

Interviewee: MARY ALICE FIELITZ BISHOP [ALSO WITH RICHARD BISHOP]
Interviewer: MARY EMMA HARRIS
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[BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1]

MEH: I missed part of that, but we'll get it when we go back downstairs.

MB: Okay, well this is—The important thing for me was the coming up—[BREAK IN RECORDING] was based on our experience down at Black Mountain. My experience at Black Mountain was what sort of made me feel community could continue up, bring it into our life in New England where we could afford it.

MEH: Richard, any particular thoughts that you haven't already shared?

RB: No, I think that's pretty much of what the feeling was.

MEH: What was it like to be a young couple together at the college?

RB: [LAUGHTER] Well, it was—It was, that was part of the different experience is that there was—You know, all our previous experience—or my previous experience—was that everybody lives in their own separate little enclosure and, you know, doesn't really communicate except on a social level. And the college was totally different. It was totally open. Everybody was sharing pretty much everything, even their living space and certainly common meals, common activities, completely intermixed male-female roles without any, you know, any thought about it at all. And

totally—totally into doing what seemed to be the important things, mainly to talk about arts and craft and what was always interesting and important to do with your life and things of that sort. Mary's right, I think—certainly the experience with children was part of that. Everybody took care of everybody's children, or felt responsible for them. It was—it was certainly a wonderful experience. And we came into that of course having looked at those possibilities before and having visited a couple of other communities and things of that sort, so it wasn't like totally new. It's just that it was—it was finding something that was, that we hadn't really expected to find, certainly in an academic site.

MB: I don't know what to add. For me the experience of community, coming from a large family already—which he didn't—and the, again, coming from a town which was pretty suburban, although it was still farmed, in the Midwest, and then coming down to Black Mountain, the whole new lifestyle was unique for me. I can't add—

MEH: That's okay. We'll talk more about it when we're just talking. Okay, maybe we'll let you go to work [TO RICHARD BISHOP].

RB: Okay.

MEH: That's pretty good. I'll get a bit of the weaving, and the plant. Oh that's much better than all those cases. [IRRELEVANT TECHNICAL REMARKS ABOUT SET-UP] [GIVES IDENTIFICATION]. Mary Alice, how did you hear about Black Mountain College?

MB: Through Rich. We weren't married, yet.

MEH: Where were you at the time?

MB: I was in high school, Elmhurst, Illinois, and Rich had—I don't know what his connection was with Chicago University, but we went and had an interview by M.C., with M.C., who was trying to get students to come down there. And it was before that, I think, that Rich went down to Black Mountain with Bill Turner. That was right after Rich and I met. And then that interview with M.C. So that's how I heard, through Rich. But I did mention it to my Sosh [PH] teacher in high school and he was very impressed that we were going to go down there, so it was known in the intellectual world.

MEH: So you were just out of high school.

MB: I hadn't graduated yet.

MEH: You hadn't graduated. But when you went back for the summer—did you graduate in the spring and then go down in the summer?

MB: I graduated in June, got married a week after, and then a week after that went down, we went down to Black Mountain.

MEH: But M.C.—Rich had come up to, had visited Black Mountain, and then M.C. came to interview you all about —

MB: At the University of Chicago.

MEH: At the university—okay. What was your feeling about being interviewed like that?

MB: It was all new. I mean here I am about to get married with someone I only had known from one month, and, you know, we only met the end of

February and this was maybe May or something like that. It was very unique to me. I knew that I had a scholarship from my high school, but they wouldn't give it to you if you got married, so it didn't matter. So it was—I had no expectations at all. I didn't know what—I had always done acrobatics, and I always did my own sewing, so my first—Going down there was "Well, why don't you take weaving?" So—because I knew cloth—and since I had done the other, "Why don't you try modern dance?" And that's how I got—I did it with Katherine Litz, and I did the weaving with Andy Oates.

MEH: Okay, let's go back to what you took first. How did you physically get from Chicago to Black Mountain? Did you take a train?

MB: No. We took a car. We took our—Father had given him a 1939 Chevy or something like that, and we drove down.

MEH: Had you been in the South before?

MB: No. No, I had only been out of the State of Illinois once, well—Missouri once and Wisconsin. But no, I was born, grew up in the house where I was born, with eight brothers and sisters.

MEH: And that was in—outside of Chicago?

MB: [AFFIRMATIVE] Small suburb.

MEH: And so what was your—what was your first impression of the college? Do you remember?

MB: I might have called it almost a feeling of a vacation, but there was again no expectations because I hadn't gotten out of high school long enough to

know what it was like. Never lived away from home to know what that was like. So it was all a new experience. And I know I had emotional distress at times because I didn't understand all the stuff that went on. But since I like to learn, it was more—Oh, I studied piano too. I had been studying piano. That's what I pursued down there with David Tudor. I'd never heard modern music before. Just all of that was like a foreign world to me. So, all I can say is I just plodded along. [LAUGHS]

MEH: So you must have, you were very naive relative to most of the people who were there.

MB: Oh yes. And they were mostly out of New York. They weren't—That first year I don't think there were any local ones, and I'm not sure even after that. We were trying to integrate in with the community, but the last year, Remy Charlip came from Asheville to do dance with Merce Cunningham, but it was—All I could say is we tried to combine nature. We would tent out sometimes at night, and then, you know, would be at the school. And there weren't—It wasn't like a school. And we would be shoveling coal or, you know—we used all the money we had, but we also were in the work detail, which was back then.

MEH: So that first summer, that was the summer that Shahn was there and Callahan [OVERTALK]

MB: Yeah, Ben Shahn and his whole family were there.

MEH: Do you have any particular recollections of him as a person?

MB: Ben Shahn? Just very gentle. And his wife also. The whole family was very loving. The children were—That's my recollection. They were beautiful children, but very quiet. And that's what I felt about them too.

MEH: So you took weaving with Andy Oates. Was he teaching that summer?

MB: He was teaching. It was a night class, and there were too many people so there were two people on the loom, on each loom. He had studied with Anni Albers, and she wasn't there anymore. He—I don't know if it was just something in me that wanted to pursue it, because I had him work with me even after the class was finished and people were gone. There was that in-between before we went home and had Rich copy a plan of a loom so we could build one. And so I tried to continue on my own, so—And then the next year, when I had one child, I'm not sure I even got in the weaving room that year. Yes I did. Yes. Somebody from California was there, and I did work in it, on my own. And probably the last year I did too. But mostly on my own.

MEH: Did Andy have any particular way of teaching or how did he go about it?

MB: Our first and maybe the major object was to try and create nature on the loom, which was to maybe bark or weeds or—but that was what we tried to do.

MEH: You mean using natural materials—found stuff—[OVERTALK] but on the loom.

MB: On the loom. And he had us set up the loom. We went through the process in his method of setting up the loom, which is not the way I do it now.

MEH: Did he have any particular philosophy that you remember of weaving?

MB: I can't remember. I mean when you're just learning, the philosophy doesn't present itself at first, and so it was just going through the mechanism of putting, winding a warp and putting it on the loom. And we didn't go into techniques or tapestry things. We just, you know, just tried to weave something, and since you're coordinating with someone else you would weave apart and then the other person would have time to weave on that same warp so that it wasn't conducive to develop more than the technique. All I can—Aside from that, I remember he was putting a white warp on a LeClerq loom over by the window, and he was going to use all shades of white to make something, and that's what stands out in my mind for Andy.

MEH: Do you remember with whom you were sharing the loom?

MB: No I don't. When I started talking I was trying to remember who she was, but—

MEH: Do you remember other students who were really interested in weaving?

MB: No. No, I don't. It was at night time. But then a lot of classes would go all night long. And it was in the basement of the dorm, so, you know, we could work, but it was only at night time mostly that we did it—evening. And only a few hours. It wasn't like every night either.

MEH: You took that, and then you took dance, you said, with Katy?

MB: Katy, yeah, and I'd never heard of modern dance before. And that—that we met every morning. And then I—I actually studied music, at first down in the Round House, which was down in the woods, with Lou Harrison, and that's where I got my first experience with contemporary music [LAUGHS].

MEH: You had played the piano before?

MB: I had studied when I was young, and then right after we were married I'd studied a little bit at the Chicago Musical College. But that was a whole new era for me to get into that modern music.

MEH: How did you react to this? I mean this was a lot of new stuff.

MB: I just—because I'm stubborn—I just did it, I just went along, you know. I just pursued it. And of course I had—we had no money, and I have one child and another one's coming the second year. And then Rich was going off with Tommy Jackson up to New England to find a place. And I mean it was just—Maybe my curiosity held me through it all. So—[LAUGHS]

MEH: What was Katy Litz like?

MB: She was wonderful. In our daily stuff, she was incredibly beautiful. She just was—All I could say is she was wonderful and beautiful and a kind, loving person. When she went on stage, it was like she had to perform, and a different person came out. And I can remember Charles Olson and David Tudor and I talking about that, how what a difference. I mean we preferred her in the daily, daily routines. She was just a wonderful woman. I know

Betty Jennerjahn was studying with her, and then she was going to go over to join her husband. And Katy had a performance with everybody. Everybody was in it except two of us who weren't modern dance people, but we had to make a dance. And I can remember how I struggled with making one. It was a wonderful experience. And I continued, as a result of that, for a long time. I started a group at Franklin Pierce College, and I started a group at UNH when Rich was at the university, so I had tried to continue that plus the weaving, even if it was on my own.

MEH: Do you remember any performances at the college that summer that you were part of, or that other people did?

MB: Well that's the only one. We only gave one that summer. And I, I'm trying to think of—I can picture the people, but I can't remember their names. The performance—Possibly Katherine gave one by herself, but I don't remember that, whether—I think it was one by herself. And David Tudor probably played the piano for her.

MEH: Do you recall a “Glyph” performance that was done that summer? That Katy Litz gave, a “Glyph”—There was a screen that Ben Shahn painted and she did a performance.

MB: That might have been the one that I'm talking about that she did, but I don't remember beyond that. If you remind me, all I know is I imagine she gave a performance, and I can remember the skirts, the wide flowing circle skirt, and her shawls. But I remember her graceful, gentle movements.

MEH: Where was the class taught?

MB: In the Dining Hall. That's where—I took a few classes with Merce Cunningham and he held them in there too. [LAUGHS]

MEH: So you were there for that first summer. Did you have any interest in the photography things going on, or the printing press, or any of that sort of thing?

MB: No, we stopped by there because the woodworking was in the printing place. And when we'd come home, Rich would go in there, and I think he helped set up. And Lenny Billings was the—was the woodworking place, and Ed Dorn was in the—Ed Dorn and Jonathan—oh, the publisher, Jonathan—

MEH: Jonathan Williams.

MB: Yeah, was—they were in the print shop. And I watched in there, and I turned some bolts in the print shop. But it was—I can remember—this is sort of stupid—but there was a cat that used to ride up the hill on Rich's shoulder. And we'd stop there, and there was a Pepsi Cola or a Coca Cola thing. And he'd get his bottle of coke, and we'd walk up and stop at the print shop and the woodworking shop, which was in the woods there. We lived up in Next to Last Chance one year, and Last Chance. Those were the army barracks. And then when our daughter was born, we lived in the first lodge, off—No, I guess it's the second lodge, which was the one where at the end Charles Olson and Connie lived in. They lived at the end, and where we washed clothes was underneath, and we were at the other end. And John Pike Grady was also in that building, and Harvey—what's

Harvey's last name? Harmon. We were all kind of in that building, and Franz Kline also was in that building one time. And Cynthia—

MEH: Homire Metcalf—

MB: Maybe that's what it is. You know, she has a home in the next town here. Have you —? She's gone blind.

MEH: Right. I talked to her a couple of years ago.

MB: Well she still comes up. [OVERTALK] My friend took care of her mother, who was also blind. So I knew Cynthia, and she's been here to the house a few times, but she goes to her sister's during the year and comes here, I think, in the summertime usually. So—

MEH: You were there that first summer, which for a young girl from the Midwest just out of high school must have been—

MB: A shock. You might say that.

MEH: And then—Are there any particular students you remember from that summer?

MB: Marcia Chamberlain. Stan VanDerBeek, who has passed on. He's the one who taught me how to cut hair. And Stan VanDerBeek and who's the other guy? They hung out together. Oh, Henry. Oh, you've got to know those two people because they were real standbys. Anyway. And Selma, S-E-L-M-A, married Trueman MacHenry. And those—we hung out a lot with Trueman MacHenry and Stan VanDerBeek. And then there—I can't remember—Dorothea somebody.

MEH: Williams.

MB: No, not that Dorothea. I knew her. And I knew oh, what's the Williams —?

MEH: Carroll?

MB: Carroll.

MEH: But another Dorothea.

MB: Dorothea was his first wife. But that wasn't—They might have been there that year, but it wasn't until I think the last summer that we connected with them. And there was Joel Oppenheimer too, and his first wife, Sissie. And we were at their marriage. But that wasn't until the second summer that they got married—'52.

MEH: So you left at the end of the first summer, and went back to Chicago?

MB: [AFFIRMATIVE]

MEH: And Rich—And Rich was in school. And what were you doing?

MB: I was a secretary for the whole science department at the University of Chicago—physics, chemistry, biology.

MEH: And you became pregnant with your [OVERTALK]

MB: I was pregnant too. We left when I was seven months, so that it has to be in April, or the end of March, when there was a split-semester. And we just packed—Through that winter, Rich had taken a course in piano tuning, and we had—His father bought us a small grand, and we loaded that up. We had bought a trailer and loaded it up behind this Chevy car, and packed everything up and went down to Black Mountain. Was it that —? Wait a minute. Could we have brought that piano back? The piano that we brought back when my son was born, which would have been '53,

because we were still doing—he was making money doing pianos. So maybe we didn't take the piano the first year, '51. '52, are you on year '52 now?

MEH: Yeah.

MB: Okay, that's when we brought the piano [OVERTALK]

MEH: You went down like in April.

MB: Right, in '52, and then Djuna was born and then we had the piano with us and we brought—We bought the piano when she was a baby, back at Chicago, and then took it back with us when we came down again. And that's when Rich learned to tune the pianos for the college, because again we had no income. And we'd considered buying or living there, and didn't do it.

MEH: But you registered as students for those two months.

MB: I don't think we were registered as students. I think we just moved there, because I didn't take—I mean, I took one or two, a few classes of Merce's, but I didn't take anything else.

MEH: When was your daughter born?

MB: In May. At that time is when we were living down the hill, because the first year we were up the hill and then we were down the second year, the Second Lodge, that's what it's called. And then the third year we were back up the hill. We were in the same apartment that the man who was a contemporary with Einstein and died there—the mathematician.

MEH: Max Dehn.

MB: Max Dehn and his wife lived in that place where we were the last year—Next to Last Chance. [SPEAKS TO CAT] Bob, Bob Rauschenberg also was up there, and he and—they had this tiny little baby who was so anemic, it seemed like. And there was his friend, Jeremy? A tall guy, thin guy?

MEH: Cy?

MB: Cy, maybe. Yeah, Cy. And Cy could not play a note on the piano, and he would go into the house that was off from the kitchen and just play for hours. But he didn't know how to play. He had never had any music lessons. And Mary Fitton was—I remember her from the very beginning. And I remember Wilma, who married—

MEH: Willie.

MB: Willie, yeah. And he used to take her every morning at five o'clock, with her little daughter, over to the farm in a jeep. They'd go, and then she'd come back, and she did dance. And her first—Wilma Joseph, wasn't it, her first name?—had been a weaver, and he wove nonstop, apparently. That's—So these people. We've kind of—I have kind of kept in touch with John Grady from Eastport, more than—Rich never wrote—[TECHNICAL INTERRUPTION TO CHANGE AUDIOCASSETTE]

MEH: So when you went back that second summer, of course you had just had a baby, but Merce was there that year. Did you study with him at all?

MB: That's the time. I didn't study—Well, wait a minute, '52, yeah, I just had—Merce was there in '52?

MEH: [AFFIRMATIVE]

MB: Well, then that's when I must have done a little bit of my studying with him.

Was he there in '53?

MEH: He was there both summers.

MB: Both summers.

MEH: '52, he didn't have—'53, he brought that whole group of dancers with him.

'52 I think he had appendicitis that summer, so he was teaching some but

[OVERTALK]

MB: No, I don't remember doing hardly anything that summer. I'm trying to think of the—Viola Farber was in my first class with Katherine Litz. I remember her.

MEH: What about Nick Cernovich? Was he dancing?

MB: He was in that first class too. I can remember being not only in the class but out on the farm, working with him, bringing hay in on the farm. And Nick was in it, and then—None of the other people—Dan Rice wasn't. --he was doing painting and he was doing—I think he was doing bookbinding that year, one of those years. And somehow we kept contact with people, but more through me writing and keeping a connection with them. So that was '52, which was again—you know, I'm with a little baby and not knowing what I'm doing. And Connie Olson had had her child, and then there was Vera Williams and, you know, we didn't start where we worked together babysitting until '52, or '53 more. And, oh, my favorite, Wesley

Huss and Bea. Yeah, I was—Bea was a close friend to me. Both Bea and Connie helped me a lot.

MEH: You went into the hospital at Asheville to have your baby?

MB: Yeah [AFFIRMATIVE]. We had—The doctor was from Black Mountain. He was only twenty-eight. Miller, John Miller, I think. And it was Mother's Day, and we had everybody over for dinner. I mean there was John Grady and Harvey Harmon. And at that time there was another couple, John and Libby Hamilton—have you been in connection with them? And he had epileptic fits, which he had that Sunday night. And on Monday I sort of thought maybe I had the flu or something, and the doctor came out and said "Well you don't look"—I mean nobody could hardly tell I was having a baby anyway, because I hadn't gained very much—"but you better go in." And even when I got in—But this is irrelevant. This doesn't have to do with Black Mountain.

MEH: But there were a lot of young mothers there then.

MB: Well we had a lot of them, and we all tried to find a mid-wife, but there weren't any. And our colored cooks couldn't find one—Cornelia and Malrey. Nobody knew of any midwives. So we were kind of, you know, had to go in. And I would have had her naturally except that the nurses, in the Cath- —We had to go to the Catholic hospital. The Protestant wouldn't take you.

MEH: Why not?

MB: Don't know. Everybody was forced to go to the Catholic one. And they couldn't believe that—The doctor had given instructions not to give me anything, but they couldn't believe me because I was so quiet. I was sort of falling asleep. That they gave me a hypodermic as he was walking in, and my last recollection was hearing him swear, which was unlike him, because I lost total control of anything. It was bad news. And so I was in the hospital, you know, the normal five days. And so I was back at home, and we named the child after Djuna Barnes, who was a Southern poet. All our children are named after some kind of an author. Okay, so my time that year was just sort of intermingling that second summer, but not really doing much because I had a new baby, and I could see things outside. I mean, I'd take her for walks, and I don't think I did any—maybe one or two classes of modern dance. I don't remember whether I even did any weaving. I couldn't tell you. I didn't keep notes. [LAUGHS]

MEH: What was it like to be a young mother in that sort of community?

MB: Well, because there were so many of us—we were all in terms of being young, not age-wise but new mothers, that that was our focus. We just sort of were sidelines to what was going on at the college. I didn't even think of it as a college at that point. You know, it's hard to think of it as a college because so much of it was work activities, and most of the people who came there had no money so everybody was sort of finding (funding ?)—God, everybody I think was on a work scholarship even, you know, to the end. And the fact the faculty ran the college was unique in itself. And

then there was Hazel, who lived across the bridge. You've been there? At what point were you there? Were you there when —

MEH: The college? The site?

MB: Yeah.

MEH: I've been there on and off over the last thirty years.

MB: So you were there maybe when you'd walk across the bridge. You'd walk by the—where Paul Williams and the science—and then across there—Hazel was there the first time. Then she was in the little house that was over closer to the Dining Hall, where the two roads forked. She was in there, I believe. And actually I thought that Ben Shahn was there too, at one point, before—and his family—lived in that house before that. And then there was Nell Rice, who lived with her daughter and children up on the left side going up the hill. And then M.C. and David Tudor lived on the right, in the house which I think burned. [INAUDIBLE] And I don't know what landmarks were there when you were there.

MEH: How do you remember M.C. at that time?

MB: Vibrant. She was always very vibrant and down-to-earth. I just always had a strong connection with her up until even when we were at Haystack together. There was always a strong connection. She's—I can remember her, somebody giving her a turquoise like eight yards or six yards of I don't even know if it was silk, and she wrapped it around her like a sarong and came to one of the dinners. I mean, those are the kind of things I remember her doing. And David Tudor was exceptional too. He—Snowing

again. [LAUGHS] The two of them I thought were really well—really nice together. But then here I knew nothing about this mixed couple kind of thing going on. I knew none of that, the exchange and the free love that was going on. And maybe it wasn't as bad as later on. I don't know. So—

MEH: So that summer you basically were caring for your new baby.

MB: Yeah, but again Trueman MacHenry and Stan VanDerBeek were—would always come and visit me. And there were times when we went where we weren't supposed to go. There was a place we'd go swimming, because you know there was no place to go swimming. There was—You had to go on private property to do it. There was just no place. I mean the pond was no place, and in the pond—oh we would fish in the pond. I mean we were try—I think basically we were carrying—doing activities that were very unlike being in a college. I mean, not just us, but everybody, because we'd pick berries, raspberries, and made jam. And, you know, the cooks made home-made bread, and everybody kind of joined in and helped with everything. Not like you would think of as a college at all. And baseball games on Sunday and going—they would go to the pub where they used to drink, and I would sit out in the car because I had a baby, would visit them in there. So—Then we would have the—in the Dining Hall, out on the deck—on the porch which was screened in—we'd always have—seemed like there was some kind of exhibit that was going on. A weaver from California had an exhibit there, and I might have—have studied a little with her. I can't remember whether I actually studied with

her that second summer. She's well known. She was well known, but I don't remember now. If I see her name, I do. And I can't remember much about Marcia Chamberlain. She came up at Bard and said that she remembered me quite—I don't know what people remember, but she remembered me really well, so it was—I think she was a friend of Selma, who married Trueman MacHenry. I think they were very close friends. And then Viola Farber, I connected with also. She gave my first child—She came over and gave my child some little stuffed animal. So that, you know, it's almost like carrying on a commonality of a regular life that wasn't college life, so you were still studying—that's the weaving or the music was done that way. It was integrated with your survival, you might say, in the environment you were in. I know Nell Rice would say "Oh, there was a copperhead down outside the library." And I never knew what one looked like, and so snakes would come into the question. And I know when I was pregnant with—it was when Dan Daley and—they were in the end—they're both, I think, dead now. Dan [DONALD, ALSO CALLED "DUCK"] and—

MEH: Ilona?

MB: A strange name, yeah. Yeah, they were at the end. And I walked out my door of that—the upper, where I was, and I was going to go have a lesson with Lou Harrison, and there was a black snake draped up over the post right outside the door. Well, I didn't know if it was poisonous, and I thought well, Dan's [sic] little boy at the end was crawling around, you know, and I

thought this huge snake! I didn't know they were harmless at that point. So I climbed out the window on the other side of the building, and ran around and got him. and I think he shot the snake. But then after that I found out it was a blacksnake, and they're very harmless and they're very good in the garden. I felt terrible about it after that. But those were the kind of experiences you had. You didn't—You didn't think of it as going to a ty—You know when you go to typical school, you're told everything. And all of sudden now you're not told. You are on your own to develop whatever—If you even knew what you could do. And I think that's what in all those years impressed me the most was that you had to find yourself in the situation, and whatever you became good at. I watched the drawing class. Who taught that? I can remember Charles sitting in there, and Nick, and oh—another guy—Vic, Victor—I think he's down there also, down in Santa Fe. And they would sit out on the front steps, and they would be doing life figures. And Charles Olson—big Charles Olson is, you know, trying to do this. And it's the same when we did with Merce Cunningham. Everybody tried to join in. Here's Charles Olson. And you never saw anybody so clumsy in your life, trying to do these things. It was incredible. You wouldn't find that in a typical college, you know. And the fact that you—There were no grades, that was new to me, very new. And I was so used to cramming to get good grades so I'd get a scholarship, and then I'm out there and there's no grades, and—And you learn to survive in a different way. I think that's what it taught me. So you didn't have firewood?

So John Grady and Norman (?) and Rich and Tommy came up here to look for a place. John Grady tried to help me split firewood for the—the place, and it was so cold because the army barracks had no under-floor. And I had blankets on the floor to keep my two little kids warm. I mean where would you find that in a typical college. You just wouldn't. So—And then there was Motherwell, the photographer, and Siegel, the photographer. We had those shows.

MEH: Motherwell was a painter. [OVERTALK] Siskind and Callahan . .

MB: Callahan, I mean. Callahan—But wasn't there a Segal too? S-E-G-A-L?
[SIEGEL]

MEH: Yes there was.

MB: And they were there that same time. They were—

MEH: Yeah, they were there the first summer you were there.

MB: That was the first summer? Yeah, it had to be. And I can remember his wife being pregnant and how he took photographs—That was Callahan taking pictures. And so there were a lot of photography classes there.

MEH: What was Olson like?

MB: I can remember him more when he came to our place in Vermont than I can at the college. All I know is that he was this tall guy, and I can remember, as I mentioned at one point, walking all the way down the hill, him holding the hand of my little girl—

MEH: This was at the college?

MB: At the college. My little child. And I had won in high school a clown, a stuffed clown, and I can remember him holding her hand, and she's holding this funny little stuffed clown in one hand. I just wished I'd had a picture, because here was this huge guy and this tiny—because she was really small—walking down the road. It might have been, I wasn't holding hands because that could have been the summer I had my second child, so I had Joel in a stroller and he was holding—I can't remember the sequences of that. But I don't know, just the odd things. That he didn't—I mean, what I remember of him wouldn't be that particular, like he was soft and kind and that. It was—Everybody—again, I have a remembrance of his relating to me in a kind, gentle way, but I can remember he had no, no real honest conception of what a vehicle was. And he, one of the times driving from Asheville back home, burned up the motor because he didn't know you were supposed to put oil in the car. He did that a couple times. But he just had no concept of what to do with a car, mechanically. So that's what I remember about him [LAUGHS]. And I do remember Connie and .Go on, I can't think—

MEH: We'll come back. You left after the summer of '52, after the second summer, and went back to Chicago?

MB: Right. [AFFIRMATIVE] And—This was all during the Korean War, and Rich had never been—was not in the war to begin with because of going to college, at theological seminary, and so when we came back, we were in a small apartment, which actually had been a porch. And that was the

year, you know, he continued schooling. But he had to—They told him that he had to concentrate—because the school was paying for his education—so he had to graduate, and at that time, as he set up to get his MIT, something like that, with Charles Olson, and that's why we left that next—again, May, or whenever it was. We had to leave college unless he committed himself, which meant to finish the degree.

MEH: That's why you left Chicago, the university. [OVERTALK]

MB: The university, yeah [AFFIRMATIVE]. And he then went and did his whatever he needed with Charles Olson, and that's how he got what is called—I think it was called an MIT, but I don't know what that stands for.

MEH: And so you went back that year for him to finish his work. You were there in the summer of '51, and then you went back, and you came to Black Mountain in April.

MB: Yes.

MEH: And then your daughter was born, and you were there through the summer of '52, and you went back to Chicago.

MB: Yes.

MEH: And were you working again then? You had one baby.

MB: No, I didn't. Rich worked at Wards, and because he worked at night, I had to—I would take her walking around Chicago at five o'clock in the morning in a buggy so that he could sleep. And it was the first year he started—took a course in tuning pianos, before our child was born. And

then I don't know, I think he just worked at the—Wards, besides going to school.

MEH: And then you went back in the summer of '53. And had your second child been born then?

MB: No.

MEH: Or was the second child born at Black Mountain.

MB: It was born. We left at the end of whatever the semester was, in May, I believe, sometime in May, and went down to Black Mountain. And then Joe was born in August.

MEH: Joel? Joe?

MB: Joel. J-O-E-L. Named after Joel Oppenheimer.. And again—Well that was, again, a very, I think—Bea and Wes were in the place below us, which had been where Callahans had lived. And they took our daughter, because this happened in the middle of the night, very very suddenly. And then because, well, we didn't have money, we—I talked them into me only staying in three days, which is not unique now but back then it was unique. And then that fall was when he—of '53—when he and Tommy came up to New England to look for a place because the college was folding. They, Rich spent a lot of time and Tommy did trying to talk to figure out what to do with Charles Olson and Wes Huss. And things were just not good, and people were—the farm was suing the college, and oh, what was his name? A couple of the old old-timers were suing the college for back pay, and there just wasn't the money. So they were trying to figure

out how to re-establish it up here. And that's when Tommy and Rich came up, and we found this place in South Royalton, Vermont. So that's—It didn't work. We tri—we did start a community there where we were in South Royalton, tried to get something going, we had a couple come in besides Tommy was living there, and then we took in Harvey Harmon and his wife and they had a set of twins. We took them in in December, transported them from California. They had a little girl who was not quite two years old, they had this little set of boy twins that were six months old and she was pregnant again. So before the little girl was three years old, she had another set of twins. They had five kids. Well anyway, we thought we had this incredible farm—not that it was farmed, but all this land—and we thought that we were trying to do them a good deed to get them out of the trouble they were in in California. They stayed in the house. We didn't let them help out. Financially we tried to cover for them. Rich was teaching school at that time. So anyway, that—They ended up going to—finally had to go back to California. They were told to go back. So we've had people from Black Mountain. John Grady always used to park his head at our place [LAUGHS], and as time went on, you know, there were a few people that were in that period that we stuck to. And then we did go visit M.C. at Stony Point with our four children, I think. We drove down there and then we did go to Gloucester to see—at that time it wasn't Connie, it was—

MEH: Betty.

MB: Betty and Charles. So we were there at their place in Gloucester, and at our place—I can't remember—Cynthia came. So life moved on, and the college just sort of kind of came to an end.

MEH: That last summer you were there—that's the summer that Merce came and Viola was there and Remy and [OVERTALK]

MB: [OVERTALK] Yeah, they started and Brown—the —

MEH: Carolyn.

MB: Carolyn Brown and her husband, and yeah, that was a summer of big concerts, more than one.

MEH: You were pregnant that summer. Did you dance with Merce?

MB: No. As I said, I can't remember, it must have been that summer, I did do some of the morning exercises, but it was really hard for me because I had the two kids, and I was up at the, where the barracks were, and to bring them, you know, to figure out what to do with them and bring them down, it just didn't work.

MEH: What do you remember about meals at Black Mountain?

MB: Well, I can remember mostly because the first year was the only year that I—we were at the meals. The other ones we were cooking in our place. The meals were Malrey and Cornelia, and I got to know them pretty well. I thought they were always great. I can't remember—you know, I learned to eat lentils with vinegar, which I never knew. You know, I can't remember much about the meals. It seems like I should, but I can't remember them at all, I guess there were so many people together. I believe Sunday you

didn't have meals in the, and the people, the teachers or whoever you call, like Merce and Nell Rice, and they took their food, and Wesley Huss, they took their food up, so there weren't any regular meals. No, I don't remember much at all.

MEH: It was only the first year you went to the Dining Hall for meals.

MB: Yeah, it was only the first year.

MEH: Why was that? Was that because of the babies?

MB: Yeah [AFFIRMATIVE]. And then because we weren't actually paying students the other two years, I don't believe. I think Rich did his work on the farm, as paying for it, both, and then he did tune the pianos the last year when it was really at its end. So I don't think when we had the children, we ever ate our meals there. That's my recollection.

MEH: Did you have like—did the college like give you money for baby food or—?

MB: No. No. We just [LAUGHS]—No. We were into using as many health foods as Adele Davis—Bea Huss and I, we had a book, and tried to live using what we, you know, natural foods. We might have gotten them from them, but I don't think so. I think Rich had two—some pianos in the town, and so there was a little money to buy stuff. And Rich's father had—every once in a while would give us a little money, so we—I mean not that we ever bought a lot of food, but we managed. To this day, I mean that's—by the gift of something, we've never been in debt, and we've never had excess money to buy food, so I can't tell you how I—We're vegetarians and have been, so I make what I need to. I make tofu, and it's no different

now than then. And I kind of feel, you know, we did struggle. We didn't have a lot of money, so our kids didn't have the normal diets that—Well, most of them sort of still eat like that. Okay.

MEH: Okay. You left Black Mountain in '53, you came up here with Tommy, and you had four kids?

MB: I only, when I came up here, had only two.

MEH: And then you had two other kids.

MB: Yeah. After that.

MEH: So you were pretty busy as a mother.

MB: Yeah. And since there wasn't money, we made everything. I learned to make everything. We—He didn't the first year—he tuned pianos like going around the state, but the second year he got on what's called Emergency Teaching, and he taught where Goddard is in Plainfield, and we rented up there with another couple who were at some point with Black Mountain. I don't know. Christopher Somebody. Anyway, in Plainfield also there was a couple from Black Mountain—Annie?

MEH: Will Hamlin and [OVERTALK]

MB: Yes. Yeah. And so we, he taught at the high school there, and our daughter went to the preschool at Goddard College. So we were still somehow connected with people from Black Mountain. Somehow there's always been some connection, and I know the years, at different points, I went to dance—every year there's an international folk festival in Massachusetts, and the couple's house I stayed at were from Black

Mountain. I don't remember their names. So, you know, like and then the Hamlins. It seems like I have been around people from Black Mountain, and, you know, we didn't know each other, but then they crop up. Kind of electricity, and then Betty and Dick's and his whole close friends were all Black Mountain people, so I've been around them continually. And then Joel Oppenheimer, also, who came up to teach at New England College. And he taught in the department with Sylvester, who was head of the department of psych (?), Peter Sylvester? And was surprised to find Joel up here. And we knew them from UNH, the Sylvesters.

MEH: When did you start weaving again?

MB: It's like I never stopped. Rich's mother had the loom that he built. It never worked very well, but as soon as I—they brought the loom to Vermont. I set it up and then I had Rich—we went around and looked for looms, the old antique ones, and I finally got one and I continued weaving, because it was—I lived in isolation and all I had was my children, and Rich would be gone, when he taught school, so all I had were my children. My closest neighbor was—[TECHNICAL INTERRUPTION]

[BEGINNING OF CASSETTE 2]

MEH: We were talking about —

MB: How I got back [OVERTALK]. I just wove. I mean even though...

MEH: What were you weaving?

MB: When my children were small, again, we had no money and Rich's, you know, teaching job was three thousand a year, and four kids, and paying a

mortgage on the place. No, I ripped up rags. I remember making a 9 x 12 rag rug out of strips that I ripped, and I ripped up plastic bags and I went out and got cat tails, and I—And through the State of Vermont, the craft section, you could have weaving books for three months. So I—I mean you could have craft books, and that's—I continued working on my own, trying to study weaving with these books. And then I finally hooked up with the Weavers Guild in Vermont, and somehow there was something that kept me going, doing the weaving while we're trying to, you know, keep out of debt and raise four kids and everything. So I continued that. I didn't know how to spin at that time, and I can remember a neighbor in town, South Royalton, who started teaching me, and then when Rich got a government grant to go to UNH, we sold our farm. Then I hooked up with some people who taught me to spin, so I began to spin and weave. I had only started selling a little bit before I left, because I didn't have confidence in myself. And then when I got to UNH, the university in Durham, I started selling my weaving. I wasn't teaching then, but I did become a member, I was accepted in the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, which was very unique then because you had to go through a big jury system. I didn't teach weaving yet. I started teaching when we moved down to Jaffrey, when Rich taught at Franklin-Pierce College. And I taught for the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, set up a weaving program in the town, that was Jaffrey, New Hampshire. And I've been doing it since. At the same time, another—when I—I went to Haystack through M.C. Richards, I met a

friend, Joyce Johnson, who was from the Cape. And she was trying to start a school, and I set up the weaving program on Castle Hill in Truro, Mass. And I wove every, I taught every summer there for nineteen years—sometimes four weeks, sometimes three weeks, it just depended on my situation. So then I taught, I taught weaving there, where I set the program up, and then I taught weaving at Harrisville Designs, where they were using my loom as a model to build a portable loom. And I did craft fairs. Weaving was my form of survival. Through this all, we started this community called Hidden Springs, and—

MEH: Is that when you came here?

MB: Yeah [AFFIRMATIVE]. Well, it was here, but it was not under—it was owned by somebody, and then we were the first land trust—second one in the State. We were involved with the first one. Because through this all, we were trying to live a simple life involved with peace organizations, which we marched with when we were at UNH against the Vietnam War. And we hooked up with a friend, a man called Arthur Harvey, who ran, had a newspaper, Greenleaf, and he helped conscientious objectors. And he was the only dealer for Gandhi books in this country. And we talked him into coming here and help us with this community. And that's when we formed this land trust. But through this all, weaving was something that I used a means of income, not only through the teaching but through selling at craft fairs.

MEH: But were these like wall hangings? Were they—

MB: Anything.

MEH: —practical things?

MB: Practical—Anything. I was one of these people who wove rugs, I wove placemats, I wove clothing. I got into double weaving and weaving articles that were totally woven, shaped on the loom, no sewing, you know, cutting off. And I—color was my strong point. So people would take my classes for me to teach them color. Meantime I started getting better looms, because neither of those looms were good—the ones I had in Vermont. They just were terrible. [LAUGHS] So I began to find where looms were available, and I tried to teach weavers who were mothers. I mean, I taught whoever wanted to, but they were people who—the mothers tend to migrate to it, because nobody could tell them what to do. They were their own boss in what they created. And I would try to teach them how to weave using what you had, instead of a lot of expensive money going out to buy this piece of equipment and buy that yarn or whatever. I tried to teach them how to do it within their means. So people from all over the state knew me as a loom, the Loom Mother, because if you needed a loom—I still get calls: "Do you know where I can get a loom?" I just started to know where all of them, all of the looms were, or how to get them. But then the sad thing is over the last few years weaving has faded out because of computer age, and even poor people have clothes excessively. But I really feel it's such a wonderful thing for your hands. I through that also started teaching handicap, and for eight years I had a

weaving program, the only one in the state, where people loaned me looms and yarn, and I taught adult handicapped people. I was a counselor, but I also taught them how to weave. That was a wonderful experience, and through that experience I learned how to simplify the process of putting a warp on a loom, because in their own mental way they would show me things that I couldn't have done from somebody who had all their mind with them. So I did that, and then I—at this community, Hidden Springs, I also taught anybody who wanted to know how to weave. This house was only a tiny little thing like that, like the cabin out here, and my looms—and I always had a piano of some kind. I mean, what you see now is a combination of an adding-on of twenty years. The first few years this was just like nothing. And I had a communal household of girls here. I was—Rich was in the commune, started the commune. And I had teenagers in this household the same time we had this free school in town for four years. And our two youngest children were in there and we had to teach them there, so I taught those kids how to weave, same time. And I was separated from Rich. But—So this house was a house where—There was no electricity at first, and only an outhouse and a pump. We had a pump, and all the kids came and they'd climb on the rafters, and that was good. That was back in 1970 and '71. And then finally, after many experiences and experiments in this community, the intentional community ended. And I'm still here. We're still here. Our two older—our two sons, the one has an auto shop down below that he has built the whole thing, and

my other son also lives here. My daughter married, my youngest daughter, who was an artist, married an Arab, so we have two Arab grandchildren. And my other daughter, who is also an artist—I can show you a stained glass door she made downstairs for me. I somehow tried to continue the piano. It was really hard. The piano wouldn't be in tune and I play classical music. And at one point I finally started bartering my weaving for piano lessons with this Dick Winslow's wife, who I had already taught to weave. And I went there once a week for nine years or so, and then this Alzheimer developed, and so I'm there now helping her, whereas she helped me before. So I can—It was like starting from scratch, playing the piano again, because I really for thirty-some years had been away from it in any real sense, because it was difficult to play wherever I was. I got the piano back, and—I had given it to a college student. Got the piano back and continued, you know, playing the piano. And now I play at an Episcopal church, whenever I can. I'm singing and playing. And I also taught myself the autoharp, which is a different instrument. You know, I can carry it with me. So I play both piano and the autoharp at Senior Citizen Group and at the nursing home, where I developed—I needed to make some income that, since weaving wasn't available anymore, and I started doing, studying Shiatsu with a Japanese teacher. And that's been nine, almost ten years that I've been doing that. And so I do that at a nursing home now, and—if anybody wants it—I don't push it, because I'm doing, helping so many outside activities. So that's where I'm at now.

MEH: I mean it's really obvious in some ways, but I'm going to ask you anyway, what has really been the impact of Black Mountain, do you feel, on your life?

MB: The impact is that my uniqueness has not been hid. I mean, I haven't buried my weaving. I haven't buried my music. I feel strongly about—I mean, I do Tai Chi, and the inventiveness in my mind, the learning aspect, was developed. It was always there as a child, but it was always hooked up with grades, and now it's just me. I have to—It's my own inner self, the strength that I didn't know was there, because I was always following somebody. To do it myself. So I have taught myself so many things, which I would not have done if I had lived a normal, or a suburbanite wife type things.

MEH: Was that really your expectation for yourself when you were growing up?

MB: No, no. It was—I was always wanting to learn. When I hear people say how they had trouble in school, mine was that I just wanted to learn, and whether—I know I was called "Teacher's Pet," but it wasn't because of that. I just wanted to learn. The interest of studying, and just a hunger I have.

MEH: What did your family do? Your father?

MB: My father? My father was a carpenter, and there were eight of us children, born in this house, and my father died when I was three and a half, and my mother was a German immigrant who ran away from Germany, landed at Ellis Island, you know, Statue of Liberty, and raised us all. She didn't go

out to work. My brother that I had been very close to died of polio when the epidemic was in '45. And so, at the vulnerable ages of three and a half and ten, I lost two of the closest people. But, you know, in a huge family and your mother's trying to make ends meet—because she never went out to work. She held us together some way, and we still marvel at that. So my father was a carpenter, and my uncles were in the old school. My grandfather was an incredible carpenter who built a third of the houses and stores in the town I grew up in. So—And that's my background.

MEH: Are there any other memories of the college that we haven't discussed? Any more thoughts -- other thoughts or recollections?

MB: It's funny. I associated the college more with outside activities than actual classwork. I remember the nature of things, the—Hiking down through the back woods to get the raspberries, or going up to—there was a point on the mountain top called—was it Eve Point? Or Even? Or something, up on the top there's a ridge that goes like that—and hiking up there. And somehow I think I remember Bea Huss showing me how to crochet, and it was more or less not what you would call student learning. The pig roast they had the summer my daughter was born—that the people at the farm had up in the hills. And Max Dehn and his wife, and how they would go in the morning and wash themselves in the waterfall and then going up the mountain. That's not really school, but that's what my memory is. It's more associated with natural outdoor things. And the garden, working in the garden up there on the farm, and—Or walking down through the woods

from our—the army barracks. Going over to the farm. Or just simple things, not—Walking down to the gatehouse with my daughter in her buggy, and listening to Malrey and Cornelia talk. I even have the cookbook from Black Mountain College. The Joy of Cooking cookbook Cornelia—no Malrey —Cornelia gave me, that I still have. It has, you know, the multiple numbers she needed to make for things, and how hard they worked to feed us when they—you know, they were hard-stressed too for what we had, because there wasn't excess money. There was not—And then the first summer I can remember shoveling the coal in back of where the kitchen was. That was our work detail job. [LAUGHS] Shoveling coal into the bin. So I—

MEH: Did you go into the surrounding area much?

MB: No. Just basically where we went back in the backwoods, where we weren't supposed to go swimming [LAUGHS] with Trueman MacHenry and Stan VanDerBeek. And, let's see—I remember more nature. The kumquat tree that was outside of—what was, was it Shepard? Shepard One of the names?

MEH: Flola?

MB: Flola. And who was the other person, the man who was an archaeologist?

MEH: Leser.

MB: Leser, Paul Leser. Then there was another later archaeologist, later on. Paul Leser was the one who lived down there, back there with her, and that's where—I don't know, I think Bea Huss that first summer with a little

baby, they lived on that building across the road from us, which was an innovative building. Then there was the Quiet Time, where we went when Max Dehn passed on, and that was in that little building, stone building —

MEH: The Quiet House.

MB: The Quiet House. I remember that.

MEH: Do you have any recollections of Rauschenberg as a student? What he was doing?

MB: I don't remember him being a student. I always connected him as just being the painter there. But he was a student too?

MEH: [AFFIRMATIVE] Sort of like a student-in-residence.

MB: Student-in-residence. Huh. Well, Dick Winslow has a couple—has one of his huge, huge paintings in his house that he got at some kind of a student auction, or an auction at Wesleyan. I just remember him as being real skinny, and his wife was very neat-looking, and he used to spend a lot of time with Cy. And that's—And this little tiny baby who was always crying. It was a boy, though, wasn't it?

MEH: He grew up.

MB: He grew up [LAUGHS]. And I don't know if he would remember me, because I remember the people who were successive in that apartment, where he lived the first summer. And then after him was a guy who became, who played the violin, and he became conductor of a well-known orchestra. Strange name, a Jewish guy.

MEH: I'm not sure.

MB: I can remember him practicing the Bach Chaconne, or whatever it was, in that end apartment. [LAUGHS] And then after that, the last summer, there was a native couple, family, that rented the place. Maybe that was another summer. I don't remember. And I do remember more the people when David Tudor's teacher lived over where Nell Rice and her family lived, and Wolf—Stefan Wolpe, was in that, stayed in that house too. And I remember the one who played the piano who had been David Tudor's teacher.

MEH: Was that Irma?

MB: Yeah. Who gave a concert. I remember that.

MEH: Did you take part in any drama performances?

MB: No, but Rich did. He was in one of the plays. No, I didn't. I always, always really liked David, Dave Huss—Not Dave. No, that was the boy's name. Wes, Wes Huss, and Bea, who I heard later on, Bea went—I don't know how to say it, she went mentally, mental. And I know that Wes was coming out east here at some point too. And of course M.C. was a strong figure in our house too, because she even came—on her ways into Vermont, she would stop at our place, and I would—She would say "Oh isn't this a pretty plant," and I'd start naming it, and she'd say "Oh, just let it be." You know, it was like let's not classify everything. [LAUGHS] And then David Tudor and John Cage—I don't have pictures here, but I have pictures that I gave to my—to the Winslows, of me with John Cage, and their mushroom hunting.

MEH: At Black Mountain?

MB: I never knew they did it at Black Mountain, but they used to come up into Maine to do it. I knew that. And—Because I, there's a Russian family around the corner here that—The woman passed on, but she was a translator for Solzhenitsyn. And anyway she—the daughter's a close friend of mine, and we did mushrooms here too. But John Cage and David just really did it. [LAUGHS] So, you see, that's not a connection with a learning thing, although like John Cage did a concert at, at the Putney Green, the Yellow Barn, which you probably don't know about. It's a music school in the summer for teenagers, and they get professionals from around, out of this country even, to come. And John Cage we got there. In Putney, I know there's Black Mountain people.

MEH: There are people all around. I'm going to stop now, and

[INTERRUPTION IN TAPING.]

[LOOKING AT WEAVINGS]

MB: Part of that was some yarn for a hooked rug that I got at a yard sale, and I had to use That kind of stuff. As you can see, I can't throw plants out either.



MEH: You say this is typical of the type of work that you've done?

MB: Yeah. Unbalanced. I call it my "Bach Counterpoint." Do you want that lamp out of the way? I don't draw a cartoon—they call it—recipe. I don't draw it. I have—You know, people will see something and they'll say "Oh," by picking one section out of it? And it evolves. Using—Again, it's color, which is the predominant.



MEH: You spun your own yarn?

MB: Yeah, I spun the wool there and vegetable dyed some of it.

MEH: Where is there?

MB: Most, most of it's hand-spun. I have one whole rug—[INTERRUPTION]
Everything you see is stuff that I've bartered for or—I don't buy yarn anymore. It just shows up on my doorstep. [LAUGHS] I have to say to—People will say "Oh, Mary'll take it." Or plants, you see these plants? I come home and there's plants in the hallway for me. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Okay.

MB: Okay, this—The reverse is different than the other side. It's just the way I make it. And this has a hood on it, which is woven. It's not sewn on. So I try to make them all right on the loom.

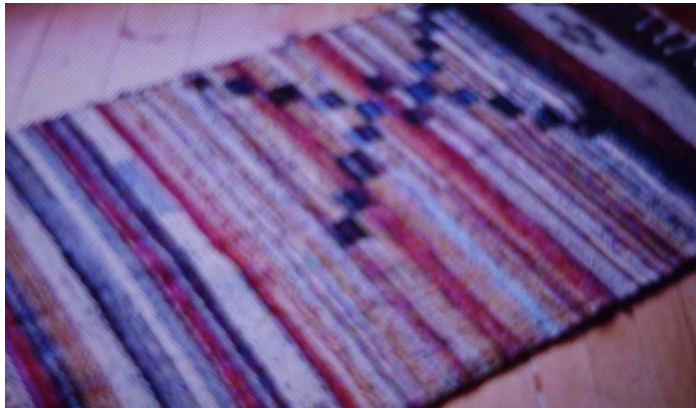
MEH: [AFFIRMATIVE] In a single piece.

MB: In a sing- [INTERRUPTION]

MEH: Now where did you win the national award?

MB: I was the—Well it's "national" meaning the League of New Hampshire.
Anybody can enter, all media, and this won an award, one of the, you
know, big ones from the—I don't know if it's in the country or what to call it.
And it's all totally double-woven. It doesn't look nice there.

MEH: This is a rag rug?



MB: Are you on video now?

MEH: You say rag, but —

MB: It's old clothes, wool, that's been ripped up into strips. Instead of yarn, it's
strips of cloth. You really get strong effects.

MEH: Because it's . .

MB: Because it's double-weave, you can make one side one color and the



reverse on the other side. So since it's a rag rug, that means if one side, one of the pieces of rag starts wearing out, there's another layer underneath it, so it's really long lasting. A point / counterpoint because, you know, Bach does, interacts different scenes within the same piece. And mine sort of evolves the same way. I start and let it develop whatever feels right to my.—[INTERRUPTION] You know, it's not like a 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4. I don't know how else to describe it. It'll be interesting if it comes out. [LAUGHS]

MEH [INTERRUPTION] [MARY IS MODELLING THE DRESS.] Why don't you tell me about the dress.

MB: [OFFMIKE] The dress took me three weeks to just sew together—to piece



it together, working every day. And weaving it to the [STATIC, UNINTEL]. It's shaped on the loom so when it came off, I was able to sew by hand the pieces together or fringe it. Then I decided I wanted it long, so I took a stole, which is this piece here, around the bottom, to make it a long dress. And I called it my Crone Dress. Do you know what a crone is? You're a crone, Mary.

MEH: What is a crone?

MB: A crone is a woman who has gone through menopause.

MEH: Okay [LAUGHS]. That's right.

MB: And they on the slip put it, called "My Wedding Dress," but it's really my Croning Dress, which is coming out as an elderly woman—elder.

[LAUGHS]

MEH: How wonderful. Okay.

MB: [MODELLING ANOTHER DRESS] Okay, this was woven down at Black



Mountain College in 1952, and it's the honeysuckle pattern, and what I—It's one of those patterns that you can weave over and over again and never repeat it, and so I was trying to do that. I was—That was after I studied with Andy Oates, and I first made it as a skirt and hardly wore it as a skirt, and then I turned it into this blouse. And so this makes it '52. '99? How old is it? When I teach a weaving class, people are still impressed with it after all these years. So weaving is something that is life-long.

[END OF RECORDING ON CASSETTE 2.]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]