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

**MEH:** When did you come to the United States?

**TD:** The first of January nineteen hundred and forty-one [1941].

**MEH:** 1941.

**TD:** San Francisco.

**MEH:** San Francisco. I had been told that you came by way or Russia.

**TD:** That's right: Russia. Siberia. Hawaii.

**MEH:** How is that? I mean, most people came by way of Europe or by Mexico.

**TD:** Well, we lived at that time in Norway. My husband – we left Germany in early January nineteen hundred and thirty-nine [1939]. Up to then – up to the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1938, my husband always felt that it would be unfair of him to go and try to get a job which would not have been difficult for him abroad while there were so many mathematicians much, much younger than he who did not have the so-called privileges and the so-called promise by Mr. Hitler that the ones who were already in government service and universities of state in nineteen hundred and forty [1940] and those who were active in the First World War would receive a pension up to the end of their lives. And so Max felt that since

that has been promised to him – livelihood, whatever – that he just didn't have the right to go. And then when this 9<sup>th</sup> of November came, he said "No. That's not possible." Because up to then he had been continued working, publishing, not in Germany but in Belgium and in Italy. He had been invited to lecture also in Belgium and in England quite often and in the Scandinavian countries – Denmark and Norway. He said under those circumstances I cannot possibly do any work and so we have to go. And then –

**MEH:** You were living in Frankfurt?

**TD:** We were living in Frankfurt. Yes. And very good friends of ours – one has been his student when I got married in nineteen hundred and twelve [1912] was a professor at the university in Copenhagen, and he had said whenever the time comes that we cannot stay any longer, that we can always come there and live with him and his wife and children until we knew what we can do. And then our friend Carl Siegel. I don't know if you know his name. He together with André Weil, who is in Princeton still are the most famous mathematicians now living. And he at the time was in Göttingen. He was in Frankfurt. But he came to Frankfurt the same year as we came – 1922. But the great difference was he was only twenty-five years old then and came as a full professor and remained up to today a very close friend. So they had arranged – or they had planned – this Jakob Nielsen in Copenhagen and Carl Siegel and Max that they

would get together somehow and plan what to do. So right after this 9<sup>th</sup> of November – a week after that – they all met in Hamburg.

**MEH:** What happened on the ninth of November? Was it a specific event?

**TD:** Well, don't you know this horrible word "holocaust"?

**MEH:** That was when it began.

**TD:** I mean, that was when they smashed all of the windows of Jewish shops and then they set the synagogues on fire. You can see that I believe – if you want to be amused, you can see it on TV one of these days. And you can read about it. Open the newspaper.

**MEH:** I wasn't sure of the date. You know, the exact date.

**TD:** 9<sup>TH</sup> of November 1938.

**MEH:** He knew then that it was not safe to stay.

**TD:** He knew that when he was arrested also on that day but he was sent back. Do I say too much?

**MEH:** No, no.

**TD:** We lived in a house at that time. Our three children were gone at that time. Helmut was in this country and our two girls were in England – in school in England. And so we moved to a small apartment on the second floor of a private home, and the private home belonged to a Jewish family when he was a retired justice of the court of some kind. Anyway at six o'clock in the afternoon the bell rang, and there came two people who told this Dr. Rothschild and my husband to come along with them. And also there are too many details to tell. Anyway I thought

[UNINTEL WORD] now he's gone. And the first thing I did was go to his desk and get all the identification papers, all that I knew. He had them where they were and so on. And called friends to tell them, and they said I shouldn't stay there alone overnight. I should come out where they lived outside of Frankfurt. And then after about an hour those two gentlemen came back. And they had been taken to the police station, and outside of the police station were already big busses filled with people ready to take off. And they came into the police station. Of course, he had been a judge – a juvenile judge. That's what you call it. All the police people knew him. And knew him very well.

**MEH:** This was your friend who owned the house.

**TD:** Who owned the house. Yes. And one of them looked at the clock, and he said, "It is 6:35," or something like that. "We have been told not to accept anyone after 6:30. So you can go home." This shows that there were people like that. So they came home. And then we called – first thing my husband did was he called friend's outside of Frankfurt – Bad Hamborg, it's called. That many who still lives – It's one of the letters I still have to answer – was a student of my husband's in 1922 already. When he came as a freshman to the university at the age of seventeen, and he was married to a Norwegian girl in the meantime. And they had told us "Whenever you want to get away from home, come here." So Max called them and only she was at home. He was still in Frankfurt doing something at the university. And Max asked her did she know what had

happened. And she said yes, she did because the senior class I believe – or several of the classes in the high school in Bad Hamburg – had been taken by their teachers to see the synagogues burn in Bad Hamburg. That we should come out anytime as soon as we could. So that evening we went out there. And then in that evening of the 9<sup>th</sup> of November this Willy Hartner is called long distance Copenhagen to tell our friend Jakob Nielsen that now the time had come. So we spent several days in Bad Hamburg before returning. All this has much more to it but I can't say all of that because it's too much. Willy Hartner, who is a very famous man how as an anthropologist and all sorts of things has written lots of books that are written about him and lives still in Frankfurt. And they decided that Jakob Nielsen would come to Hamburg sometime the following week and our friend Carl Siegel would also be in Hamburg. Max would also be in Hamburg. So they met on Hamburg and then they decided that we would leave and start what had to be done – what had to be started. And so finally at – just skipping all these things in between unless you have special questions – we left Germany on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January for Denmark. They had then to get busy to get permission for us to stay in Denmark. They got that permission only if we had another place to go to after three months' stay because they were afraid that they were overrun by immigrants. And so Jakob Nielsen called a mathematician friend in Oslo – Paul Hegor [PH] – to tell him what the situation was and my husband had been a member of the Norwegian

Society – Norwegian gewissenschaft for Scientists [PH] with the honorable president who was at that time the Crown Prince Olav, who is still the king now. There again we got permission only for three months if we knew where we would go. And we knew at that time that we would go on to England where our two daughters were and through the people that our older daughter already knew. We knew we would stay, and we planned to stay in England because we loved England and we thought it would be fine. So all this was straightened out so we could leave then Germany on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January. And then we said goodbye to our relatives in Hamburg, to my parents in Berlin and went on to Denmark.

**MEH:** And then to Oslo from there? Where did you go –?

**TD:** In Denmark. Well, we went to stay with this friend Jakob Nielsen, who was married and had three children. Owned a little home in Heerup [PH], that's one of the parts that belongs to Copenhagen. And we were – we knew we could stay there for three months. We knew that from there we could go on to Norway and also stay with friends there. Norway was always a favorite country of my husband's. He loved it and he had gone there from very young years and he even owned some land in southern Norway in the same area where that infamous Mr. Quisling came from. You know –you're too young. He was a –he was traitor to his country.

**MEH:** So, how did you end up coming to the United States instead of going to England.

**TD:** That was very simple because we couldn't go to England because of the war. You know the war started in August '39. Also in the meantime while we were still in Denmark, my husband got a letter from a mathematician friend in Oslo. No, he was in Trondheim at the Institute of Technology [Norwegian Institute of Science and Technology / Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet (NTNU)]. Some more hot coffee?

**MEH:** Please.

**TD:** And who said Viggo Brun was his name. He still lives, I believe, in his nineties. He was telling my husband that he was always wanted to take a year's leave of absence to take a trip around the world, and he had never been able – now, would you help yourself to everything and if you think of something that I might have, please say so.

**MEH:** The cheese and break is wonderful.

**TD:** We can have something warm from Meals on Wheels which I only have to put in the oven to heat it later on. It depends on how long you can stay.

**MEH:** This is fine.

**TD:** Yeah. And he had never been able to find someone who could take his job for a year and now there was Max. And, of course, Max was delighted to do that particularly because we loved to live in Norway. In the meantime there were already then people who were trying to get a permanent life-long position for him in an Institute of Research Science in Bergen, which is where Grieg comes from – the composer Grieg's

hometown. And that was on its way already that they would get a job where he could work until the end of his life. Well, then, of course, the government had to give permission for Max to stay there full academic year. And, of course, since he was a member of the Academy – Norwegian Academy of Scientists [Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters / Det Norske Videnskaps-Akaedemi (DNVA)] – that’s what it’s called – he got it. So we stayed our three months with our friends in Norway and in Oslo and outside of Oslo. And then went on to Trondheim a little earlier than we actually had planned to because in the meantime the dear Nazis had invaded Czechoslovakia and our Danish mathematician friends – do you know who Niels Bohr was? He was a physicist and his brother was a mathematician and belonged to that group of international mathematicians. Mathematicians international are friends whether they know each other very well or not. But Niels Bohr – Harald Bohr, we had known for many years very well. And he got nervous. And Niels Bohr got nervous because he said, “Now they have invaded Czechoslovakia they can just as well invade our country and then you cannot get out. So go as soon as you can.” So we left earlier than we had planned and went to Norway. And they we stayed in and around Oslo, and then when the time came that our friend moved out of his apartment in Trondheim, and we moved on to Trondheim and then we stayed in Trondheim. When the semester started in September or August – I don’t know, Max lectured there. And at that time the war was



still away from Norway, and we could correspond with everybody, and they always called me – my nephews – Aunt Toni is the chain that holds the family together because all relatives, the young [PH] relatives mostly, the younger generation, they were out of Germany in England, in Newfoundland, in Peru, in Venezuela. In many countries. And they all could write to me in Norway because Norway was neutral, and I could send it on to anywhere. So we stayed there, and then our friend Carl Siegel, whom I mentioned times, who was not Jewish but who absolutely could not stand the Nazi government, and he had a permanent invitation to come when he couldn't stand it any longer to Princeton to the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton where he had been before. And then when we left Germany – I mentioned that he was Professor in Frankfurt in 1922 on. He was not Jewish. And we became very, very close friends. He was much, much younger than my husband was and also the other mathematicians. And we became very, very close friends and he absolutely – he was one year '34-'35 he was visiting professor at Princeton Institute, and they urged him not to go back to this terrible Germany. And he says he does not – and he does go back because he wants to continue his work with Dehn. And the name of the other was Hellinger in Frankfurt. And they told him come back whenever you cannot do it any longer. And he came back to Frankfurt and as always before ,we went – Max Dehn, Carl Siegel, Ernst Hellinger and Toni Dehn. Every week we took the streetcar out into the mountains outside

of – south of Frankfurt in the Taunus Mountains, and we continued doing that. And so – and they couldn't do anything about it or the Ministry of Education, they didn't dare do anything about it. So, they did something that is never done in Germany with the university people. They are not transferred. There are lists made. Out of this list the Ministry chooses one and then they ask that one would you want to come? They transferred him to Göttingen just to get him away from us. It didn't do much good because he kept coming anyway, at least once a month. And so then they decided in Hamburg to go. And Siegel – when we left Germany, Siegel said, "I have an invitation to lecture in Copenhagen and in Oslo. I have not accepted the invitation yet because I still can stand it. But when the time comes that I cannot stand it anymore, then I will let them know somehow that now I am ready to come. And that was the message he gave us to pass on in Denmark and in Norway. And then that time came and he managed to get permission to go and lecture in Denmark and Norway without any further questions. That's a whole long story in itself and I can't go into that.

**MEH:** He came eventually back to Princeton?

**TD:** And he came back to Scandinavia, and he had not taken – he had not taken his birth certificate along. He had planned all this very carefully because he thought if they – and if he took a lot of luggage – and he thought that if the Nazis at the German-Danish border see that I even have my birth certificate, they might get suspicious. And so he couldn't –

I don't know. Oh, yes, of course, he needed an American visa, of course, and he couldn't get that without his birth certificate. He had the passport, but not the visa. So in Copenhagen they took him to all the places that were necessary. They wired or called Princeton and then he got – oh, they witnessed that he was born on such and such a date instead of the – and so he got his visa to come to America before he came to – before that he came to Trondheim to visit us and also to lecture in Trondheim. Then he was to give a lecture in Oslo on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April. And while he was visiting us, we got a telephone – he had his passage all set. We got a telephone call from a travel office in Trondheim saying they couldn't take Professor Siegel. He wasn't a Jewish immigrant, and he had booked on a Swedish boat, and they are allowed to take only Jewish immigrants. German. So they couldn't take him. So he got a – he was terribly upset because he's a very nervous – very, very nervous person and he said, "Okay then, I have to see what I can do." And they told him there is a boat going out on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April from Oslo. Maybe they can take you. And another one is going out on the 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> of April. And Max said, "Now, you have to take the one that goes out on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April." My husband said that to him. He said, "I can't do that because I promised them a lecture for the 9<sup>th</sup> of April." I believe Max said, "Then you will have to lecture before that." So he left as earlier than planned. And he came to Oslo and so on. His story ends where the German invasion – something was expected anyhow. And he got the last boat out

of Oslo on the – he had to take the train across the mountains because the boat he was to go on had left. In the meantime – and he had to take the train over the mountains from Oslo to Bergen and he got on that boat in Bergen on Sunday the – no, on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> of April and on Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup> of April the Germans came. So that was that story.

**MEH:** So you were still there when the Germans came.

**TD:** We were there when the Germans came. We were there but the Germans were so busy because the Norwegians – I don't know whether you have ever had a chance to read any books about it.

**MEH:** They had a very strong underground didn't they?

**TD:** They had – now the Germans were able to come because this Mr. Quisling, who was a traitor, had managed to convince a large group of people to join his *Nasjonal Samling*, it was called. Nazi party. And in every part of Norway – west coast and south and around Oslo – there were groups of Nazis who were there to welcome the Nazis when they came to land and so in the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> of April at 4 o'clock our telephone rang and my husband answered the phone in Trondheim and I heard him say in Norwegian "No, you must be crazy." And that person said "Well, you can just look out of the window. If the snow stops maybe for a moment, you will see that the harbor is full of warships – German warships." Well, then later on a Norwegian friend of ours and my husband walked down to the harbor and there were Nazis and Norwegian girls already making friends with German soldiers. And so on.

But then, the resistance was so strong that they didn't bother about anything but just to conquer the country.

**MEH:** So, how long after that did you stay?

**TD:** Well, they came the 9<sup>th</sup> of April. Then the country was cut off from the outer world for six weeks. No mail and nothing. And one postcard came through but also much, much later which was written in Germany but on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April with some messages for our son who was in this country already. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July we got a telegram – 4<sup>th</sup> of July – yeah. We got a telegram offering my husband a position at the University of Idaho in Pocatello, Idaho.

**MEH:** Did this come through your friend in Princeton?

**TD:** Well, that comes a moment later. And the consul – American consul in Oslo would get in touch with us. So we knew that there are enough people in this country would try to get us out. It came through – it actually came through a friend of mine – a lady friend of mine who was a doctor, and I knew her in Frankfurt already and she was also Jewish. And she had come to this country and was a doctor at the state hospital in Idaho. And she knew what our situation was, of course, and she knew [UNINTEL WORD] that our son was in this country at that time. Or did I say that was nineteen hundred and forty, forty-one. Yeah. At that time he, of course, did not have a practice at all. But anyhow – and my mother had quite a lot of relatives because some of her uncles in the eighteen hundred and forties had come to this country and settled in

Savannah, Georgia. And so there were cousins of my mother's in this country who Helmut knew about it at least. And there were also relatives from the other side – two brothers in Cleveland. And so they all got together. And there was this Carl Siegel, mathematician and Courant and Hellinger. They were mathematicians. They all get together because Pocatello had let them know that they would be very happy to have a German mathematician of some fame but they couldn't pay. They didn't have money enough to pay. So they all got together that they got the money guaranteed for one year and also got the money to pay for our – to pay for our transportation because we were not supposed to take any money out of Norway. We didn't have much anyway because we left Germany in January of 1939 – yeah – with ten German marks each. And then whatever we needed our friends had a fund started for us so that we had some spending money. And well in the American consul in Oslo didn't move and I got sort of impatient that we weren't probably – do that maybe easier than [UNINTEL WORD] Max said, "Wait. If they say so, he will come." And we didn't hear anything so I don't know what we did. I think we wrote a letter. Max wrote a letter to him saying that we were supposed to hear from him. He got a letter back from him that "Okay, yeah." He had the telegram, but the telegram didn't say anything for what length of time that appointment was nor what you would get paid. So I took that letter and I went to the Nazis in one of their offices in Trondheim because a man couldn't go. They would keep him. But with

women at that time they didn't do anything yet. And I told him and I told him I have to send a telegram to the United States to tell what the situation is. So they gave me permission to do that, and I did that and then later when we were in this country already we heard the president of the University of Idaho wrote a very – wrote or wired, I do not know – wrote a very, very strong letter or telegram to the consul in Oslo saying this a [UNINTEL WORD] state university and a state university has no reason to give any details. He is appointed and this takes care of him. So then we finally heard from that man. And he made any – he made it difficult at any step of the way he could. Apparently he wanted –

**MEH:** At the American consulate.

**TD:** Apparently he wanted to protect this country from too many people to come. But in the long run I make no sense to tell all the difficulties he tried to make. He tried to make it impossible. And with the help of – do you know who Fritjof Nanson [PH] was?

**MEH:** [Negative]

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

[MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS NOT TRANSCRIBED]

**MEH:** When you left –

**TD:** Oslo. When we left Norway –

**MEH:** – you came by way or Russia.

**TD:** We came by way of Russia. By way of Sweden. The only most unpleasant experience that we ever had with the Nazis was at the border

between Norway and Sweden. We had to get off of course because our luggage like everybody else's, but it just so happened that we were on that train the only ones that went on to Sweden. And they searched our luggage and were very, very nasty. Obviously trying to find a reason why we wouldn't be able to catch that train, and then they could keep us. Well, it doesn't matter again to go into details. It also would show that there was one person among those Nazis who was a real human being and understood what the situation was and saw to it that we did get out. And then we went to Sweden, and we were supposed to leave Sweden after a few days, but we still had to get the Russian visa. Japanese we could get in Oslo, but not the Russian. Did I say that we went through Japan?

**MEH:** No. You went through Russia and then to Japan.

**TD:** Russia, Siberia, Japan.

**MEH:** How long did that take?

**TD:** We left Oslo the 30<sup>th</sup> of October, and we arrived in San Francisco the 1st of January. So it took all of November and all of December, with in between waiting for almost three weeks in Stockholm before we could get that Russian – that plane that took us to Russia. Then we were in Moscow a few days, and that was very interesting. Very interesting. And with a guide – a Russian young girl who spoke fluent German and French and English. And when I asked her had she been in any one of the countries, “No. Night classes.” And then we were in Russia and in



Siberia my husband got terribly sick with pneumonia on the train and survived it. And then in Vladivostok we had several days because we had to wait for a boat that took us from Vladivostock to the Japanese coast. And all this has so many details that I cannot tell you in – I can just give you –

**MEH:** We should come on to the United States.

**TD:** And then we were on the boat to the United States. And then we were in Hawaii on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, just for ten hours. And friends of friends in Sweden had invited us to spend the time – the ten hours with them. They met us at boat and they took us around Pearl Harbor and the whole area was peaceful as anything. The harbor was full with American warships. And the lady of the husband, they lived there for good, said, “Now there you can see, nobody can do us anything.” That was a year before. That was still nineteen hundred and forty [1940]. Ya. Well, then we went on to – left there the 24<sup>th</sup> of December and arrived in San Francisco the 1st of January '41. And we had a nephew in San Francisco with his wife and a son. That son is now Professor of City Planning at East Lansing – Michigan State University. And we stayed in San Francisco for about two weeks just to catch our breath. And then they put us on the train, and we went by train to Pocatello, Idaho. And they had found a one room – I believe, yeah. There was a bed that came out of a closet, you know. A little apartment. That was so that we could pay for it. Our friends in Olechef [PH] had sent us a check so that we had

some money and so there we were. Then Max started to teach mathematics. Also philosophy in Pocatello. And we liked it. What we liked best was that it was such a beautiful location. Mountains all around and since my husband was a great hiker and mountain climber, all the free time he had he could walk and hike. And then the first summer our friend Carl Siegel came. That was the summer of '41. Carl Siegel and our friend Ernst Hellinger, who in the meantime had been in a German concentration camp in Dachau and really it was for some reason we never found out it was. And he came to this country. They came and visited us. Our friend Siegel had bought one of those old Fords and with that he traveled all across the country. And then we did not know what would happen then. Then when the summer came – we lived in that little apartment and we invited faculty members for wine and crackers and cheese after supper, of course. And we were invited quite a lot. Met the people. And they were very kind, all of them. Students were more than fifty percent Mormons because Pocatello is quite close to the border of Utah. And that was a very interesting experience, of course. And then we didn't know what was going to happen. We knew that our friends would try to find a place where he could continue teaching. An offer then came from the Institute of Technology Illinois – Institute of Technology in Chicago. And then in between there was an International Conference of Mathematicians in Chicago, and Max got a grant from somewhere so that both of us could go there, and then we could also travel a little more.

We also visited the – and he was invited to lecture University of Iowa, for instance. And they thought maybe they could get a – but anyway, we ended up in Chicago in the next year. And my husband did not like it very much. The first thing was that we lived on the South Side and the Institute of Technology is – you know the area where it is probably. And he hated public transportation. Absolutely. But it was too far to walk. So he had to take buses every day, and just he didn't like the atmosphere and so on. And then – but we were there for the year not knowing what would happen the next year. And then he got an offer to teach at the famous St. John's College in Maryland. Annapolis, Maryland. And he went there to visit and he was a little doubtful whether it was the right place. You know about St. John's College, of course. Whether that was the right place, but since there was nothing else and he hated Chicago and the Institute. So I went in the meantime while he was teaching in Chicago, I went to the School of the Art Institute because before I got married – that is between sixteen and nineteen years – I was married when I was nineteen, I got an art education in Germany which I gave up when I married because university professors' wives didn't do that. And so I went back to the School of the Art Institute in Chicago and took courses in what I had planned to do that was advertising design. So I sent there for the school year, and in the meantime he had had that offer from Annapolis. And we decided that – he was sort of doubtful whether that was the right place for him – we decided that at the end of the

school year I would be ready to look for a job in Chicago and wouldn't it be wiser for me to do that. And we kept that little apartment on the South Side, and he would see whether it was for a longer period of time.

Because coming there as strangers, I wouldn't find a job there. So we did that and I found a job. Then my final job which I had for almost three years was at Montgomery Ward in the advertising, very primitive work. But anyhow it paid my living there on my own and made it possible for him to stay there. And he disliked it. He disliked the philosophy of the college – that every –

**MEH:** How was that? What did he dislike about it?

**TD:** Now, he taught mathematics and philosophy. For instance, it happened that at seven o'clock in the morning a colleague who was a professor of religion, I believe, would knock at his door. Could he explain him this and this in mathematics because today he had to talk mathematics. And he knew nothing about it. And every teacher had to be able to talk about every subject, and students had to read Greek authors and Latin authors in the original language. They didn't know any Greek and any Latin. And he felt the whole thing was a hoax. And so he couldn't get along either with – I cannot remember now the names of the two on top. Very famous people. You know their names, of course. So while he was there, somebody came visiting – one of the professors. Dr. Klein was his name, I believe was his name, who originally was German. And one of the professors of Black Mountain College was a friend of this professor and

he came and visited him. And, of course, he met Max. And he asked whether – the man who was visiting him was Professor Erwin Straus in Lexington.

**MEH:** Right.

**TD:** Do you know whether he still lives?

**MEH:** He died about two or three years ago.

**TD:** He is.

**MEH:** He died –

**TD:** Two or three years ago. Does his wife Trudi –?

**MEH:** She died last year – about a year ago.

**TD:** Ahh.

**MEH:** But that's how you heard about Black Mountain, was through the Stauses.

**TD:** About when?

**MEH:** You learned about Black Mountain through the Strauses.

**TD:** Through Dr. Straus. Dr. Straus, hearing that Max didn't like it there, said to Max "We need a mathematician because our math professor Theodore Dreier – Ted Dreier – you know his name? Who also was their main money maker – I mean, traveling around for money and so on – would like to be relieved. So Max visited Black Mountain and was delighted with everything. The atmosphere and the situation. And so on and so on. And so he accepted that, and he finished in St. John's, of course, at the end of 1944, came back to Chicago where I still had that

little apartment and stayed, and then in January '45 he went to Black Mountain.

**MEH:** Right. You didn't come with him immediately. You kept your job.

**TD:** Oh, no, because we didn't know whether that would be – for how long that would be, and we felt I shouldn't give up something which I knew I could continue which would give me enough money to live and would give him a room to stay if it didn't go on. So we decided, and it was very wise that we did. I didn't go there until March of 1947.

**MEH:** That's what I had. That's good.

**TD:** Yeah.

**MEH:** You visited before then.

**TD:** Who told you that?

**MEH:** I've read all of the college record, the college the papers. So I have made notes.

**TD:** I must come to New York and interview you. Although I will not come to New York. And he went – while he was there in 1946 already, he was asked whether he would be interested to come as visiting professor for a semester, I believe, to the University of Wisconsin. And when he talked it over with Ted Dreier [TECHNICAL INTERRUPTION] And they said they would give him permission to do that, but would it be possible for him to come – I believe it was once a month or twice a month – from Madison to Black Mountain for some lectures. And so he went for that year – for that half year, semester. Liked it very much and always went back to

Black Mountain. And went on there and then in 1948 or earlier – 1947 – they must have asked him, yeah, of course, in 1947 would it be possible for him to come for the full academic year '48 / '49.

**MEH:** Right.

**TD:** And they assured him and Black Mountain College that they would be happy if after that he would come back. And then we decided that then I would stop in 1947 already in Chicago and go after Easter vacation or something like that, go back with him to Black Mountain. So in the spring of 1947.

**MEH:** I had some questions. You came in the spring of '47. And then you both stayed there for the summer of '47. That summer. And then the next year which was '47-'48 you were there.

**TD:** We stayed there in that spring – in that fall of 1947 I went to Switzerland – to Europe altogether, because my old mother still lived in Lugano at that time and my sister lived there with her. And still lives there – my sister. And then I came back to Black Mountain. That was also quite a story in itself.

**MEH:** So, you were gone for the fall.

**TD:** I was gone September / October. I believe – I had to leave by boat. I went over by boat, on a French boat. Grasse [PH] was the name. And I had to leave on the same boat the first week of December because I promised my husband I would be back for Christmas. At that time the French had decided to strike and I couldn't – the boat was of course not

leaving and so on. It was a very important story, of course, but it's indirect. I made it by plane then. [VISITOR ARRIVES. COMMENTS NOT TRANSCRIBED. BRINGS FRUIT AND CAKE.]

**MEH:** Okay. You went for – I want to get my chronology straight.

**TD:** I went to Europe and came back and then we stayed until the spring of the – or through the summer of '48.

**MEH:** You were there the summer when de Kooning was there. And Cage.

**TD:** Oh, yeah, Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah.

**MEH:** And then from '48 to '49, that's the year you went to the University of Wisconsin.

**TD:** Then in '48, we didn't go anywhere special.

**MEH:** The '49 summer session did you go to Notre Dame in South Bend. The summer of 1949, did you go to Notre Dame in South Bend?

**TD:** Exactly. Then '48 we went to Wisconsin without going back and forth between Black Mountain, and, of course, he got a very good pay there and which he didn't get at Black Mountain, as you know. And then Arnold Ross, who now lives outside of Columbus retired or not retired. I don't remember and asked him whether he would appear to teach six weeks summer course at Notre Dame which we accepted which was very well paid and which was a very nice experience except that it was beastly hot. And he was very satisfied with that. And then we were able through that year in Wisconsin and that six weeks in Notre Dame we were able to have money enough to go to the West Coast and visit our relatives



starting in Seattle where at that time a younger brother of his was still living with a wife and son.

**MEH:** Had you known – had you had experiences before with a community like Black Mountain?

**TD:** No.

**MEH:** A college like Black Mountain.

**TD:** No, we – because German university life is so entirely different. In the first place the professor goes there in time for – when his classes start. He stays there long enough that when students like to talk to him they are available or they tell the students “Come and visit me at home.” And if he didn’t have any classes in the afternoon, then he stayed at home in the afternoon and could do whatever – or he had time when the children came back. Helmut our son has a sister who was a year-and-a-half younger than he is – to go and – the youngest one who lives in Auburn, New York is three-and-a-half years younger. So the two older ones were almost like twins. Or he could go for walks with them. And, no, we visited back and forth with colleagues, but, no, nothing. Our life was different and insofar as Max got very close to all the students. Very close to them. They knew they could always talk to him and many came to the house. And once very semester we went – I say “we” because I was almost always included. He was the only one who had a wife available. Two were not married – were bachelors – Siegel and Hellinger – and a third and a fourth one had wives who were not well enough. So all of the life

with the students – most of it – was in our house. That explains also my close connection to the ones who are still living and my ease to love to be with young people, which I have plenty here, of course.

**MEH:** So how was Black Mountain different?

**TD:** Black Mountain – Max was offered – by the way, he was offered Berea, Kentucky at one time and that was before Black Mountain. Long before. That was when we still were in Idaho, and he was corresponding back and forth. And when through the correspondence he found out that a teacher at Berea, Kentucky was expected to be available for the students day and night, Saturdays and Sundays. And by that time Max was maybe sixty-two years old or something like that, and he felt this was too much. He needed time when he knew nobody needed him. That's why he turned that down.

**MEH:** Did he have that time at Black Mountain?

**TD:** Well, they knew, of course, that they couldn't come at midnight or so but otherwise they came whenever they wanted to talk to him. And he went on walks with them. This was the wonderful –

**MEH:** Everyone remembers Max Dehn for his walks in the mountains.

**TD:** Oh, is that right.

**MEH:** He took everybody.

**TD:** You must tell me or write it down for me. I had a pad there lying for you.

**MEH:** I can write it in mine and give you the page.

**TD:** Oh, here. Write down if you may all the Black Mountain people, not only students, on any piece of paper in here.

**MEH:** Oh, I have talked to three or four hundred.

**TD:** How did you find out about them?

**MEH:** Each one tells me about two more.

**TD:** How did you get to write another book about Black Mountain College?

**MEH:** Let me tell you later when the tape –

**TD:** Yeah, yeah. You're right.

**MEH:** Everyone remembers Max Dehn because of his walks and his hikes in the country.

**TD:** His what?

**MEH:** His walks through the mountains. Was he interested in plants in Germany or was it just here?

**TD:** Oh, very much so. No. he was what you call assistant professor in Münster in Westphalia as a very young man and had a group of – I believe there were three or four young teachers, and they went for walks a lot. One of them was a botanist or a professor of botany, I believe. And through him he got interested when he was less than thirty years old, and he always knew plants. And he – this was his very great interest. He introduced me to that because I grew up in Berlin – big town – and knew nothing about, nothing much anyway, about nature. And I learned all the names of the flowers, and when I come back and I will this maybe May, [UNINTEL NAME] and [UNINTEL NAME] walk through the woods there

and I see a flower and I cannot think of the name and I say, "Let's just wait a moment." And I stand there a moment and the name comes back. And I have lots of books on wildflowers and diaries. He kept a diary. He had done that for many, many years, and in the diary he wrote every spring the date of when certain flowers came out in certain places or whether they had grown underneath and came out in a little different place. That was his interest. And when we came back from the war, the first thing he would do, he would go to the library before going into the apartment in Black Mountain and look up if he wasn't quite sure about a flower, what it was. And he would go – for instance this Trueman – this is how my brain works when I want to find a name I cannot find. I cannot find the name of his university because of course I know it – with Trueman, they would talk mathematics. He would work on his thesis walking through the woods. And then it would happen that Max stopped because he had discovered a flower down there. And he first had to kneel down and make sure that it was the one he expected, of course.

**MEH:** I'm especially interested in the relationship between Max Dehn and Josef Albers because of Albers' –

**TD:** Of who?

**MEH:** – Josef Albers – because of Albers' work with geometry in prints. Students say that they talked a great deal together. How would you describe their relationship?

**TD:** They were very good friends and talked and joked together. And every now and then Albers would come with a piece of graph paper and have a problem and could Max help him with it. So many of Alberses things started with that. I didn't – did I put the big envelope Albers and Asawa there? [PAUSE IN TAPING]

**MEH:** Do you mean his *Despite Straight Lines*?

**TD:** Yes. That is supposed to –

**MEH:** Here's a little book.

**TD:** Nope.

**MEH:** Here. [PAUSE IN TAPING]

**TD:** No, this was a very, very nice and kindly relationship. They differed sometimes. Now this is the picture that is behind you.

**MEH:** Who did this?

**TD:** A friend of mine who's a professor of psychology at the college here in CW [Case Western Reserve University] and actually a mathematician by studies. He did that for me and it's very well-done.

**MEH:** It is.

**TD:** They differed on – Albers was very strict in many respects and very demanding on the students and so on and Max was not. Max felt one can take things a little easier. But they had tremendous respect and like for each other.

**MEH:** How much – there would be no way – would there be any way that I could pinpoint the relationship more clearly in terms of knowing exactly –

I mean, I would like to know really what influence there was in the relationship, what influence in terms of Albers working out his geometric problems and his visual problems. Max Dehn was a geometer. His interest is primarily in geometry.

**TD:** My husband. Oh yeah, Oh, yeah. He is – if you talk to mathematicians – people who have studied mathematics – they will tell you it is a special field in geometry nowadays is topology and he was the first one who worked in that topology. Yeah.

**MEH:** What did you do at Black Mountain?

**TD:** I worked in – now you could do a lot of different things – help in different places. I worked in –

**[END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO. BEGINNING OF TAPE 2, SIDE 1.]**

**TD:** [REFERRING TO PHOTOGRAPHS] This is in Colorado, where we spent the last year of my husband's life, outside of Estes Park. Climbing Mountains.

**MEH:** Last year – is that '51 through '52.

**TD:** The summer of 1951. Summer of 1951. We spent two months outside of Estes Park with mathematician friends of ours.

**MEH:** Let me make a note of that here. Because I think I had you at Black Mountain that summer. I had a question by '51 Summer Session. You were in Colorado?

**TD:** Colorado, Estes Park. On the other side where there was not such traffic.

**MEH:** But then you came back to Black Mountain in the fall.

**TD:** Then in the fall we came back to Black Mountain, yes.

**MEH:** Did you have a camera? Did you have a camera? Who made the pictures?

**TD:** I made almost all of them. This is Idaho – all Idaho, winter in Idaho, which was wonderful. This is also Idaho – all of that.

**MEH:** This is Black Mountain.

**TD:** I could turn around and [UNINTEL]. This is Black Mountain already. Yeah, of course. This is Black Mountain. This is the house where we lived. The house doesn't exist anymore. Have you been at Black Mountain where the college was?

**MEH:** Yes.

**TD:** Oh, you have? Recently?

**MEH:** [AFFIRMATIVE]

**TD:** I wonder whether the same man is still in charge of it – Carl?

**MEH:** Pickering? Yes.

**TD:** Pickering, ja. Ah-ha. This is Black Mountain.

**MEH:** Do you know who this student is?

**TD:** This is my – His niece, Franziska is her name. She's a weaver.

**MEH:** Franziska Mayer – what is her name, last name?

**TD:** Franziska Mayer.

**MEH:** I didn't know – I've written, I've corresponded with her.

**TD:** And she didn't tell me. Is that right?

**MEH:** In Peru?

**TD:** Yeah. How long [UNINTEL]?

**MEH:** I've never been there. I just wrote a letter.

**TD:** Is that right? Did you get an answer?

**MEH:** Yes.

**TD:** On what you wanted to know? Isn't that right. Well, she is one—all our family.

**MEH:** She was there one year. She was at Black Mountain one year.

**TD:** At Black Mountain. And then she felt she had to go on to Peru. Her parents – her mother perished in Auschwitz and her father died in the Theresienstadt concentration camp and there were three children. And she felt that she should be where her two brothers are and that was Peru. And she started a weaving shop there with – I was there at least twice. And last year I was again in Peru, but my doctor didn't allow me to go to Huancayo because of the altitude. And she had fifteen looms there in the end, and now the new government in Peru made it absolutely impossible for her with all the – all the regulations that they have. So now she has just stopped it and is hoping to start teaching weaving in Huancayo. Yeah.

[TECHNICAL INTERRUPTION]

**TD:** In the weaving shop.

**MEH:** During their sabbatical. While they were gone.



**TD:** Yeah, yeah. That's right. Yeah, yeah. And then she slowly went through the States to California to visit our folks in California and then she went to Peru and she stayed there.

**MEH:** [OVERTALK] This picture I've seen. This picture I like very much.

**TD:** Yeah, yeah, Johanna is –

**MEH:** Who's that? Do you know who that is?

**TD:** I don't remember his name, I'm afraid. But I don't remember his name. And Albers and Max. Yeah, yeah, that's a very beautiful one. No, I do not know all the names of all these people. I should know this one.

**MEH:** That's Leo Amino.

**TD:** Oh, yeah. You know more than I do, I'm sure.

**MEH:** Some things you know I don't know.

**TD:** No, this is where we lived. It's where the barracks were. They got that after the war.

**MEH:** You lived in the barracks. Up the hill?

**TD:** We lived – No, at the very end before you go in the woods there.

**MEH:** At the very top?

**TD:** It's not top. It's low.

**MEH:** Oh low – down near the lake, near the dining hall, before the dining hall area?

**TD:** No, you go from the dining hall you go along the lake and then you come to one building – [OVERTALK]

**MEH:** There's the library down there.

**TD:** That's right, but further down toward the woods.

**MEH:** On the other side of the Studies Building.

**TD:** Yes, on the other side of the Studies Building.

**MEH:** I see. Right. Who is that?

**TD:** This is a friend of ours who had nothing to do, who visited us – a physicist who visited us there. Yeah (?) Fehr (?) was his name. That is the barracks. And this is the view from where we later on lived.

**MEH:** Right. Looking at the farmhouse.

**TD:** Yeah, that's right.

**MEH:** Who made this picture?

**TD:** I do not know. No. One of the students probably. This – Have you ever met –

**MEH:** Lore Kadden? Yes.

**TD:** Have you? Recently?

**MEH:** Yes. I saw her last summer.

**TD:** If you have a chance to see her again, do give her my love. I completely lost track – completely. They live near Princeton.

**MEH:** Princeton, right.

**TD:** Does she still weave?

**MEH:** [AFFIRMATIVE]

**TD:** Good. I like her.

**MEH:** This is from that summer – Buckminster Fuller, Beaumont Newhall, and Bimbus Schlesinger.

**TD:** Yeah. Somewhere else is a bigger picture of that – maybe in one of the envelopes with –

**MEH:** I think in one of those, right.

**TD:** With Buckminster Fuller, yeah. This is our youngest daughter when she visited us there. It's very good. This is very good. This is Mrs. Bodky, yeah. I didn't take these, see, because –

**MEH:** A different negative size.

**TD:** It's a different, different camera, yes.

**MEH:** Is this your son? Who is this?

**TD:** No. I don't know. Oh, this is in Madison. This was made in Madison. I don't know who that is, yeah.

**MEH:** These are not Black Mountain.

**TD:** No, this is the summer in Madison. Madison mathematicians and friends of ours. Yes.

**MEH:** This is Black Mountain now.

**TD:** I believe this appears also Black Mountain.

**MEH:** Then we go over here and this – we're back at Black Mountain here.

**TD:** This is – this is where the Merricks lived. This house has been torn down. Yeah. This is Mrs. Merrick and Johanna and Max. And this is the same road there, past the Merrick's farm, and these are two Merrick children. [UNINTEL] is this one here.

**MEH:** There's a picture, yeah. That's good. You didn't make this picture?

**TD:** No, somebody else made that. Maybe one of the new – maybe one of the Dreiers. Maybe Ted Dreier.

**MEH:** This also is very good.

**TD:** [AFFIRMATIVE]. This is a beautiful picture. I think Ted Dreier did that or Beaumont Newhall.

**MEH:** Beaumont Newhall. I have a feeling with this size negative, this may be Beaumont Newhall's.

**TD:** Yeah, yeah. This I took. This here I took for fun because it was so funny, and then I thought, well, maybe I can get my big nose also, so I did this. [LAUGHTER] Now this is the kind of thing, of course, where I was always along helping because there were always things that one could do.

**MEH:** That was farming? Packing tomatoes or – ?

**TD:** Yeah. And M.C. Richards, of course.

**MEH:** Now where is M.C.? Oh I see.

**TD:** [LAUGHS] And the Jennerjahns, do you see them? Betty?

**MEH:** Yes. Yes, I see them. Do you know who that is?

**TD:** Yeah, that is the librarian, Nell Rice. Yes, yeah. Who was married to John Rice who came there. Yeah. This is outside of Jalo's house.

**MEH:** And who is this?

**TD:** My youngest daughter. Yeah. And this is the house where we lived when he died. The Cork –

**MEH:** What did he die of?

**TD:** Pulmonary embolism. Just like nothing.

**MEH:** It was his heart.

**TD:** No it was not his heart.

**MEH:** No, pulmonary, it was pulmonary embolism.

**TD:** Lung.

**MEH:** His lung.

**TD:** Blood clot that got into his lung.

**MEH:** Oh, I see. So it was very sudden. Very fast.

**TD:** Absolutely sudden. He was, if you don't know that –

**MEH:** I thought he had been ill. He hadn't been ill?

**TD:** No, not a moment. Not a moment. Three hours, five hours maybe. He was to come to Berea where Helmut had his practice since 1950 to meet a girl who apparently was very fond of Helmut, and Helmut wasn't quite sure really and he wanted Max to meet her because he was very very fond of Lore Kadden but he felt he couldn't expect Lore to want to settle down with her weaving in a small place like Berea. Well he – And he was to leave for Berea on that same day when he died. He was to leave in the afternoon. I was to go to the station to get the ticket – somebody would have taken me in a car – so that he would leave in the afternoon and at three o'clock he died. And then Helmut married that girl later on, a few years later. Now this is California where our friend Carl Siegel took us. This is Vera Williams. Do you know anything about her?

**MEH:** She and Paul Williams are no longer together.

**TD:** No, that was a long time I thought.

**MEH:** Then she was in Toronto. I haven't talked to her. And I think she's back in New York now. I'd like to talk to her.

**TD:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah this is this often-mentioned Carl Siegel, who now is back in Germany. This here is this thing that hangs on my window there.

**MEH:** Oh, I see! This one.

**TD:** It comes from the beach on Sanibel Island.

**MEH:** This is back at Black Mountain.

**TD:** This is back at Black Mountain, yeah.

**MEH:** Who is this young man?

**TD:** This is a nephew of my husband's, who visited us there. And this is –  
Yeah, Mrs. Dreier.

**MEH:** [OVERTALK] Bobbie.

**TD:** Bobbie Dreier. And this is Gregory.

**MEH:** Mary Gregory, right. So most of your family got out of Germany. Did most of your family get out?

**TD:** Yeah, most of our family.

**MEH:** You have so many nieces and nephews that they must have –

**TD:** Yes, most of us got out. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Now this is again – this is the picnic place. And this is, was, the reason for my husband's death – the picnic place. My husband was very upset when – and that was already all such poor managing – they had to sell a lot of wood in order to get money. And so the forestry service sent people out and they marked the

trees that should or could be cut down. And Max was terribly upset about that because nature was just everything for him and after the forestry people had been there and marked the trees that were to be cut down with an either white or yellow mark. Max, with Wesley Huss, together, went through the woods again. Max wanted to see the trees that they would cut down. And Max marked the trees that he felt should absolutely not be cut down with either white or yellow, whatever that was, the other color, so that they should not cut those down. And some of them were on this famous picnic place where they built the fires. And then on the day of the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, when he was – no it was a day before he was to go to Berea – we came home from dinner or from the meal, in the middle of the day, and he lay down as usual. It was terribly hot. It was 96 degrees. And on the way home it was a little uphill from the dining hall to where this house was where we lived. And he said, “This cannot be right that the outer temperature is almost the same as the body temperature is – “ see, 96 – “for weeks and weeks.” And it was – for weeks and weeks. And when we have worked on the farm, for instance, always in the summer, we started at five o’clock before the sun came over the mountains. And so he lay down as he always does and all of a sudden I heard him get up and he said, “They are working there and I have to see that they don’t cut down the trees that I marked.” And that was on the picnic – direct on the picnic place. And he got – put his boots on and he left. And then he came back, and the next morning was when I was

supposed to get him a ticket, and the next afternoon he died. And in going over there, there was a little bridge over – you remember that house that I believe Paul Williams designed it, and that was built on the left side of the road into the woods—and there was a little brook right underneath the house and the little bridge was broken. And so he had to walk down into the brook and then up the brook again, and he did it in a hurry. And this must have been when a blood clot – he had varicose veins, we knew that – when a blood must have broken off the veins, and then the next day – And he had a very, very bad what is called stomach pain ,and he got very angry when I said I'd call the doctor because he says “Well a doctor doesn't know as much about – a doctor who has hardly ever seen me doesn't know as much as I know and it is the same thing – that is stomach or gall bladder.” That was it.

**MEH:** Is this his study at Black Mountain?

**TD:** This is his study. His study in the nice apartment that we had.

**MEH:** You did not take this picture, did you?

**TD:** I did, yes.

**MEH:** Oh you did? I'm wondering, because it was a square negative.

**TD:** Maybe I had it developed that way. I don't know. And this was picking strawberries. Again, I cannot remember the name of the boy who then went to Canada for a while. And this of course is Fiore's husband – wife.

**MEH:** Mary.

**TD:** You know them?



**MEH:** [AFFIRMATIVE]

**TD:** Give them my love. Give my love to all these people. I'm so sorry I lost touch, but it was impossible. Now this is Jalo's, one of the grandchildren of Jalo. This was when Max didn't live anymore. I don't know. Maybe it's not. I don't know. No, this was Colorado. This is Colorado. This is all – this is climbing mountains in Colorado, yeah, here. All this is Colorado and friends in Colorado. This is the wife, American wife, of a Chinese mathematician who worked under Max's guidance for his doctor's degree in Madison and so on. All this is [UNINTEL] – that was such a beautiful, beautiful summer. It is phenomenal there. There should be still more.

**MEH:** Here's some more. This is the study at your apartment.

**TD:** Yes. This is the head that is on my desk now and this is - somewhere is the lamp that I have on my desk – the table lamp, yeah. This is – All this is Black Mountain. This is a few weeks only before he died. This is Lisa, but Lisa came after he had passed away.

**MEH:** Yeah, her little boy.

**TD:** Do you know anything about Lisa's son?

**MEH:** I know he was having a problem.

**TD:** I think so.

**MEH:** Yeah, with drugs or something, I've been told. And I saw her recently. But her husband's been very ill so I didn't ask her about her son.

**TD:** Unfortunately I have no way of hearing from these people because my correspondence is just too much. Here, this here, this was taken up on the mountains – on the what did they call it? Everyone knows it. This was the most frequent walk that one would take with visitors. And these two ladies came. One had been – One is a weaver, Mary Something. And he took her up there. This was to the day three weeks before his death. It's a beautiful picture.

**MEH:** What – I was going to ask you something. Oh, do you have negatives?

[OVERTALK]

**TD:** Yes. I do not know why – I was amazed at myself when I found out what a very organized person I was at one time. [TECHNICAL INTERRUPTION] There's one drawer that is full with photographs. You know, when we left Germany, the one thing – the one thing that we took with us from Germany and then from Norway through all our traveling to this country were our photographs.

**MEH:** It makes sense. In fact –

**[END OF RECORDING ON SIDE 1; OTHER SIDE UNRECORDED]**

**[END OF INTERVIEW]**

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT]**