

Interviewee: NANCY DUNN EISENMAN
Interviewer: MARY EMMA HARRIS
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[BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1]

MEH: [GIVES IDENTIFICATION] Nancy, how is it that you came to be at Black Mountain College?

NDE: I was brought up in New Hampshire. My father was an Episcopalian minister, and my mother – he had gone to Princeton, my mother to Mount Holyoke. We didn't have, didn't have very much money. I had read an article in a book, a collection of essays about Bennington, and somehow that really appealed to me – the program there. We couldn't afford that because I couldn't earn enough money working as a waitress in the summer. They had a program there where you worked in the winter, I think, the quarter, quarters in the winter. So in the back of that article, there was a brief mention of Black Mountain College, and so I applied and was accepted.

MEH: What about the college interested you? What appealed to you?

NDE: You know, Mary, I'm not really quite sure. I was a very rebellious child and very angry with my situation [LAUGHS] as a teenager. I think it was far away. It – I remember the catalogue. It was quite, quite splendid looking. In the country, and with various programs. I hadn't done really any art in school. I'd played the piano. But there was something about it that really appealed to me on some level or other, and I was quite surprised that I was accepted. I think – When I

talked to one of the professors – Miller, do you remember? – that they were trying to get a wider – they were trying to get a variety of student and I was obviously somebody very different. [LAUGHS] [OVERTALK] Then there were the children from the School of Arts in New York City, I forget what that was called, and the other students – a lot from Chicago, Country Day or some country day school in Chicago area. So they accepted me.

MEH: You were the token preacher's kid?

NDE: Yes, I guess so. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Do you remember anything about the application process? How did you apply?

NDE: No, I really don't. No, that's quite out of, out of my memory. I don't remember that. At all. I remember it was just – In 1945, it was just after the end of the War. I took a – it took me thirty-five hours by bus to get down to Black Mountain, and I usually did it in one stretch [LAUGHS], without stopping.

MEH: Do you remember the first time when you went down? Did you go by bus?

NDE: Yes. Yes, I always went by bus. Yeah. It was a long, a long trip.

MEH: Did you have any idea what – Do you remember your first impressions of the college?

NDE: Not really. I remember meeting Faf Foster. He was in a class – oh, I think Miller gave a class in sociology or history or something of that sort. I remember Faf sitting in the corner. I enjoyed it. I think I – I think I liked it. I liked the teachers. I had a writing class with, I think it was Merrick. Elliot. Was it Elliot Merrick? Yeah, I had a writing class with him. I took drawing classes with

Albers, and *matière*. I had studied – continued my French with a Russi – a woman, I think she was from Russia.

MEH: Goldowski?

NDE: Did she teach? What did she teach there?

MEH: There was Natasha who taught physics, and her elderly mother, Madame Goldowski – I'm not sure if they were there yet though.

NDE: Yeah. Yeah. She was a very wonderfully rounded lady, all very firm.

MEH: Sounds like Natasha. [OVERTALK]

NDE: Yeah, yes, yes. I took – studied French with her. I certainly enjoyed the countryside. That was always a great pleasure – walking to the dining hall every morning, on those lovely spring mornings. In terms of anything else at that moment, I don't really – I don't remember a great deal.

MEH: Going back to some specific classes. It sounds like you were taking a general range of courses.

NDE: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. I took Anni Albers weaving. Did weaving with her.

MEH: What do you – what do you remember about her class?

NDE: I liked her class. I certainly – I certainly enjoyed it although I never did any weaving after that, because there was so much time spent in setting up the looms, and so on that I didn't – I didn't continue with that. I did some nice pieces there, with sisal – unraveled rope, keeps its twist in it, pieces which unfortunately I didn't save. But we did have a sort of student show and I was – I had my weavings in there with – not Harry Holl. There was a redhead fellow

who I think married Susie – what was her name? I just haven't kept contact with these people. I'd remember the name if you told it to me.

MEH: I'm trying to think. When I think of red hair, I think of Harry Weitzer, but I'm not sure he was there then.

NDE: It might have been he. Yeah. Yeah.

MEH: What about Albers? You took his design class?

NDE: I never particularly warmed up to Albers. I did get – I got an A in his class for one of my *matière* studies. But I think I found his personality, as I think Faf did too, very, very Germanic and kind of dictatorial. I enjoyed the drawing class. I liked that. But I just – the drawing class was all single-line drawings, and nothing else – to use charcoal or any shading or anything was absolutely forbidden. [LAUGHS] At least not encouraged. I think I took watercolor with him, too, and I remember there was one piece he really liked. But I think at that time in my life, I really was a very very very late bloomer. It wasn't I think until I was fifty that I began to do set design.

MEH: You were very young then. How was it to come from being in a preacher's family home to a place like Black Mountain, and very young. Was it easy to deal with?

NDE: I made some friends. Annette – Annette Stone became quite a close friend, and she had a little group of people – Faf and Annette and a couple of other people, Ike – used to have tea there in the afternoon sometime and get together in the evening. So I made friends right away. Randi. I forget just when. She came I think maybe the next year. I remember when she arrived

she was all beautifully dressed in a lovely – I think it was a wine-colored coat, and we became close friends. Then there was Anita Fein, I think, who was a close friend for a while. So I didn't feel – I certainly wasn't lonely. Then I know for a while I ran the afternoon teas. I think we had tea or something like that, and I coordinated that.

MEH: Was Annette Stone doing that then? Were you working with her? Or had she stopped doing that?

NDE: She was kind of the hostess, for the people coming in. I think she kind of took care of linens and things like that. I think that's what she did. But I felt very at home there. I wasn't – I wasn't lonely at all.

MEH: What did you do on the Work Program?

NDE: Oh, on the Work Program I did various things. I was in this – I remember being in the silage tower one time, raking it out to keep it level. All the fumes from that. [LAUGHS] I really enjoyed that. Then I can't remember. Maybe running the afternoon teas. I guess that was part of that. I didn't do the coal, the coal business, unloading the coal and bringing that in. I'm trying to think what else we did, whether we cut – cut corn. You know, I just remember working in that silo. Then Faf and I used to ride the work horses, once in a while.[LAUGHS] Then they had a wonderful – there was a swimming pool there. A pool that the river had made, kind of in the woods. It was a lovely place. Then we used to go swimming there, and I can remember one time – we used to go nude swimming there. I can remember one time being in the water and all of a sudden this head rose, and it was a farmer in his straw hat looking [LAUGHS]

at us. I think there was a certain amount of screaming on the part of the girls. I forget what I did. [LAUGHS]. Then there was some – We had some wonderful trips up the – They used to grow apples on the mountainsides there, because the frost would collect down low and so the old orchards were usually up high, as I remember, in the mountains. We used to hike up and I think the best – it was one of my clearest recollections – of those Macintosh apples that were the best I've ever tasted. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Did you work on the farm – besides in the silo?

NDE: I don't remember working very much on the farm. I mean, I don't remember how the whole Work Program functioned. I must have done other things with it, but I just – I can't remember now what, what I did. I remember working in the shop with Molly Gregory. She was my advisor for a couple of – number of years. I remember she used to roast a grapefruit, and we used to eat hot grapefruit over the fire there in the shop. I made a desktop for my study – in the Study Building.

MEH: What do you think was the – I'm very happy to hear the Molly Gregory grapefruit story. I haven't heard that before.

NDE: Oh, yeah [LAUGHS].

MEH: What was she like as a person?

NDE: She was a – she was a very open, very enthusiastic person. I know – I just heard from Bob I guess or – we met some people at his house around New Year's. The woman was a friend of Molly Gregory's – is a friend of Molly Gregory's, but knew her apart from Black Mountain, in Massachusetts. She

said that – I think she was the one who said that Molly Gregory became very much involved in the government of Black Mountain, in the administration and so on, and complained that she was only a student [LAUGHS], you know. Suddenly all those responsibilities and decisions were being placed upon her. But I certainly liked her. I didn't keep up with her afterwards. I think the only person I kept up with afterwards was Randy, and Harry Holl. I was a bridesmaid at Randy and Harry Holl's wedding in – oh, it must have been about 1950 because the trains were still running from northern New Hampshire where my grandfather had a house down to the Cape, so I remember I went down by train to that.

MEH: This was your first trip to the South?

NDE: Yes.

MEH: When you went to Black Mountain?

NDE: Yes, yes. When I was there, there were a group of people who came through, I think it was the Friends – American Friends, with two white and two black. They stopped at least once at Black Mountain College when they were testing the bus, the bus thing. I remember – I remember meeting them. There was a biologist on the campus, and it was sort of, I guess, indicative of my lack of observation, or just the fact that the college didn't make any kind of fuss about it. He was black, the biologist. I never realized it [LAUGHS], you know. I just didn't think about it. Then there was another fellow – I think he was in music with Eddie Lowinsky. He was black too, but I can remember being told not to go into Asheville with him on the bus, because it would cause – cause

problems. But aside from that, we really weren't very, very aware of problems in the South. There was a girl, I think her name was Alice Jackson? Have you run across her? I used to tal – I used to visit her mother in Cambridge. She lived down the street from where I was living, near where Fred Stone was living. I know that Alice was rather rebellious. She had taken a trip through the South, and I forget whether it was the problem that – whether she had gone with a black student – but I think she ended up in jail for some reasons. The college was rather upset about that.

MEH: I think there were some earlier incidents, and one of the few rules at the college was that women students should not hitchhike in the South.

NDE: She was hitchhiking. I guess that was it.

MEH: That was genuinely considered to be prost- – You know, you could easily be picked up for prostitution.

NDE: Yeah, yeah. That was probably what happened.

MEH: It was very unsafe, yeah.

NDE: Yeah. We had some, we had some black students there for a while. I think that was probably the third year that I was there. From some black college. One of them was a music major. But they didn't seem to fit in very well. I think they felt uncomfortable. As I remember the girl, she was just not educated or whatever to adapt to the Black Mountain kind of situation.

MEH: So you were there how many years?

NDE: Three.

MEH: You were there three years.

NDE: Yeah, and I was there for at least one summer. I was there when Cunningham and Cage were there.

MEH: That would have been the summer of '48.

NDE: [AFFIRMATIVE] Yeah. I helped Buckminster Fuller build one of his domes.

MEH: What do you remember about that?

NDE: Oh, I really enjoyed that. Yeah. I enjoyed Buckminster Fuller. In fact when we were in L.A., we'd gone to a party in the Pacific Palisades where he lived, and he was there with – I think it was very shortly before he died. So, I introduced myself to, to him. He was – As you know, he was involved with Arthur Penn, putting on a play by Satie, I think. I sort of vaguely, vaguely remember that.

MEH: Do you have other memories of that summer? Did you take Fuller's class? Or did you just work on the dome?

NDE: No, I didn't take Fuller's class, and I don't remember which classes I was taking. Certainly nothing with Cage, or things with Cunningham. I don't have a very clear memory. That was the summer, I think, that Faf and Anne got married. That was rather upsetting, because I had a real crush on Faf. It was my first. He never told me what happened, so when I arrived there, that June I guess, he – another friend of his told me what had happened, that Faf had gotten married. [LAUGHS] It was kind of – Because Anne had the very same name as I, except her last name was D-U-N-N-E, I think.

MEH: I'll have to really check my records, because I don't remember having a record of two Nancy Dunns, but there were two Nancy Dunns.

NDE: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

MEH: Be sure I haven't mixed you up, or combined you into one person.

NDE: Oh yes! [LAUGHS] No, I think she was a New York City family, a fairly well off family, and –

MEH: Do you have any other memories of that summer? Do you have any particular memories of Cage and Cunningham? Or de Kooning?

NDE: De Kooning was there. That's right, and he was there with his wife, yeah. Yeah, I remember that. I remember talking to M. C. Richards. She ran the library there. I always liked her. She was a nice homey, nice homey person.

MEH: Did you take classes with her?

NDE: No, I didn't know that she taught. Did she teach anything?

MEH: She taught literature.

NDE: No, I don't mean M.C. Richards.

MEH: Are you thinking about Nell Rice?

NDE: Yes. Yes. Nell Rice. Sorry. Yes. No, I took courses with M.C. Richards. Yeah, yeah. I know I had – I wrote – I had – I think I kept a diary at that time, but when I left, it was kind of upsetting, and I left a lot of things in the attic of the – one of the dormitories. There, wherever, in the dump somewhere probably, probably rotting away. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Why was it upsetting when you left? Was this because of the Faf situation?
[OVERTALK] –

NDE: Well, I didn't, I didn't really know what I wanted to do. The business with Faf was upsetting. I just didn't see what my direction was. I think at that time I felt if I don't get married before I'm twenty-five I was going to be in a really bad state.

I did get married [LAUGHS] at twenty-five. We're celebrating our fiftieth this year, this coming, this year, yeah. So that was upsetting, and I just didn't know. I knew something in art, and I went to Boston, looked up Randi, and we both lived in the same sort of boarding house for a while with a woman who taught at the Buckingham School in Cambridge. I worked in Jordan Marsh department store in Boston for a while [NDE: I was fired from Jordan Marsh. "Not selling" was the verdict!], and then in an industrial art shop on Newbury Street, and then somehow we got the money together, and I got a degree at Boston University in art history. So art was kind of always an interest, but I didn't really use it until I was fifty, and then started – I wrote a play for my husband's department at UCLA, a Christmas play, sort of skit. I had such fun at that that the secretary said, "You know, Nancy, why don't you do something you really like to do," because I was doing piano then and it was – and I was not advancing. So, I joined a community theater and worked for them and other theaters, doing set design. I loved that. That was, that was very – and I got a number of prizes and so on. Then I went on to get a Master's at UCLA, but I think I was too independent for them or something or other. I only lasted a year and a half. [LAUGH]. I'd been on my own I think too long at that point to buckle down to whatever it was that they – [INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]

MEH: Okay, we're back on.

NDE: Yes. I think many of the problems with Black Mountain for me was that I didn't – it didn't focus me on anything. There wasn't any one particular thing that really grabbed me. I just felt there were so many students there who had been

at the New York School of Music and Art, and they knew what they wanted to do. I think for people like that it worked out very well. For me – Well, maybe I just needed the years, you know, to find out what I enjoy doing.

MEH: Did you ever take the Senior Division Exam?

NDE: I think Anita Fein and I did, and I think we didn't – we didn't finish it. It just didn't seem to be something that I could – I could manage, concentrate on. At that point I wasn't, I wasn't focused on any one thing.

MEH: What did you do for entertainment at the college?

NDE: Oh, for entertainment. Well, let's see. We used to go – We used to go into Asheville, and I don't really remember what we did when we were in there. Oh, I remember one wonderful thing. My brother had come down to visit me. There was a sort of a roadhouse down on the main road into Asheville, and they had square dances. But these weren't square dances like the kind you see at International House or something like that. These were the local people square dancing. I can remember – my brother remembered it too, very vividly. I can remember being led down one of the square dance things, you go down through a line of people, and with one of the guys, one of the local people. That was really quite exciting. I mean I felt I'd really [LAUGHS] seen something real about that area and about their heritage and so on. Probably it was one of the last ones. Then I enjoyed the hiking a lot. I used to hike with the German professor, he was quite an old – Jalowetz?

MEH: Dehn? Was it Max Dehn, the mathematician maybe?

NDE: Max Dehn. Yes. We used to hike with him. Yeah. I loved that. I loved the whole countryside there. I just remember going to breakfast in that lovely – the light over the lake and the shape of that – I forget what the name of the mountain was. Bob remembers.

MEH: Mae West?

NDE: No, it wasn't called Mae West. Oh, let's see, the lake was Lake Eden. Then there was a beautiful willow tree that we used to pass going up to the study, and it was lovely when it came out in the spring. So let's see, what did I used to do with Randi.

MEH: What do you think –

NDE: Swimming. Well, we used to enjoy swimming in that hole and hiking up in the mountains and getting apples. What did I – ?

MEH: What difference do you think this really beautiful and rural environment made to the college?

NDE: Well, it certainly had – it certainly had an effect on the teachers who came down who weren't being paid anything. Suddenly from New York City or some other big city they were in this really, really beautiful rural, rural place. So I suspect that kept them on a bit longer. [LAUGHS] I don't, I don't, I don't know what other difference it would make.

MEH: Certainly it made a difference to you, just in terms of your – from what you said before, sort of, you know, your enjoyment of each day.

NDE: Right. Yeah, yeah. No, I always remember the colors, the colors in the fall, the dogwood and the flowers, the azaleas. There was a beautiful orange azalea

that used to bloom in the woods. So that was always something that I enjoyed, but I was always quite aware of that from New Hampshire. We lived in pretty small towns until we moved to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. So I had always enjoyed the rural kind of environment, and felt very at home in it.

MEH: Did you have any encounters with snakes?

NDE: Oh, yes, yes. I saw – Oh, this was very funny. I saw a rattlesnake along the side of the road going up to the Study Building. I asked Dreier's son, who was there to kill it for me. So, I skinned it, after he'd cut the head off. I skinned it, and we took it down to the kitchen. I don't remember the name of the cook. She was a big black lady. We put this – we boiled the water, and we put this snake in it. Well, the reflex action, it's wiggling like mad! That woman nearly jumped out of her skin. [LAUGHS] That was funny.

MEH: Did you then eat it?

NDE: [AFFIRMATIVE]. It was very tough. Taste sort of, I guess, like chicken, but as I remember it was very very tough. [LAUGHS]. We had – I always – Annette too, we always enjoyed – I think his name was Ben. He was a sort of a handyman there at the college, and – Do you remember his last name? Do you hear about him?

MEH: Was it Ben Snead?

NDE: Ben Snead. Probably. Yeah. He had a lot of old, old English expressions that I don't remember, but I remember Annette was – Annette was a good storyteller, and she'd tell funny stories about the things that he said and about what the cook said. The cook I remember would explain to Annette what her funeral

was going to be like. She had it all worked out, and it was going to be very glorious and [LAUGHS], with all kinds of gold trappings and things.

MEH: Did you take any music?

NDE: No. I don't know why I avoided that, because I'd studied the piano for a number of years. I was there when Eddie Lowinsky was there. No, I didn't – I didn't – I think, oh, I sang in the – I have a fairly decent alto voice – I sang in the – I think we did The Messiah with – and I think we sang it in German, which amused people who knew German because it didn't sound like Germans at all. I'm not sure, but I think we had people come out from Asheville to hear that concert. There was a librarian and a couple of women who used to come out who really liked what was or were interested in what was going on at the college. Because I think for the most part people had no idea. We had – I remember there was one time when some – I don't remember whether they were black or white people, but they kind of snuck up on the perimeters of the college to see what was going on. They might have been black. I'm not sure. I kind of doubt it, because I think that would have been really scary for them. They probably were white people, because there was all talk of this being a nudist colony and all that sort of thing. Also harboring blacks, on an equal – equal basis. So I remember at one point there was some trouble about that. I don't remember exactly how they handled it. Just something that happened.

MEH: Do you remember the community meetings?

NDE: I certainly was very aware of them. I remember there was – I think when Buckminster Fuller was there, there was a student from – architectural student

who came down from Harvard, and somehow they decided there should be a football game. So, they organized the people on the two teams, whatever they were, I don't know who was against whom and [LAUGHS] a lot of people sniffed at that. Football was not supposed to be something Black Mountain engaged in. [LAUGHS] There was something else. I just lost the trend there. No, there really were no sports. I don't think there was a tennis court or – Just the swimming. The pond was – It had to be drained fairly often because it became rather muddy. Also, it was full of bloodsuckers, as I remember. I didn't particularly like swimming in it. That was why we went into the woods to this pool – which probably doesn't exist anymore. I went down there with my sons when they were about ten. That would have been – fifty-two, fifty-three, sixty-three – sometime in the mid-sixties, and there was a tremendous gravel operation going on there, and so a lot of – I didn't recognize a lot of things there. Didn't recognize the approach to the college. It had been so dug up. The buildings were still there.

MEH: So when you left the college, you went to Boston, Cambridge –

NDE: I went to Cambridge, and I can remember coming out of the Cambridge subway and looking around and saying "This is where I belong!" [LAUGHS] I have a very clear image of that.

MEH: And so you got your degree in art history, and you then went to California?

NDE: No, I met my husband then, and he was at Harvard Medical School. We had – our first son was a year after, and the second one about thirteen months after that. Then we were there for two or three years, and then we moved to

Philadelphia to a research institute the state was running. That fell apart, and we went to Utah University Medical School for three years, and then to University of Chicago for four, and then to Los Angeles for twenty-five years.

MEH: And during those early years you were basically being a mom?

NDE: Yeah.

MEH: A homemaker?

NDE: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. No, I really – I did some music, but not very much. But finding the theater was really –

MEH: How did that come about?

NDE: Getting involved in the theater, as I said, was because of writing a Christmas play for the physiology department at UCLA, and doing the sets and all that sort of thing. Then I went into community theater and then into some of the Equity waived theatres [NDE: Actors were allowed to work in them for less.] in Beverly Hills and out in the Valley. But I think when we moved here and my husband retired, I'd kind of had enough of that. I was doing sets for plays I didn't particularly care about. So, now I'm very much – I don't know whether Bob told you that I'm very much involved in a project that I started in Guatemala.

MEH: He told me that you were doing something in Guatemala, but he didn't tell me what.

NDE: Yeah. Yeah. Five years ago I started a project among the Indian families making native dolls. So I've been very involved in that.

MEH: Is this like a way for them to earn a living and then sell them?

NDE: Yes, it gives them some – It gives the women extra income. It's mostly women. There's just one man, who's the tailor. In Guatemala the tailors are usually always men. So I've been very involved in that.

MEH: How did you come to do this? What was the –

NDE: Well, it's a little bit round about. My husband had never taken a sabbatical, and he was working with professors at the University of Chile in Santiago. So, I said, "All right, you're working with them. Let's go to Santiago for a year." So, he sort of said, "Well, maybe." So, I studied – I realized I had to study Spanish if I wanted to do anything in the theater there, and so I studied – started that. Then Pinochet fell, lost, fell out of power, and the CIA as I remember gave a lot of computers and so on to the university. George was able to communicate with them. Almost – Not e-mail then, I think it was a little bit before e-mail. So he said, "We don't have to go there. I don't want to go there anyway." But then by that time I had three years invested in Spanish, so I just kept going. I went to school in Mexico, and then I went to Guatemala because the schools there were a lot – much more inexpensive. It intrigued me – the textiles, because I'd always had an interest in textiles. I kept going there. But I noticed as I walked through the Indian markets that there were no dolls that really respected the textile tradition, which is very rich in Guatemala. In fact, going back to Black Mountain, I helped Anni Albers – I don't know if her husband had gone with her – went down to Mexico. Were you aware of that? – and made a very fine collection of textiles. I suspect they've ended up at Yale? Yeah. I helped her

hang that. I'd love to see those again, because now Mexican textiles are almost nonexistent, in terms of being worn, the way they are in Guatemala.

MEH: Okay. These are the dolls. [GIVES INSTRUCTIONS]

NDE: This is the doll from Sololá. That's the area that, where the town is where I work, the town of San José Chacayá, which is a very small town about an hour and a half walk from Sololá. This is their costume. This is the – I buy the fabric, used fabric, from the women so that gives them some income. This is the old skirt or corté, an old cotton one, which they have – Now I don't have the other one, a newer one. The women knit or crochet the roosters, and one of the little girls – well she's ten I think now – she makes the earrings. We did have bracelets on them, but we've discarded those because none of the women wear them. They're using their hands so much they can't really manage a bracelet. So that's the doll from Sololá. She has a husband. [LAUGHS] This is the gentleman, in his coat, which is quite elaborated, embroidered with – here it's ric-rac and the real ones, they would use something a little different. He's wearing a scarf over his head, and he has his moral [PH], which is this with Sololá. This is the carrying

bag. But even the men when they don't wear native costumes anymore, which many of them don't, they'll carry this bag which will have whatever they need. One of the dolls has a – He's an evangelical, so he has his bible, a tiny bible. He has his machete.

MEH: The detail is wonderful.

NDE: He wears a skirt that's wrapped around, and then the pants, which are often quite heavily embroidered – woven in, actually, in the process of weaving the fabric. We haven't made many men because there are just so many items that have to be done. We have to have this, we have to have the jacket, we have to have the shoes, and find somebody to make all of this. So he's a lot of work!

MEH: An incredible amount of detail there.

NDE: Yeah. Yeah. We have a lot of detail.

MEH: They're wonderful.

NDE: And then we've been – We have – This is the doll from Santa Caterina, which is another pueblo. These are all pueblos around Lake Atitlán, in the highland area of Guatemala. She's – she should have some more jewelry on her. But this is a blouse that's woven. This is woven to order, so she's a little more expensive than the other ones. She always has her hair wrapped in a great turban kind of thing. Then we've done dolls from Santa Cruz. We have dolls from Santa Cruz and Santiago Atitlan, and also one from Quetzal-tenango, which is the second largest city in Guatemala.

MEH: And where do they sell these?

NDE: We sell them in a – I sell some of them in the States, but selling is not my main interest. I'm trying to get the group independent of my trips down there. I go down twice a year for about a month each time. So, I'm trying to concentrate on them selling to the tourists in Antigua, which is the tourist city in Guatemala. There's a very good shop there Nimpot, run by a fellow from the States, and he has textiles and toys and all sorts of things from all over, right in the middle of Antigua. So I think that that's the best place to sell them. We get a good price there, and the tourists come there. It's the logical place to sell them. If I try to sell them here, then unless somebody wants to help the project – half the price of the doll goes to the schoolchildren, for school supplies. Aside from that, it's just been too much bother to put on consignment two dolls or three dolls, in a museum somewhere in the country and then three in another, and just keeping track of all of that, I just hadn't wanted to get into all of that. Now the problem is to get – to really get this group independent, and that's going to be my main effort this June, to see ways to do that, to get a decent director. We don't have someone who can really control the quality, which is what everybody says is the main problem.

MEH: Is this like incorporated under a not-for-profit corporation of some kind, or do you have just – ?

NDE: Well, I'm actually a president of a foundation, the Dunn Foundation, that my brother started. He had asbestos poisoning from the – lung poisoning, from the years he'd spent as a marine engineer. Three, four years before he died, he

got a lot of money from the asbestos settlement and put at least half of it into a foundation to help children in Third World countries. He worked in Nicaragua, and in Guatemala, so I am president of the foundation. But I haven't – at the moment I haven't been taking money from that. It just gives me some legitimacy. Once this project gets going on its own, then I might consider using some of it for that, but at the moment I've been helping a foundation that's extremely well-run and very well-funded, in Antigua, the God's Chilel Project, a project to take poor children who want to go to school and help pay their school expenses and help pay their parents a little bit so the children don't have to work.

MEH: It would seem that in terms of continuity and quality control you would have to have some sort of organization that would –

NDE: Yeah. Well actually the women did form a directiva (?) so we have a president and a secretary and vice-president and so on, and we have a bank account.

MEH: How many women are involved?

NDE: About twenty. Maybe it's best to say about twenty families, because sometimes the children do things too. But it's a small town and there's a lot of – One of the women in particular is an incredibly inventive liar, [LAUGHS] and it's going to be very difficult to set things up so that everyone gets a fair shake. [LAUGHS] Because she has been trying to pull everything into her own family.

MEH: Going back to Black Mountain, do you think there – Are there anecdotes or memories that come to you that we haven't covered? Questions that I might have asked?

NDE: Well, the more we talk, the more things seem to come up. There was something that I almost had a hold onto, and then it slipped away. I remember we had a young couple come to – He was going to run the farm and his wife, I think, sort of ran the kitchen. They were a very straight-laced couple. I think probably upset by the freeness of the Black Mountain Community. I don't remember their names. But I do remember that on Saint Patrick's Day we had green dyed pears [LAUGHS] to represent that. Then there was – You've undoubtedly talked to Harry Holl about his mush days. He made this wonderful spaghetti, and everybody else wanted to have it but they weren't supposed to because it was much cheaper and we were saving money and so on.

MEH: Were you a musher, or a non-musher?

NDE: Oh, I ate the spaghetti. I was good friends with those people, so I came into that. There was – I remember the first year there I remember singing the Spanish revolutionary songs, the Three Insurgent Generals. That was with Gropius's daughter. I remember she knew the songs. I had been aware of the Spanish War, I remember when I was eight, on the radio hearing about that, it was the first conflict that I was really directly aware of. Then at Black Mountain I don't remember if we had any veterans who came through, but I can remember singing those songs.

MEH: You had a study in the Studies Building?

NDE: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think I took courses with Wallach. Was it Wallach?

MEH: Wallen.

NDE: Wallen, John Wallen, yeah, yeah. I remember there was discussions about whether the study door should have windows in them because of all the goings-on behind those doors! [LAUGHS] I think John Wallen may have been part of that, that there should be windows in those doors.

MEH: What do you think was the effect of students having their own little study where they could study or whatever – a space to call their own at the college?

NDE: Well, I don't know because I don't really have anything else to compare it to. But you see, we all lived in dormitories. I lived in the – we were on the second floor of this big open wooden structure. Have you been up there? All you had was a bed and – I don't remember – a bureau, but there must have been something. So you had no privacy. The study was the only place where you had any at all. So, I suspect that's fairly important.

MEH: Any other thoughts? Any other memories?

NDE: I'm trying to think about the Dreiers.

MEH: How did you dress?

NDE: [IRRELEVANT REMARKS TO AND ABOUT PETS] Oh, dear, let's see. Whatever happened to Anita Fein?

MEH: Any other particular memories of people or activities? Did you take part in any of the drama productions? Were there drama productions then?

NDE: Well, there was the – it was Art Penn, and he was doing the – he did the Satie play as I remember. No I didn't, I didn't get involved in that. Art Penn I found to be a very strange character. Seemed to me that he spoke very well about nothing, at great length, and so I never – I never warmed up to him. I'm trying

to think what happened to the – There was the chemistry professor and his wife who lived in one of the houses there.

MEH: Hansgirg?

NDE: Yeah, I think so. There was always the – Was he a communist? Annette used to tell me stories.

MEH: No, he –

NDE: Or was it his wife? It was something about his having to leave.

MEH: No, he was in this country. Again I won't put this on the tape, because it just – He wasn't a communist. You were really thinking about Carl Niebyl. Do you remember anything about that whole situation?

NDE: I just remember feeling rather badly about it. I think his wife was pregnant. I was not – I didn't know anything about communists, so I didn't know what was happening, but it seemed rather, rather brutal in some ways. I'm trying to remember what Annette told me. Did you interview her – Annette Stone?

MEH: No.

NDE: Oh, that's too bad, because she had loads of stories. She helped, I think – Fred Stone told me, maybe he told you that – was it Munch? What was the name of the fellow who was homosexual, had to leave?

MEH: Wunsch.

NDE: Wunsch. Yeah. I think Annette had helped him pack or something the night before he had to leave. I didn't know him. That was before, that was before my time, so I heard a little bit about that but probably from Annette. Then that other couple. I just mentioned the couple who had to leave because they were

supposed to be communists. But I remember the furious meetings. We just felt the college was kind of tearing itself apart, all these dissensions, and professors coming down who had only been there for a few months and had the full powers that the old guard had. That must have been very hard for Albers.

MEH: Did you take classes with Bolotowsky?

NDE: Bolotowsky was –

MEH: Painting.

NDE: Painting. Oh, yes, he and I were quite good friends. In fact, I visited him in New York in his apartment. I met his mother. They lived in a sort of railroad flat on 125th, New York. Then I also went with him to the old Museum of Modern Art before that was established. I remember going down to this place where there were all these modern paintings around. In fact I drove with him from, I think – yes, the last time I was there, at the end of that summer, I drove with him and one of the students who later committed suicide, up to New York. He was always somebody we would invite to any party, because he was such a good talker, amused everybody twisting his moustache.

MEH: Was there much drinking at the college?

NDE: I don't remember anybody getting drunk, but maybe, maybe they did. We certainly had beer. I don't remember drinking anything stronger. I never particularly liked beer, so I probably, I didn't, I didn't much. I don't – I don't think Faf did, and I don't have any memories. When we went to Annette's

house we usually just had – She used to pick wild mushrooms in the field, and we'd have wild mushrooms.

MEH: Do you have any particular memories of the Dreiers, Ted and Bobbie?

NDE: Not very much. Maybe the Rondthalers a little bit more. I remember them certainly visually. I never took any courses with Ted. I remember his son being there. Then the business that we were never to ride on the running boards of cars because that's how their son was killed. I didn't go with him on any hikes or – So I didn't really have any particularly close relationship – I guess I didn't have any close relationship with any of the teachers. I took a – I took that writing course with Merrick, Elliot Merrick.

MEH: What do you think was the effect of not having grades? Do you think it was good, bad?

NDE: That's right, I had to – I think finally the grading – They did grade, didn't they?

MEH: Well [OVERTALK]

NDE: Because I went for a brief spell to Cal State Northridge in music, and I had to get grades from – I had to get whatever happened to me at Black Mountain.

MEH: Grades were recorded in the office, for that very reason, for the sake of transcripts. But generally students, you know, you weren't given grades at the end of the semester.

NDE: Yeah. Yeah. I don't remember that, whether it had an effect. It obviously didn't have a good or bad effect, because I don't really remember. But it seemed to me that Albers gave me an A in his *matière* course. I seemed to be getting one of his high marks. I thought, "I've fooled him." [LAUGHS]

MEH: Do you remember what that particular matière was?

NDE: Yes, yes. It was the acorn, and I had taken the acorn cap, and I had arranged them in lines, like that, in a kind of a box thing about like that. I'd painted them in some special way so I think you didn't know quite what they were. It made a very interesting pattern, and that was what got me a good grade in that class. Maybe he gave grades. I don't know. Maybe he told the students. I just don't remember.

MEH: Did you save any of that material? Did you save anything from Black Mountain?

NDE: No, I gave away my one nice weaving piece to a friend I had in Philadelphia, and I think he's died. I don't know what's happened to it. I think there were some other pieces too. No, I really don't have anything. Don't have anything. I have three, three small paintings, three gouache paintings from then.

[OVERTALK]

MEH: Can you put your hands on them? Do you know where they are?

NDE: Yeah. I have those – [BREAK IN RECORDING]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]