

Interviewee: LEO KRIKORIAN
Interviewer: MARY EMMA HARRIS
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[BEGINNING OF CASSETTE 1]

MEH: [GIVES IDENTIFICATION] – Leo. How did you come to be at Black Mountain College?

LK: Well, it was really a kind of accident. I met this girl in Los Angeles, and we had a cup of coffee and we talked. She talked about Black Mountain College for maybe five, ten minutes, and I really got interested and she gave me the address, so I wrote them a letter. I sent them photographs I had at that time, to enter, you know.

MEH: Photographs you had made?

LK: Yeah.

MEH: Where were you living?

LK: I was in Los Angeles at the time.

MEH: Were you just out of high school?

LK: No, no. I was going to photo school. It was toward the end of photo school. I went two years at the Art Center School. It was a very famous photo school.

MEH: And so you – she was convincing enough you decided to try Black Mountain?

LK: Well, the thing is, you didn't need any requirements to enter. See, I had never been to college or anything. I had no – what do they call it, when you've got to

send in – some kind of record of what you have been doing, right? – So regular colleges, you know, to go you've got to take certain classes and all that and Black Mountain College was absolutely free, you see. So that interested me.

MEH: [ADJUSTMENT]. – Okay, start over.

LK: I drove back to Black Mountain College in a Model R Ford. It took two weeks.

MEH: From California?

LK: Yeah, from Los Angeles. It was a Model A Ford. A Model A Ford only cruised about thirty-forty miles an hour. Yeah.

MEH: First, let me go back a little bit. Had you been in service at that point? – That was '40s [OVERTALK]

LK: Yeah, I went to school on the GI Bill.

MEH: Oh, okay. So you were not just out of high school. You had been out of school for several years.

LK: Yeah. Maybe four years. I don't know. I was maybe like twenty-three, twenty-four years old. Yeah.

MEH: So you drove from California in your Model A.

LK: Yeah, yeah.

MEH: Did you have any idea what to expect?

LK: No, no idea. [LAUGHS] I got there early. They put me to work in the farm. I got there a week before classes started. I stayed one night in Black Mountain, the town of Black Mountain, and it was – You know, Black Mountain was a

tourist town. – There were no tourists there. I was the only client they had that one night.

MEH: And then you went out to the college and they put you to work?

LK: Yeah, they put me to work on the farm. About a week, I guess. You know.

Later on I worked a few days on the farm too. They had two people running the farm during that time.

MEH: Ray Trayer?

LK: I've forgot their names.

MEH: Do you remember your first impressions of the college when you went out to the campus?

LK: No, I don't remember. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Did you have any idea what you wanted to study?

LK: I didn't study anything. I studied art. I had one class – I forgot who gave it. It was a class in– well, some kind of social group class.

MEH: John Wallen?

LK: Yeah, Wallen was the guy. Yeah. He was there with his – I guess he had two kids. Yeah. Yeah, he later went to, I guess, the state of Washington? Yeah. Yeah.

MEH: You took art classes with Bolotowsky?

LK: Yeah, Bolotowsky. I took a few with Albers. He's not a good teacher. He's a good artist, but not a good teacher. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Why do you think he was not a good teacher?

LK: Well because he doesn't teach. He starts you off. You've got to taste this and feel this and that. You know, that's no way to start painting. But Bolotowsky, you could paint any way you wanted. You could be a realist or be an abstractionist, and you'd get criticized according to your painting, not what you think. Albers was what he thought, that's the way he taught it. It was his ideas, not the students' ideas.

MEH: Right. So you really wanted more freedom at that point to just go ahead and paint.

LK: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

MEH: How did Bolotowsky conduct his class? Did he have –

LK: Nothing. He just – you had class, you painted, and then occasionally he would make each student make a remark about that guy's painting, whoever's painting it was, you know. Everybody would get involved in the paintings. That's something Albers didn't do. You know. Get the students involved with what they did. No criticisms from the students.

MEH: Who were other students who were in Bolotowsky's class who were painting?

LK: Well, Ken Noland was there, and Louis Carr (?) was there. Used to destroy all his paintings, after six months.

MEH: I don't know who Louis Carr is.

LK: He was a good-looking guy. I don't know what – But he'd do four or five paintings and one night he'd get – he'd just flip out. He'd cut up all his paintings. There were other artists there. I forget them. Maybe Ruth Asawa. I don't remember. Yeah.

MEH: What sort of work did you do on the farm?

LK: I just – Well, we'd load the silo. That was about it, I guess.

MEH: Had you ever worked on a farm before?

LK: Oh yeah, sure. Sure. I was raised in a farming community.

MEH: Where?

LK: In Fresno.

MEH: Your family's Armenian?

LK: Yeah. Yeah. I started work on a farm when I was eleven, twelve years old.
That was during the Depression. It paid. If it wasn't piecework, you got twenty cents an hour. Yeah.

MEH: That wasn't bad for a kid then.

LK: No. It was the only way to make any money. [LAUGHS] Parents never gave you any money.

MEH: Were your parents immigrants? Did they come over?

LK: Yeah. Yeah. 1914. Yeah. They never spoke English. My father never spoke English.

MEH: Were you an only child?

LK: No, no. I was the fifth – fifth one of us. Six of us. Yeah.

MEH: At Black Mountain, you had your own study? To work in?

LK: Oh, yeah, sure. Everybody had a study.

MEH: How do you think that worked? Do you think that was a good idea?

LK: Yeah. Sure. Sure. It made you independent. You could sleep there or whatever, cook in there, do whatever you wanted. Even though there was an

area to sleep in by the mess hall. The Study Building was built by – Who the hell did built that? Geez, I've forgotten. In my old age I'm forgetting the names.

MEH: Kocher. It was Larry Kocher. A lot of people think Gropius did it, but Gropius didn't do it.

LK: Gropius didn't design it

MEH: No. He did one earlier, but it was right before the War and they couldn't build it. It was a very big elegant building.

LK: Well, I was under the impression it was Gropius.

MEH: No it was somebody named Kocher. Was there any building going on when you were there? Any construction?

LK: No, no. No. There was one guy kept grading that road. There was a road maybe a mile long, dirt road. He spent a lot of time grading it. The guy had a grader. He must have enjoyed driving that thing. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Did you – What memories do you have of mealtimes at the college?

LK: I don't know. Meals were okay. Yeah.

MEH: Everybody ate there together?

LK: Oh yeah. Sure. Oh you had to work one or two days a week in the kitchen. That was a requirement. So, work, I don't know, four hours on two days or something. I forget now. Yeah. They started to have – they wanted to feed people in Europe and so they started serving some kind of soup. I've forgot what the hell it was, it cost three cents to feed one of us. That lasted maybe a month, maybe not even a month.

MEH: Do you have other particular memories of the college? Anecdotes, people?

LK: Well, it was a – the black woman, she was a singer. I forgot her name.

MEH: Delores.

LK: Yeah. One night, I guess five other – five people with her, we went around Asheville in the blacks places. One restaurant, they wouldn't let us sit with the blacks. They put us back in some kind of alcove, you know, where the other customers couldn't see us. We went to – I don't know, four or five black restaurants and bars or whatever. Then they sold a lot of – North Carolina was a dry state then. I don't know if you remember that.

MEH: Right. Yeah, the whole state wasn't, but Buncombe County was [I think I'm wrong. I think the entire state was.]

LK: Well, when I was driving across the border, entering North Carolina from South Carolina, the police stopped me in the mountains. It was about eleven, twelve o'clock at night, and they didn't say anything but they searched all of my – they searched everything in my Model A Ford. I had a big footlocker. And finally – when they stopped searching, they told me they thought I was bootlegging. They thought I was a bootlegger because during that period they used to get a car that really sped across there, and the police would chase them. Then some old clunker clunked through there and would take the booze up to North Carolina. [LAUGHS]

MEH: I guess they were disappointed in you. You didn't have any booze.

LK: Well, I had California plates on there. So they didn't – you know, I don't know what – the routine guess. I stop I guess. Yeah.

MEH: Did you ever go to Roy's? No, Peek's. Did you ever go to Peek's Tavern?

LK: We used to go to – There was one roadside bar we used to go to quite a bit. I don't know the name of it.

MEH: Peek's. What was it like inside?

LK: [LAUGHS] Well, wasn't like bars today. It was kind of a – Have you been to any – They used of have a lot of bars – like one in Richmond that was run by Southerners. It was like that. It was nothing fancy. Nothing fancy. They used to a have a – dancing. They had a big auditorium somewhere out there. We used to go there occasionally.

MEH: Had you ever been in the South before?

LK: No. No. Well, yeah, I was in the army in Florida. Yeah. I was there two years I guess. In Leesburg and Orlando. Yeah. So I was there a couple years.

MEH: Did you ever try with Delores going to any white establishments in the town?

LK: One time we went with – Ken Noland was born in Asheville. One evening we went to town with him – three or four of us. Some of the people he knew started to pick on us. So we got up and we left. Yeah, we'd go to town to buy our wine and beer in Asheville, you know. We'd buy a case of wine or a keg of beer. We had to go to town for that. Yeah. But not to hang out. We never really hung out there.

MEH: Who were people – other students – that you particularly remember?

LK: Well, Ruth Asawa I remember really well. Ken [Stan] Hebel , and Levi. His father owned a gallery on 57th Street. I forget his first name.

MEH: Jerry.

LK: Jerry, yeah. Well Art Penn was there. The guy who wrote Midnight Cowboys.
[Cowboy] Forgot his name.

MEH: Jim Herlihy.

LK: Herlihy was there, yeah. Yeah. Well I don't remember too much, too many
people.

MEH: What was Ruth like then, as a student?

LK: She was pretty quiet. Really quiet. Today I don't think she's that way.
[LAUGHS] Al was there. Al Lanier was there. Sucha. I forgot her last name. A
woman named Sucha. New Yorker. Most of the women came from New York
City.

MEH: What was Ken Noland like then?

LK: Well, he was [LAUGHS] – he was a woman's man. I think he made two
women pregnant when I was there. He's still the same. I saw him about four
years ago, I guess. Had a show at Paris. He was after his show too. Yeah.
We drove from – him and I and a guy named Brody. When the school closed,
we drove my Model A Ford to New York, and in the middle of the night my
Model A Ford started giving out a lot of steam. So, what happened was we
needed some water. So we stopped – antifreeze burns, right – so Ken wanted
to look in the radiator, and I lit a match and the thing exploded and it burned
all his hair and his eyebrows. We drove all night to the next town. We went to
the hospital, and we put towels over his eyes, see, because he couldn't see,
uh, because of the flash. When we got to the hospital, they took the towel out
and his eyes were okay. But, anyway, when he found out he could see, he got

really – he made comments about his looks, right [LAUGHS] instead of being hurt.

[INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]

It was done in Spain, I guess. Printed it. Made in Spain. Yeah.

MEH: Any other particular memories of the college? I'm asking you to remember

LK: [OVERTALK] Well, on Saturday night there was a band. They gave a kind of dance in the Mess Hall. Then there was – Jesus Christ, I forget, the dancer, what's his name?

MEH: Merce Cunningham?

LK: Merce – Merce Cunningham, and the piano player, what's his name?

MEH: John Cage.

LK: They were there. They gave performances in the kitchen. They were performances. They never practiced together. They just worked on the timing, and they'd – He would play and Merce would dance. Yeah.

MEH: Any other particular thoughts? When they were there, had you been exposed to this sort of experimental dance and music before?

LK: No, no. Put a lot of nuts and bolts in the piano strings to give it weird tones.

MEH: Did you take any other music at the college?

LK: No. No. I just painted. That's all.

MEH: So, you were free to just go to your studio and paint. I heard you did a lot of photography at the college. Is that right?

LK: Yeah, took a lot of photographs before I went there. That's how I got in. That was my creativeness when I entered the school. You want to see some photographs?

[INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]

MEH: Sure. First, you left Black – You were only at Black Mountain for a year. Why did you leave?

LK: Well I thought I was out of GI Bill. But I wasn't. I made a mistake. I came to San Francisco. I went to school at Art Institute, which is a big school in San Francisco. Then I went to sea two years, and when I came back, Knute and I opened this bar in North Beach, San Francisco.

MEH: What was the name of that bar?

LK: It was called "The Place."

MEH: Now just exactly where in North Beach?

LK: Upper Grant Avenue. Do you know San Francisco?

MEH: A little bit.

LK: You know Chinatown's Grant Avenue. When you cross Broadway, that's Upper Grant, it goes up maybe five or six blocks. So, the bar was up near Filbert, and opened in 1953 to 1960.

MEH: Why did you decide to open this bar?

LK: Well, it was a way of making money. [LAUGHS] Besides, you meet people. It was a means of meeting people. Being out to sea two years, you know, you hardly meet any. You never got along with the people on the ship. You know, it

was hard to find someone you get along with. So the bar was convenient.

Yeah.

MEH: [TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS]. So it was really a way of getting to know people in San Francisco and make money.

LK: Well, Knute and I both had gone to the Art Institute, so we had a lot of clients, artists, start coming there. In fact, in the '50s, there were no galleries in San Francisco that showed abstract art – except one that was open maybe a year by Clyfford Still. It only lasted a year, in 1950 or something like that. All the other abstract artists, we showed in the bar. We had a show every month, you know.

MEH: No, I don't know. You have to tell me these things.

LK: Okay*-, well

MEH: Describe the interior of the bar. Describe the interior of the bar.

LK: Well, just a crummy bar.

MEH: Be more specific. What was crummy about it?

LK: Well, it had sawdust on the floor. Nothing special about it.

MEH: Did it have tables? Did it have a jukebox – I had a piano in there, and there were about three or four piano players that'd come by and they'd play the piano. There was a Frenchman that used to – He worked in the French Consulate. He used to come by there. He'd wear the – you know the bands here [points to shoulder] and the striped shirts? Like old time bar – piano bar players? He'd play that old honky-tonk type piano. Yeah, he was okay. We had “blabbermouth night” every Monday night, which got really famous. I had

to hire someone to keep people out of the bar. [LAUGHS] The bar wasn't very big. Otherwise I couldn't serve them. Then I had –

MEH: Tell me about Blabbermouth Night. What was it?

LK: Just free speech night, you know. You know, you'd get up and give a speech, and at the end of the evening whoever won – got the most applause for their speech – would win a bottle of champagne. It lasted I don't know maybe a couple of years. Then we had April Fools Night Eve. We had a “dada:” show, and the artists would bring all kinds of crazy, crazy gadgets made out of tin cans and things hanging from the ceilings.

MEH: Did you have any other special event nights?

LK: Well, we celebrated a lot of different – We tried Bastille Day. It didn't work out too well. We celebrated Chinese New Years a couple times. Armenian Christmas is January 7th. We did celebrate that – one time, I think. But mainly shows. We had a month – Every month we had a new show there. There was a guy that had a show in England about eight, nine years ago, and a friend of mine went to the show, and the guy said – well, you know, they found out that they both knew me – and the guy said, "Oh, you know, the first show I ever had was in the bar." And he was having a show in England.

MEH: Well, who were some of –? Do you remember who some of the artists were who had shows there?

LK: Well, Jay DeFeo is the one that's been the most prominent one. I don't know. I've forgot them.

MEH: Who were people who frequented the bar?

LK: All kinds of people. It was a – people that didn't fit in normally in society would hang out there. Well, there were some hoods there. There were some gays, some lesbians. It was really mixed. People that didn't fit in any other phase of society would hang out in the bar, because they were accepted there.

MEH: Do you think it was more of a literary crowd, or more of an art crowd, or mixed?

LK: Well, it had both, but the literary crowd got famous. Because Kerouac's book came out in '58 or '57, On the Road, and people started hitchhiking to San Francisco from all over the United States. Some would walk in the bar with their suitcase.

MEH: Was Kerouac – did he frequent the bar?

LK: He was there every night when he was in town.

MEH: Does he mention The Place in On the Road?

LK: I don't know. I never read it.

MEH: But people would just arrive with suitcase in hand?

LK: After the book they'd come from New York, New Orleans, and – I don't know. They was – you know, and they came in the bar with their suitcase. I'd let them leave it there for a couple nights till they got situated somewhere.

MEH: Who tended bar?

LK: I did, in the beginning. Well, Knute came back. You know, he left after the first year because he didn't want to throw his friends out. A lot of them were really heavy drinkers. So I bought him out. He moved to Mexico – Oaxaca somewhere, and I'd send him money every month. He was there about a

year. John Ryan was a guy, he was a bartender, was there quite awhile. They made a movie, The Subterranean.

MEH: That's the name of the movie?

LK: Yeah.

MEH: About the –

LK: It took place in the bar, yeah.

MEH: Oh, it took place in the bar.

LK: Well, they didn't use the bar as a set. They photographed it and rebuilt the bar, a pretty good reproduction of the bar.

MEH: When was the film made? Was it recently?

LK: 1960. '60 or something like that.

MEH: Do you know who the director was?

LK: No. No. I think Leslie Caron was in it. I forgot. But it was lousy, it was a terrible movie.

MEH: Was the reproduction of the –

LK: The accuracy of reproducing the bar was very good. Yeah.

MEH: Okay. So why did you close it?

LK: I never had a lease. The landlord was an Italian ex-Mafia from Chicago, and his lease was the handshake, so I never had a lease. He sold the building to a Chinese guy, so I moved out. I just closed it. Yeah.

MEH: Did you ever have another bar?

LK: No, I had – I had a restaurant in Sausalito, twenty-one years.

MEH: What was the name of that?

LK: It was called The Kettle. It was a Jewish-style restaurant.

MEH: What do you mean by "Jewish-style restaurant"?

LK: Well, I sold Jewish food there. You know, like a Jewish style. It was – Some of the food was Jewish. Some was not – Some of it wasn't – It was Jewish food but it wasn't blessed.

MEH: It wasn't kosher. But the style was Jewish.

LK: Yeah. Yeah. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Twenty-one years. That's a long time.

LK: Yeah. That's where I made my money.

MEH: And so then you closed that and went to France?

LK: I sold that in '77, and I moved to France. Well, I had the bar and that restaurant at the same time. I opened the bar in '53 and the restaurant in 1956. So, three years I had both places.

MEH: Was the restaurant fairly conventional in terms of the people who went?

LK: No, it was still – pretty much the same type of people that came to my bar. Because Sausalito then – there were a lot of artists there, and it was cheap to live there. You could rent an apartment for thirty or forty dollars a month, and a lot of people lived on houseboats. Some of them lived down there in half sunken boats. They didn't have to pay rent. Half of it was under water, and they'd feel the – bunked in level, and they'd sleep in that.

MEH: Varda had a barge

LK: Varda had a barge. Yeah. He used to give a party every year. Yeah. I used to go to his party. Really wild parties. Yeah.

MEH: Do you remember Black Mountain people who frequented the place? Were there particular people?

LK: Well, I remember – well, Williams came there, and Creeley, and a young couple, they were not real big, I forget their names. Maybe about five feet. Married couple. They must have been about ten, fifteen – When Black Mountain closed, a lot of them came to San Francisco.

MEH: What about Robert Duncan? Did he, did he –

LK: Oh, yeah, he was there. He was there. He was there a lot. All those guys. Ginsberg was there a lot. Ginsberg and Kerouac's hero, what the hell is his name? Cassady. He was a speed freak. He used to talk like crazy. He also played the horses a lot. He was always borrowing twenty bucks on a sure thing. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Were there a lot of drugs at that time in the bar? Were people doing a lot of drugs? It was definitely the time

LK: There was a lot of people smoking marijuana. I had maybe three or four junkies come in there. There was a speed, speed is anything that makes you high. There was a pill that came out, about as big as the end of my finger, that kept you up for 24 hours. People used to do that. A lot of people used to use methadrine. If you use methadrine about a year, you'd flip out. You become a scavenger. You start collecting things. A friend of mine – I had a girlfriend. She was on this methadrine, and she would – Every time she went out she'd bring empty bottles back to the house. The place got so loaded with empty bottles, the guy had to kick her out. I knew a lot of those. Those guys would

really flip out. That's worse, worse than heroin. Methadrine. Not methadrone, but methadrine. That time you could get it by signing for it in a drugstore. You didn't need a prescription. Yeah, there were a lot of those – There was a guy who was – I don't know – an engineer for a radio company, or for a radio outfit. He flipped out. He used to walk around carrying just a white dish, like this, just a plate. Wherever he went, he had this plate in his hand.

MEH: Were you painting at the time?

LK: Very little. Very little.

MEH: You had two businesses to run.

LK: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I got a lot of painting – I've got over six hundred paintings.

MEH: Wow.

LK: I bought that – Outside I have a ship's container, you know, it's full of paintings. I got three storerooms just outside there.

MEH: We'll talk about your painting in a little bit.

LK: Yeah.

MEH: Did you have any connection or any contact with Peggy Tolk Watkins?

LK: Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah. She lived here and there.

MEH: Was her bar--

LK: She had a bar in Sausalito, called The Tin Angel. Later on she opened a bar on Embarcadero also called The Tin Angel. A musician, Kid Ory, used to play there. He was a trombone player. She never paid her taxes, see, so they closed the place down, took all her possessions. The only thing they let her keep was an old piano, which she gave me because she owed me two

hundred dollars. A Model A Ford she had. That's the only thing they allowed her to keep. She died. She was even young when she died. Yeah.

MEH: Do you remember her bar? Was it more painters or –

LK: [COUGHS] Well, she catered – They weren't really all artists. She catered to everybody.

MEH: It's interesting that these two bars were both started by Black Mountain people. Were there other bars that you would think were comparable or similar, at the time?

LK: Well, there were jazz bars in the city. Not in Sausalito. She never had music in her Sausalito bar, just an eating place.

MEH: Did you serve food at The Place?

LK: No. But I had a kitchen there. Occasionally somebody wanted to cook. I'd let them use it. It had nothing to do with me. They had to do everything, you know.

MEH: Why did you decide to go to Paris?

LK: I don't know. [LAUGHS]

MEH: We'll look at some of your art. Why don't we take a break and do that now?

[INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]

Do you think it would have made any difference in the direction of your life if you had not gone to Black Mountain?

LK: Yeah, oh, yeah.

MEH: How?

LK: Well, hell, I would probably have been a photographer somewhere.

[LAUGHS]

MEH: What do you think about the Black Mountain way of teaching, as a school?

LK: Yeah, I think it was a good system. Depends on the teacher. Anywhere you go it's relative to the teacher, you know. Some – generally, you meet one or teachers that you agree with or get along with or whatever. Well, I had a good teacher in the Art Center School that got me interested in abstract photography. He wasn't a photographer. He was an artist. But he used to give assignments like “claustrophobia” – you had to really think, you know, how you're going to photograph it, and what's the word mean, so it made you think, you know.

MEH: What do you think would have been the difference if you had had that same teacher at Black Mountain, in a different setting? Do you think it would have made any difference?

LK: No, I doubt it. It was really different there. Different environment. Because he'd give you assignments. At Black Mountain, you were totally free. You did what you wanted to do.

MED: Did you take any classes with Max Dehn? The mathematician?

LK: No. No. There was a woman, I've forgot her name. She used to teach mathematics. I've forgot her name now. In my old age I forget a lot of things.

[LAUGHS]

MEH: A woman who taught mathematics. In my old age I forget a lot of things, too.

LK: Yeah, yeah.

MEH: What about – Did you ever go hiking in the mountains or anything like that?

LK: No. Are you kidding? We used to go out on trips on the weekend. You know, Ilya had a car and I had my car and we'd load them, drive round the mountains and, you know. We'd stop off at certain places. Yeah.

MEH: One of the stories that I hear about your – I hear all kinds of stories about your rubbing sand in your eyes?

LK: [LAUGHS] It was ashes. It wasn't sand.

MEH: Well, that's better.

LK: Ashes from a pipe. That's how I got out of the army. I got out of the army in three months before the German part of the war was over. I'd go to sick call. I'd see the eye doctor, and I'd rub this in, and I'd have red eyes so they couldn't figure out what the hell was wrong with it. Then finally toward the end – you know, they had these coal burners in the – what the hell they call those, where you slept. So I finally told them, "You know I can't do my work. This soot from the stove is screwing me up," and they kicked me out.

MEH: It probably saved your life. You didn't go overseas.

LK: No, I never got overseas.

MEH: Do you think you would have gone otherwise?

LK: I was on what they call "limited service." They'd never put me in the front lines, even if I went over there. I did that the first month I was in the army.

MEH: You mean the eye thing?

LK: Yeah. Yeah.

MEH: Is that why you were put on limited service?

LK: Yeah. Yeah. I was in Orlando, Florida, and I was in the outfit that just did any – all kinds of dirty work, you know. You'd dig pits. There was no plumbing out in the swamps, so you'd dig pits for the water and, you know, you'd pick up cigarette butts, and they finally sent me to photo school. So I went to photo school in Denver and came back to my outfit, which was south of Leesburg, Florida, I don't know, maybe twenty miles. There was nothing there. It was all swamps. There were no more huts. They had forgot me. I didn't know what the hell to do. So I finally went to Orlando. Orlando was a key station for, I don't know, a radius of maybe a hundred miles or something like that. So they put in the lab there in Orlando. I could have left. They had no record of me.

MEH: You never got a college degree.

LK: No. Never been to college.

MEH: You went to Black Mountain College.

LK: Well –

MEH: Do you think it made any difference in your life not having a college degree?

LK: Yeah, probably. Probably.

MEH: How is that?

LK: Well, I can't spell. I'm a very bad speller. I've got that, you know, the computer does all my – corrects all my spelling.

MEH: Any other thoughts? Any questions that maybe I should have asked that I didn't ask?

LK: About what?

MEH: Black Mountain?

LK: No, I forgot about most of Black Mountain.

MEH: Was there any supervision of student life at the college?

LK: No. No. No.

MEH: What do you remember about the community meetings?

LK: I don't remember anything about it. Knute would know all that. He's got a
good memory.

MEH: I'm going to see him in Bisbee in a couple of weeks.

LK: Oh yeah? Yeah.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]