

Interviewee: THEODORE DREIER, JR.
Interviewer: MARY EMMA HARRIS
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[BEGINNING OF Hi-8 CASSETTE 1]

MEH: [GIVES IDENTIFICATION].

TD: Okay. They [My son Richard Read, 40, and his wife Kim] moved back a couple of years ago. So then last year they were here because he won a Nieman fellowship, so they lived in this area and we got to see them quite a lot. Now they're back in Oregon and they're having a baby in another month.

MEH: Is this their first baby?

TD: This will be the first grandchild.

MEH: First grandchild! Oh.

TD: So that will be an event. Everybody's buying little things [LAUGHS]

MEH: I'm sure. [LAUGHS] Just getting ready.

TD: And excited about that. Then next is Kate, and she's 38 and she lives up near Dartmouth where she went to college and lives with a friend there and works for the Hanover Co-op, and she's the director of education, which involves a lot of marketing and education for members and general administration, too. Lisa, who is thirty, lives in Berkeley, California. She's been working for the Environmental Defense Fund as a money-raiser, developmental associate, for several years. But she also is somebody who has loved to travel, and she spent her junior year in South America, in Quito in Ecuador, and traveled throughout South America and has done some free-lance journalism in the past and now would really like to interview women activists in Asia. She went to a regional women's conference in Kuala Lumpur last summer as a little bit of a beginning and made quite a lot of contacts. Now she's sort of raising money, making more contacts, talking with people who might like to print something she writes and will probably be leaving the first of the year and going to, I think, India, Pakistan, and maybe Nepal. The youngest daughter, Ruth, is 28 and she's a herbalist. She's actually living with us at the moment. She had been living in Arlington and is back here for a bit. But she teaches courses in herbs, medicinal uses of herbs, and herbs in healing and has a practice as well. Currently doing mainly writing, writing up some of her ideas.

MEH: So it sounds like everyone is doing something adventurous and interesting.

TD: Yes, Yes.

MEH: Ted, getting to Black Mountain now, going back to Black Mountain, do you remember your earliest memory of the college? How old were you when you moved there?

TD: I was four-and-a-half when we moved there.

MEH: Can you remember the move?

TD: Well I remember moving, I remember the little house that we were in behind Lee Hall, at Black Mountain, it was called Overlook Cottage, and it was not far behind the din – Well, it was then the dining hall, which I think has since been torn down. But I remember going in the kitchen of Overlook Cottage, which was just stacked full of chairs, one on top of another like that, and someone said, “This is where we’re going to live.” [LAUGHS] So I remember that. I have quite a lot of childhood memories of Lee Hall and throughout the years there.

MEH: How do you remember Lee Hall?

TD: Well, I mean, in a lot of different ways. It’s a great big building with this big porch—you can see this wonderful view of the Craggy Mountains and everybody used to sit out there and look at the view. Whenever they’d have meetings out there, people would compete for the chairs where you could look at the view as well as have a meeting. So, I was kind of aware of that. But the building itself, it’s on an old YMCA conference ground massive building, and so faculty had offices there, students had studies there. Then there were various attics. So as a young kid I used to explore up there, and I could crawl out above the hall, above the big porch, and look down and even drop little rocks on people if I wanted to be mischievous. That was sort of fun, exploring that. The whole conference ground had a lot of different buildings that were used in the summer, and just a very few of them were used by the college for its faculty. So I and some of the other kids—there weren’t a whole lot of other kids there – but we would go around and explore and sometimes break into these buildings and bounce around on mattresses and play imaginary games and other games. Once even I and my younger brother, in a mischievous state of mind – we had some new slingshots. We went around and competed to see who could break the most windows. Didn’t usually do that kind of thing. My father was actually secretly pleased that he had “boys who would be boys,” I guess, because we hadn’t done much of that sort of thing. He was kind of intrigued. But it cost him eighteen dollars, which was a lot at the time, to repair all the windows.

MEH: So now this was Mark [OVERTALK] who was –

TD: This was Mark, who was three and half years younger than I, right.

MEH: So Eddie was born at Black Mountain.

TD: He was born at Black Mountain, right, 1937 I think, yeah.

MEH: So it sounds like, you know, as kids you had all the freedom in that cavernous space just –

TD: Yeah, lots of freedom to play all around. Not many of the faculty had kids. There was – Off and on there were kids there. The Moellenhoffs, that is – her first name –

MEH: Esther?

TD: But she [Anna Moellenhoff] taught biology and was sort of a physician for the campus, too. She had a daughter, Esther, who was about three or four years older than I and then a daughter, Andrea, who was just my age. So they were there three or four years when I was nine to ten, eleven, around then. That was while her husband, who was a psychiatrist from Germany, was redoing his entire medical training in Chicago, because they wouldn’t let him practice

unless he did everything all over again. So, he was separated from them most of the time. So, Andrea was – It wasn't an age where girl playmates were the favorite, but anyway she was there so we ran around and did things together. Once – There was another daughter of a person named John Dalton, who actually is related by marriage to my mother's family. They were around for half a – a couple of years, I guess. Nancy Dalton was a year younger. So the three of us would sort of band around together. There were various attempts to deal with the kind of poor quality of the Black Mountain schools there, so they even – my parents even arranged to have students make a little school, tutorial school, for the three of us one year. I think I was in the first grade. Who was it – Barbara Beatty, I think, was a student then, was a teacher I remember. So we were taught by students for a while. In second grade I went to Black Mountain public school, which was kind of a rougher, tougher environment than I was used to being in, and I got pushed around a bit there.

MEH: The kids were really –

TD: The kids were kind of tough, right. I looked different, and I spoke differently, and so that inspired them to push me around a bit. We went by school bus, and we'd be dropped off at the bottom of the long road up to, up to Lee Hall. I think. At least in later years, we did that, yeah.

MEH: Why do you think they didn't continue the little Black Mountain school? Do you have any idea?

TD: Well, Nancy Dalton went away for one thing. I think in the second grade, maybe it was a little bit more of a, you know, it would have been a little bit more of an academic planning enterprise. I don't know the details actually of how they persuaded the students to do it. Maybe it was a nice project or whatever, but it didn't... So, both of us then went to Black Mountain public schools, I think, so – Neither of us liked that. So then we went to private school by long car pools into Asheville, the Asheville Country Day School, for fourth and fifth grades. I think by then Andrea had left more or less – maybe. I think so. Then we went back to the Black – There was a sort of a division among the faculty in that school [the Asheville Country Day School], and I think my parents also disagreed with the firing of a nice liberal person there that some reactionary other parent group – So, they pulled me out of that school [LAUGHS] and I went back to Black Mountain public school, which again I didn't like too well but—

MEH: So you were doing a lot of moving back and forth (OVERTALK)

TD: A lot of moving back and forth, and there wasn't a lot of sort of next-door playmates so I kind of missed out on that kind of thing. But by that time there got to be a new stimulation when I was eleven years old, so that was 1940, and they were started to build – The bought the Lake Eden property and were starting to build a new Studies Building over there. So, I was all excited about that, and I wanted to join in with working there. So, when I got home at a time when there was trucks going over, I would go over or I would take a bus from Black Mountain over in that part of the country and then ride back with the students in the truck. [OVERTALK] I sort of worked on digging in the ditches, digging the foundation, doing all kinds of stuff. It was quite exciting.

MEH: That was a perfect age then for you to be there –

TD: Yeah, I really liked that. Everybody was kind of all gung ho about it and so it was exciting, yeah.

MEH: What do you remember – What were the Black Mountain public schools like then?

TD: Well, I don't know how to generalize about it. They certainly didn't have any imaginative projects. You had a textbook, you had a lesson, and you learned it and you had a little quiz and that was that. We were all lined up in desks according to the number of our grades, I guess, so I was sort of up with the top two or three or something like that and there were [OVERTALK] a lot of older kids –

MEH: Was there more than one grade in the classroom?

TD: No. No. There weren't. But there were a lot of different ages, with people who were repeating grades, things like that. So, I was eleven and I think there were some fourteen or fifteen year olds who were back at the end of the last desks. The teacher's name was Miss Miller, and she sort of liked me because I was a good student. We also had – It was the one time I really had any formal Bible teaching and that was kind of interesting. We had one lady with kind of a little temperament who sort of liked the Bible, and she said, "Well, you know, and then King Solomon told his general to put"—whoever it was, Bathsheba's husband—"out in the front, and he knew that wasn't the right thing to do, but he did it anyway." She would – But she kind of brought it down to our level and sort of taught us some of the Bible stories. So, I kind of actually enjoyed some of that although our family was not really into formal Christian worship. My father, I think, had been Episcopalian background, I think, yeah, and my mother came from sort of a mixed liberal background with traditions of Society of Friends, Quakers, and Unitarian grandmother and a mother who had been Episcopalian and then became a Theosophist. Then both parents were kind of interested in Friends for quiet, so we used to have quiet meetings sometimes, with us or our friends. So when I would go to school, either in Black Mountain or later at the Warren H. Wilson Junior Vocational College in Asheville, which was formerly known as the Asheville Farm School, which was vocational school where you worked half a day and went to school half a day, and was Presbyterian. But they would have some fire and lightning revivalist preachers come by every so often and say, "Okay, now, anybody who's a real Christian stand up!" I'd think, "Gosh, am I a real Christian or not?" They'd say, "Now everybody who didn't stand up, stand up." We'd stand up. Now they'd say, "Now all of you who'd like to come to Christ, you know, come forward." So, I would say, "Should I do this or not?" I sort of didn't have a frame of reference, in a way. So I actually went up once and then we were supposed to go talk to the minister and I did. He said, "Now do you want to join our church?" I said, "Well maybe I'll talk to my parents," so I did. They said, "Don't feel pressured." So I said, "We decided not now." Anyway, but we got sort of various colorful contacts with the religion in the area too.

MEH: So you went from the Black Mountain School to the Black Mountain public school to the private school in Asheville, back to the public school –

TD: And then actually back to the private school one more year, for the seventh grade, and then the eighth grade and the first half of the ninth I went to this vocational school which later became a junior college in Asheville.

MEH: Why did they choose a vocational school? That was an interesting choice.

TD: Well, I know. I don't quite know my parents' thinking on it, but they had tried both these others and they weren't so happy about it. My father had had some contact with the teacher of agriculture at the Asheville Farm School. His name was Larsen, and he sort of hired him as a consultant to come over and help with the college farm – Bernard Larsen, I think. A guy from Denmark, a good husky, healthy guy. So he – I think he was just ruminating – my dad. "Where shall we send my son to school?" He said "Well why don't you send him to us?" He seemed like a nice guy, so my father maybe thought it would be good for me or whatever. So, I went there and I actually lived with that professor for a few – and his family – a few weeks because there wasn't room in the main, the main dormitory. Then I moved into the main dormitory. It was again a pretty rough, tough place and guys would come around and dump you out of your bed at night. So I didn't feel very as though I had sort of easy access to being friends with people. But I did have some friends there and learned some things, worked on the farm, and then worked in the general engineering department which was dealing with electrical telephone poles and digging ditches when it was freezing weather, and stuff like that. So, we worked half a day and went to school half a day. This was boarding, so I'd be home for about half a day on Saturday.

MEH: And home was then Lake Eden?

TD: Home was in Lake Eden, right, yeah. But I wasn't happy there, and my parents knew that. Then they heard one way or another, Putney School in Vermont, and so I went up there in the middle of my ninth grade year. That was a breath of fresh air because first of all people talked a little like I did, they thought – I also had a little sense that I was learning what I should have been learning because in the summers we would go north, and, for instance, Malcolm Forbes was a good friend of my father and with whom they had taught together at Rollins College and he helped contribute funds for starting Black Mountain. We used to visit them on Naushon Island or up here. His oldest daughter Holly was just my age and an early childhood friend. So, I would hear that they were studying things like Julius Caesar and things like that, and I said, "Gee, we're not doing that. I don't know if I'm getting the education I should." So, as luck would have it, I just started at the Putney School studying Julius Caesar, so I began to be reassured I was in the right place after all. So, I continued there and graduated from there and then went two years to Black Mountain as a student and then transferred to Harvard. I did apply to Harvard and to Swarthmore and Black Mountain. I was accepted at all of them but I decided to go to Black Mountain to try that out. I had been exposed to some of the exciting art and music there in their summer institutes. My parents were excited about that. I kind of was. So, I thought well, I might go into music – I didn't know what. So I went back for that.

MEH: Now I'm going to skip way back now that we've gone through this chronology and then we'll come back to your student days at Black Mountain. Okay, going back to Lee Hall, as a family you didn't live in Lee Hall.

TD: No. We lived in a cottage called Overlook Cottage. There was – as you remember, Lee Hall is sort of, looks out over the valley and then if you walk through Lee Hall you would go up a covered walkway to what used to be the dining hall. If you went through the dining hall, you would come to the – both the boiler, where our friend Leroy used to shovel coal in and make us slingshots on the side, and then you'd turn right. About a couple hundred yards you'd come to little Overlook Cottage and that's where we lived, right near a stream there. Actually right by the trail that went up to the ridge — “High Windy,” “High Top,” “Brown's Pasture,” which my father used to regularly run up for – not relaxation, but rest and [LAUGHS] a change from the college. So we lived in that little house. When, I guess when Mark – no, I guess when Eddie was coming along, we remodeled it enough to put a basement in. Mother's grandmother, I think, gave us the money to have a little more room for the new baby. So –

MEH: What do you remember at Lee Hall about mealtime. This cottage was fully equipped with a kitchen and – Was it – ?

TD: Well, we ate with the college.

MEH: You ate with the college.

TD: And we would maybe have a few little family meals. We didn't really have much of a dining room there. I think we had sort of kitchen-dining area. So maybe Sunday nights or weekends we would have some food there, but otherwise at least I went and took all my meals with the students in the dining hall.

MEH: Did your family sit together, or were you allowed to move around and have your own seat – ?

TD: It was more likely to be separate, really. I mean, I would sort of go on my own time. If my parents were there, I might sit with them. I might not. If some of the other kids were there, I would probably sit with them. Otherwise with some of the students I would sit with them. I developed favorites among the students, among those who were a little-kid-oriented –

MEH: Like?

TD: Like passed the football with me or who'd give me a warm greeting. Some of those students that I remember over the years – One was Doughten Cramer, who used to go on hikes with my dad and Morton Steinau. There were a couple of twins called Murphy – called them the “Murphy twins” – and they were sort of friendly and I liked them. Bela Martin was one of my heroes. He was a very good athlete, who could have been a professional football player, I think, but wanted to find out what he really wanted to do so came to Black Mountain and studied art and studied drama, and he played Death in The Dance of Death. He's the one I wrote about in that poem I put in the exhibit there? Then Bob Babcock taught either social studies or history – this was later on, I think, maybe it was both Blue Ridge and Lee Hall. He was a faculty member, actually. But he was kind of athletic.

MEH: He was child-oriented, child-centered?

- TD:** A little bit child-oriented. A buddy of his was John French, whom I also knew, connected with the Cambridge School of Weston. His father had started that, and they also started a camp in Maine called the Alamoosook Island Camp, where I went as a kid. So he was there as a counselor so I knew him from there. I was really thrilled when he came back [to Black Mountain], because he was another hero – great canoesman, woodsman, and he actually became a professor of psychology. Quite a number of the students got to know – My mother was a great favorite among various of the students. They would come and chat with her. Some of the most sensitive, like artistic men, would come up there a lot, like Don Page, Alex Reed, Fernando Leon – he wasn't so much into art but anyway they were good friends. They would come home, and she'd often give them tea and things like that, so I'd know them, and we were on friendly terms with them. Probably others might pop into my head.
- MEH:** Do you – I'll throw some names – Students it's really hard to say because there were so many. What about – Do you remember Dante Fiorillo?
- TD:** Yes.
- MEH:** What do you remember about Dante.
- TD:** Well, he, I remember him as – I mean, I guess he was a musician, but for us kids he was a magician, and he used to do magic tricks. So he would, you know, make a penny be in a certain place or something like that, or whatever, or we would find – I forget all the tricks. But I even had a little funny experience with him once because I really felt he was favoring all the other kids [LAUGHS] in one little game and they were finding things. So I said, "I'm not finding anything," and so then – Then he said "Oh look, he's going to find it" – as I was heading somewhere, and for some reason I just then wheeled away and then went somewhere else and didn't so somebody else found it where he had left it. So I suppose I was playing a trick back at him or something. But I don't remember a whole lot. But he was on the whole kind of friendly, but we thought of him mainly as somebody who could do these tricks from a kid point of view.
- MEH:** I heard stories of him, you know, the kids trailing around after him.
- TD:** Yeah, yeah.
- MEH:** Playing games with kids.
- TD:** Yeah, yeah. So he was very friendly and nice in that way, yeah.
- MEH:** What do you remember about John Rice?
- TD:** John Rice? He was – Over the years I remember him as kind of a portly guy who would give us a little bit of twinkle in the eye and a hand wave so I kind of liked him, but he was in another more intellectual world most of the time. Then there was a period where he was kind of giving out candy to the kids, so that was sort of friendly. I did have one episode with him that was scary and unhappy, which was in one of the buildings next to Lee Hall – I forget what it was. If you're standing on the porch looking at the view, it's down to the right. They used to – There was sort of an auditorium there and he was rehearsing a play, I guess maybe. I don't think he usually directed plays but maybe one of his classes or whatever. There was also a projection little unit there, a little projection room, and we kids used to go up and play around in there. So I started to go up with some other kids to play around in there, and he said,

“Shhhh” So we went up there, and I totally forgot they were doing this play, so I came out and made some noise. He got absolutely furious and chased me then all the way up the covered walk and then – and kept chasing me. I ran into this big ditch that went around Lee Hall, and ran around that and all the way around to end of that and I got cornered. He then grabbed me and shook me and said “Never do that again. I told you not to disturb the play.” So I was shocked and scared by that and wouldn’t accept candy from him anymore. Then when he left and the trouble he got into – I just remember hearing a little, “Well, he fell in love with a student,” something like that. I think my mother said at one point, “He used to make fun of everybody else for falling in love and then he fell in love....” or something like that. But of course he showed poor judgment with what he did, too.

MEH: What do you remember about Josef Albers?

TD: All kinds of things, because we lived together – I guess in Lake Eden our families lived together, and before that I remember them more as just kind of good friends with my parents, and we would often go on rides together. They loved – the Albers loved the mountains and the great change of color in the fall. He would sometimes go and ride, and my father would take him these special mountain roads he knew, and he’d say “Look at that red up there,” and he’d say “Yes,” and they’d have a wonderful time. We’d have Sunday picnics. I remember all those Sunday outings very much and they were part of it so they were part of sort of some fun escapades. Later my dad got even more busy and I sort of missed the fact that we didn’t go on those so much. Then when we were at Lake Eden, they lived in one half of a house – it was sort of a double house with a common room and a common stairway – and we lived in another half. So I would just – got to know them, and, but, you know, as older people. But they were always kind of very friendly to us. Actually, another little memory I remember back when we were at Lee Hall and I was much younger. Sometimes I would sit by them when I was very young at breakfast. We had boiled eggs, and apparently it was a German tradition with the boiled egg, you’d cut the top off the hard boiled eggs and the top is “für die Kinder.” So he would make a point of trying to find a child to give that to and often it would be me. So that was kind of friendly. Then in our house he had made a garden out in back, of vegetables and grew herbs and dill and all, and he liked doing that for relaxation. And –

MEH: I heard he had cactuses in his garden. Do you remember that?

TD: I don’t remember the cactuses. I remember the dill and the lavender and I think – I was trying to think if my younger sister was big enough then. I think not. She was about two years old when we left there. But my younger brother Eddie used to go out. Actually Albers became a godfather for him. So I remember them working out there quite a lot. Then I remember hearing conversations in German between Anni and Juppi, and you could just tell by the tone of voice – I’d sort of try to guess by the tone of voice what it was about. [IMITATES]. Something like that. But then I also gradually began to pick up a few little words, like –

TD: – like something something something, nicht? Or nicht, Juppi? Something like that. So I remember that. Then, of course, I was a student later, too.

MEH: Describe the layout of the house that you shared with them. What was the name of the house that you shared? [TECHNICAL INTERRUPTION] Okay, describe the layout of the house that you shared.

TD: Well, the house was called “Roadside” and it was by the road, not too far from the shop and not too far from Meadows Inn. It burned down some later years, I heard.

MEH: As you go up the road, was it on the left or the right-hand side?

TD: It was on the right-hand side, right on the right-hand side just after you cross the bridge. You just turned right into our place. So – But the main entrance was facing toward the valley, so if you walked in that front door, there was a porch for one thing, and we kind of each had our own section of the porch. Then you walked in, and there was a pretty big central room, which wasn’t used very much but sometimes both my parents and the Albers would gather there or sometimes there would be meetings there. Then they had – lived in two separate rooms on the left. This central room actually you could walk through, walk through out and then you would be sort of coming to where the road was and where his garden was, pointing west, I guess. Something. But going back to walking in that front door, right on the left was Albers’s study – Juppi’s study – and then there was a piano and then a little further on the left was Anni’s room. In between those two rooms they had a bathroom and some closets, and that was their lower floor. Then upstairs on the left was sort of an attic, unfinished attic, with, you know I think no ceiling but with rafters, and that was his studio. Then I think he stored things up on the rafters some of the time. Then if you went upstairs right ahead, there was our upstairs bathroom, which came out into the stairway hall, and you turned to the right and there was the area where we lived – the upstairs – though my parents had downstairs rooms too. So going back downstairs and coming in the front door on the right would be my parents’ bedroom, and then there would be a fireplace in the central room, and you’d go further and there was another door and that would go into my father’s study. There was also a connecting little hallway between those two rooms and the bathroom downstairs. Then upstairs – it had been originally totally unfinished and then my parents did some sort of primitive remodeling of it, and they had hung some curtain, dividers, where I and my brothers would sleep. Yeah, I and Mark and Eddie, we would sleep there. We had a little dining area there. Then later they did a little more work and put in some half-walls. So it was fairly simple, primitive living conditions.

MEH: Now on your side did your parents sleep upstairs?

TD: They slept downstairs.

MEH: And then the kids were upstairs. On the other side, the Alberses, when you say his study, that was like an office downstairs?

TD: Are you talking about the Albers?

MEH: Josef Albers. Juppi.

TD: He had like a little office downstairs and a studio upstairs.

MEH: And they slept – ?

TD: And they – Let’s see, where did they sleep? I think they mostly each slept – His office also had a bed in it, and her little area too also had a bigger bed. So I think when they slept together, they’d sleep in her bed, but I sort of gathered, I didn’t think they spent all of all nights in that bedroom. They would join up there sometimes. She had it kind of elegantly laid out with curtains coming down and all white everywhere. It was all kind of a primitive building, really made for the summer and then somewhat primitively remodeled to make it tolerable in the North Carolina winters. They made it all quite elegant by painting it all white and having all these wonderful pictures everywhere and so forth. That was a great bonus there. He would have his pictures all over the house and loaned my parents ones to have in their area so that was fun, and we could see him painting up there into the night, often by artificial light, fluorescent light. He said, “Well, people are going to look at my paintings in artificial light. Might as well paint them that way.”

MEH: Now the central area, was that two stories? Or was that– ?

TD: It was one story. It was one story but there was a stairway that went up on the side of it, yeah.

MEH: So, okay, I’m trying to think now before we go to your student days. What do you remember about the construction of the Studies Building?

TD: At the time it was built?

MEH: Yeah. From a kid’s point of view.

TD: Yeah, from a kid’s point of view. Well, I remember there were whole gangs of people working there and so – I remember quite a bit about some of the various stages of it. First, it was foundations, so there would be digging out away from the side of the hill in which there was going to be – one end of it was going to be nestled and then it was stretching out along the shore of the lake with these Lally columns holding it up. So I remember digging away at that hill, first, and then they put up these reinforced concrete pylons along the course of the building. I remember some of the students, you know, carrying concrete. They had concrete [UNINTEL] mixed – I don’t know if they ordered it or if they mixed it. I think a little of both, maybe. It would be mixed, and they would carry the concrete in this, in these big wheelbarrows with balloon tires. Actually, one of the people who had encouraged the faculty to, you know, that they would be able to build this building was somebody who had led student groups to Europe. The name was Dick Gothe, I think. I think it was spelled like Goethe, but they called it Gotha. So he was kind of a big, tall, large and a little flabby-looking guy with a loud voice and a fair amount of enthusiasm, and he said, “Of course, you can do it.” So they said “Well, we’ll build our own building then.” So, then they hired him to help do it. But everybody didn’t like him. Somehow he was a little bit bombastic and talked as though he knew it all and wasn’t really that sharp, people felt, but I remember he said,, “Get me two blue-pointed shovels,” he said, because they were the sharp and the better, so I would run and get the shovel and bring it to him. I remember one of the big husky students named Paul Wiggan said, “That Gothe is blankety-blank-blank.” [LAUGHS] So, the students didn’t like him too well. But anyway he persuaded them, the whole faculty and students, they could do it. They got it going and he

participated in some of it, and so he played a key role. Anyway, I remember him calling for those blue-pointed shovels and people didn't know why he should always have the best shovels, but he did [LAUGHS]. Then I remember doing some of the framing too, when we were framing, and I did a lot of the nailing in too, so I have some nails in that Studies Building at age eleven, I think. So that was fun. Then it all went up, and it was quite exciting to see when the frame actually went up and you could really see it. They would take pictures and go try to raise some more money to build some more of it. So, it was kind of an exciting time with everybody gathering together on this big project.

MEH: Do you remember Larry Kocher?

TD: Yes, though he was younger, by quite a bit.

MEH: No, I was thinking of Larry's father.

TD: Oh, yes.

MEH: But that's right, the Kocher children were quite a bit younger than you, weren't they?

TD: That's right. Yeah. Yes, I do. I do. He was nice and friendly and kind of a warm voice and I just remember him saying once, "Gee, I don't know, Ted," he said to my dad, I just remember this kind of warm thoughtful way he kind of came across, and he was sort of well-liked.

MEH: From your childhood, from your time as a faculty child before you became a student, do you remember any particular parties at the college?

TD: Yeah, I do. Mainly it's a little hard to pinpoint which one, but I have sort of spot memories of different parties, and I do remember at Blue Ridge the after dinner dancing with John Evarts playing and everybody dancing and that was lots of fun. My parents loved it. They loved to dance, and it was a great mixer of sort of students and faculty. John Evarts was a wonderful sort of – I guess I'd kind of call him a social director. Well, briefly he would become one, and he would say, you know, "Change partners, please," and sort of mix people up and then give people all hands in a row, and then you'd go right hand and left and then he would stop it. Sometimes he would stop it when he had people he wanted to have dance together. Like he'd have Bob Wunsch, our short pudgy little director would dance with a tall student and he'd do something like that a couple of times. But he exuded kind of a warm, friendly enjoy-yourself atmosphere, and that was nice. Then some of the parties at Blue Ridge – When he was there, they would have dancing during them too, some of the costume parties. And looking back at some of the photographs like in your book of the masks and all, I do remember some of those, though I don't have so many original memories of those. Otherwise, at Lake Eden, as a child, I don't remember the parties so much. John Evarts was no longer there and it didn't have that kind of dancing. There would be a little bit ad hoc jazz trio that would come which – and there would be a certain amount of dancing, but not so much. So it didn't have a sense of including the whole community as much. Of course, some of the older faculty didn't know how to do the new jazz, so maybe that changed things a little, too.

MEH: Were you as a child that much aware of the various political crises taking place at the college?

TD: Sometimes. Sometimes. Yeah, because being home, and I would hear my parents talk about it. But I wouldn't have like very many detailed knowledge of some of the controversies, but little sort of spinoff comments when I was younger. But I remember – I remember there was this, I don't know all the details about it, I guess, but it was when Frances de Graaff had these two advisees who went hitchhiking, got picked up. You're not supposed to hitchhike in North Carolina so they were accused of prostitution and sort of a threat of it getting into the papers and so I remember my father had to go and get involved with lawyers and try to straighten out the whole public relations aspect of it. But at that time, there was also a kind of a faction, I guess, developing with – at least my parents felt, at least with Frances deGraaff, I guess, sort of made a bit of a clique of her advisees, and they somehow developed boundaries between the rest of the community and put a little bit of a negativistic stance to whatever aspects – this was my general sense. So they didn't think that was so healthy. Then later on there got to be a bit more of a faction. I think that with Frances deGraaff and Clark Foreman and some others. It partly took shape during one of the summer sessions when they could develop kind of a schism and a group of people who left and she was one of them, I guess. I guess it partly focused around her, they decided not to reappoint her, the board decided not, and then so some of the other faculty rose up and they had a big to-do about it. But I don't remember being very much in the know of a lot of details there. But I remember one of the students saying, "God, Clark Foreman can take something and just twist it politically like anything," you know. That statement that some student was saying there.

MEH: Did you take part in any drama productions as a kid?

TD: Yes, I did. That was one of the advantages of being the only kid there. [LAUGHS] You got all the kid parts. So I – I kind of enjoyed that. That was fun. It was Bob Wunsch directing.

MEH: Do you remember any plays in particular?

TD: Sure, I think so. I remember there was one called Bury the Dead. I guess that was Irwin Shaw. And let's see, Soldiers Who Won't Die and Won't Be Buried, or something like that. So, they did quite a big production of it, and there was this nice program they made with red ink, and George Hendricks [Hendrickson], a student who was doing design and printing. On each one of them, he put his hand on some red ink and put his hand, made a handprint.

MEH: That was his handprint.

TD: That was his handprint on there. That's a very impressive program. My father was in it as an editor, and Ken Kurtz an English teacher, I think, or a Spanish teacher. Whichever it was – English, I guess, was a reporter and there's a photograph of them in your book, I guess in that production. But it starts out with a news, a little newsboy running out, "Extra, extra, read all about it. They won't die, they won't die, they won't be buried. Read all about it!" I remember some of the students coaching me – "Throw in a few extras in there" or something like that. [LAUGHS] So that was kind of fun. Then there was, I think it's Ah! Wilderness. It starts out – I was the first person on stage, again. I'd come out and I was supposed to wipe my hand like that, and someone says

“Tommy, finish your milk!” or something like – “Oh Ma, I don’t want to, I’m full anyway,” or something like that. But that was fun. A few other things. They were mostly small parts, but it was kind of fun to be part of it.

MEH: You really took all of this for granted as a child, being in these productions and taking part in the work program.

TD: I guess so. Well, I didn’t see it happening other places, but it was happening where I was so I just took part in it and enjoyed it, yeah. That was fun.

MEH: The summers when your parents went to Mexico, did you go with them or did you stay in the States?

TD: No, I stayed home.

MEH: Home being –

TD: Home being – I’m not – Let’s see, that would have been in the mid-30s, I guess. So, I think probably I stayed with some relatives up – either the grandparents Dreier on Long Island or grandmother Loines on Martha’s Vineyard. I don’t remember specifically.

MEH: But you didn’t go on those trips.

TD: I didn’t go on those trips, no. Another thing I remember – When I was a teenager, I really enjoyed taking part in the farm, and I would go over and work on the farm with the students and the farmer there, and cut corn. When I was age fourteen, I learned to drive the dump truck and help build a road there, you know, backing up the dump truck, so I felt kind of macho with that. It was fun. Then Molly Gregory was always a wonderful, perceptive person, and she ran the shop and was glad to help us build things. So I had some pet goats, and she helped me build some houses for them and a milk stand that we’d milk the goats on, and so I spent a lot of time doing that. So that was fun.

MEH: What do you remember about Molly?

TD: Well, she – She had a kind of a nonchalant way but sort of a definite way, and she had a nice way with students and younger people and would welcome me and sometimes some of the other farm kids to come in and do something in the shop. Then I remember also when she really made some beautiful pieces of furniture that we – my parents ordered, I guess, and that became our dining room table up in Roadside and made some of these little stools that looked just like that and some other little pieces of furniture too. She was good friends with my parents, and she was on the board so she and my dad would have these long discussions. Then sometimes she would come down and just hang out with my mother, sort of, and sort of lean on my mother’s doorjamb, I guess you’d call it, and a little bit pour her heart out. I don’t remember too many of the words, but – I think mother once said, “Well, you know, she’s really in love with Bill Reed but doesn’t realize he’s not interested in that.” But they – I mean they were good friends. I remember that. But she was just a very nice warm person. I remember sort of politically hearing – There was one student moderator who was interested in being a politician. His name was McLaughlin, I think. I forget his first name. So he got himself elected quite a few years and was quite a thorn in the board’s side, I think, because he wanted to learn to be a politician so he would sort of mobilize things for that purpose. He began to talk about, you know, Albers, Dreiers, Gregory. That’s the Old Guard Coalition there. So –

and he would sort of try to coin that term and sort of mobilize people against that coalition, something like that. But I guess then they were people who had a lot of common views – Albers and Dreier and Gregory – and had a common belief in I guess the arts and practical ways of managing things and a little bit of a common distrust of fancy intellectualism. Taking note of people who would come out with, you know, out of social theories but didn't seem to be that functional – wouldn't have much integrity as people, they thought. I mean there were some judgments there too, I guess. But they shared some perceptions there.

MEH: [MECHANICAL INTERRUPTION] We were talking about the Alberses. There was a sense, and I don't know as a child, you probably have a great sense of this from being a student there, but I sense, talking to the students – Obviously there were people who shared political, you know, the same political perspective. But also I guess the students felt that there was sort of an elite group. There were people who felt that they were sort of an elite group – the Dreiers, the Alberses, who else would have been in that, probably New Englanders. Do you think that was the case or – ? Identified more with maybe the refugee group.

TD: Well, yeah. I mean I – But I'm not quite sure which students you might be thinking would have the perspective. But, I mean, people that I think of as my parents sort of having a natural affiliation to? Or –

MEH: Right, I think that's good, a natural affinity with.

TD: Yeah, both, either through intellectual common ideas or just liking them. I mean they actually liked almost everybody to quite a degree. But people they were maybe a little closer to would include the Albers and Molly Gregory and then the Jalowetzes too, though I think – They both liked Heinrich Jalowetz very much but then, of course, he died. But then they, you know, were quite close to Johanna and then her daughter Trude Guermonprez, Jalowetz-Guermonprez, who became close friends with my parents. She would sometimes go with us on weekend drives and things like that. Then I think there were probably lots more that I – Those just sort of jump to mind a little, you know. There were people they knew from the old days like Nell Rice, who was kind of hale and hearty and opinionated. She was on the board some of the time. But, you know, my father had sort of a longtime friendship with her, but she was a little less in tune to art and to the intellectual side of things. Mr. John Andrew Rice used to say he won all the arguments, but she won all the battles – something like that. [LAUGHTER] Reportedly she was a flaming beauty in the old days. But I remember once my mother saying – My dad said he's got to go up and talk to Nell Rice before the board meeting. She said, "Remember the kiss is the quickest," or something like that. I guess what she meant by that was just that, you know, giving her some support and sort of some affectionate recognition would mean she wouldn't have to be so anxiously worried about was she still going to be librarian or were they going to have a bigger library or not. I mean, if she kind of felt some basic support. Oh, and then other musicians, Charlotte Schlesinger known as Bimbus was a close friend of ours, and she was a

teacher of mine when I was a student there too. Then a wide variety of students and some of the other faculty, and their names just don't jump to me so much.

MEH: How do you remember Jalowetz – Heinrich?

TD: Heinrich? I wasn't around him very much then because I was away at boarding school, but I remember people's enthusiasm about his warmth and inspiration. There is this wonderful photograph of him conducting like this, and I can just – that matches very much the sense I get of him. Molly Gregory saying once, you know, "Jalowetz can be just so exciting to sing with," or something like that. Then there was a little bit of campus jokes about him being an absent minded professor, you know, and his wife probably used to tell us stories of "Heini, love, please go get me an aspirin?" and so he went somewhere and got her an aspirin, and then she said later, "Heini, what about the aspirin?" "It's all right, I took it." Something like that. [LAUGHS] But she did that in a friendly way, you know.

MEH: Did you have a sense of the European refugees, of their being refugees? Or just being people from Germany with an accent, or – ? As a child, do you remember?

TD: I'm trying to think a little. I mean, I have some sort of vague memory, I don't know whether it was my parents or not, of on the one hand thinking, "Well, you know, in Europe" – some of them at least thought things were too informal here, to be called by first names and things like that. I remember that sort of thing. I mean, I think Albers didn't want students to call him "Juppi" quite, but, I mean, he didn't make a big fuss but he was sort of more known as Albers or Mr. Albers, something like that. But some, quite a few would call him Juppi anyway, and he would respond. He wasn't quite so comfortable with that, except for people he was very close to, I think. On the other hand, you know, people coming from Europe like from the Bauhaus, they were in the forefront of change so they were sort of less conservative about some things than some of the more intellectual teachers there. So I think there was a bit of melding, but on the whole, kind of the inspiration and excitement of what the Europeans were bringing far outweighed any other cultural concerns, I think, particularly in the beginning. I mean, Albers with his classes,, and everybody would join in and it gave people a sense of excitement of what's going on and there's something really new here. Oh, that wonderful story about somebody who wanted to study modern art, and she called, asked Walter Gropius, and he said, "Well Josef Albers at Black Mountain College," and she asked somebody else who was in Paris and he said "Oh, Josef Albers, Black Mountain College." Took a train to Black Mountain, and nobody could tell her where the college was or something. [LAUGHS] Later on, I think, they came to be like the old timers and the newer blood, and it was – then the Europeans were seen a little bit more as resistant and hanging on. There were financial aspects to that, too. I mean Albers had put years of their lives and probably didn't have financial backup otherwise. Nell Rice was a separated, I mean, a divorced woman and a widow, and some other people. So they kept saying to my dad, you know, we've got to have some security, you know. So, he did kind of go out on a limb to get them some government bonds, and then people got very mad at him about that

[INAUDIBLE] and I think that, you know, led to some kind of panic reaction and sort of led to them being angry and finally saying please, leave, when he'd actually been saying he wanted to leave for a long time but nobody'd kind of get a replacement [for his role].

MEH: What do you remember about the death of Mark?

TD: Well, I mean, what I remember from a personal point of view was that he and I and Eddie, I guess, and Gertrude, our colored maid, were taken by Mother in our car up the creek a ways, a little ways up the valley to where there was kind of a swimming hole, and we all had a swim there. I think. Yeah. Then we decided that some of us would walk back and – Let's see, I think, I guess Mother had to take Eddie somewhere. She drove off. Gertrude and I and Mark and a little farm neighbor boy named Jack Penley, who was Mark's age and a friend of his, were all walking back. As we walked back along this road which was – [MECHANICAL INTERRUPTION]

MEH: Okay.

TD: The road was in very poor shape. We'd had a big flood and that whole stream had overflowed its banks. The road was washed out and somewhat put together, but it was very bumpy and narrow, without good shoulders or anything. Anyway, Jack Lipsey, Winston Lipsey, the cook, and another black man drove by and stopped and said did we want a ride, and I said "Well, no, I'll walk and I'll stay" – I think maybe I also thought I should stay with Gertrude and Eddie, because I would have been twelve, I guess, then. Mark was nine. They wanted to ride back – Jack and Mark. So they jumped on the running boards and grabbed hold and drove off. Then as we walked up further, we saw some people kind of running in the distance, something like that. I at first didn't pay much attention to it, and then Gertrude seemed to have sensed something might have happened. She said, "I wonder if there could have been a problem or something." Then our car came driving up, and mother was in it and Morton Steinau was driving, and she said, "Well Mark has had an accident" and so they took me, drove us home. I guess – No did they? No, they didn't. They said, "We'd like you to go back home this other way." Then they must have asked her, you know, "Do you want to go with him," and she says "No, I don't really want to go home at this point. I want to go back."

MEH: Your mother.

TD: My mother said, right. So she went back. Then so it was several hours later at home when the parents came back and I sort of didn't think, didn't really think it was that bad, or whatever – I forgot that it could be serious. She said, "We couldn't save him," so that was very sad. Then some aftermath of that was the service at our house in that – [STOPS]. Brings back some memories. In that central area where we had a piano, and Heinrich Jalowetz played a beautiful prelude by Bach in e-flat, e-flat minor prelude. We recently played that for my dad's service, a little bit. It was kind of an echo. Bob Wunsch spoke a few words, and I just remember him kind of just reflecting, his memories of Mark as a joyous young kid running around, and I think people commented on that a lot. Of course, he had a lot of energy, very smiley and just well-loved by everybody. I don't remember too much else from that service. But Alex Reed wanted to do

something so he built the Quiet House in memory of Mark, and so that was an extra reason that was a very special place. That was such a beautiful house, in the old days – of course it has changed.

MEH: The photographs were wonderful. That's the one thing that has been done, you know, by the Pickering group that I just feel was an abomination.

TD: Oh, yeah, when I saw what happened – they put on extra bathrooms and put another story and – It was a little too old and just no longer there.

MEH: It was the wrong thing to do, to say the least.

TD: I think – Yeah, it could have been – Because it was extraordinary building.

MEH: It was extraordinary – Besides being a memorial to Mark, it was just an extraordinarily beautiful little building. I visited it actually before they had done that. They'd done some but not what they've done now.

TD: You said Molly made – Molly Gregory worked with Alex Reed on that and built these wonderful oak benches which were nicely treated with oil. We could still smell the fragrance.

MEH: Did you see the oak benches when you were there for the reunion?

TD: I don't think they were still – All the building was –

MEH: They're in – A couple of them in the Studies Building, in the hall there.

TD: Oh are they. Huh. Oh, I see.

MEH: Which may be something someone might want to try to save at some point.

TD: Hm. That's a thought. The – I remember the stories of when Alex Reed was building that, and he had never done any masonry before, but he had this wonderful sense of design. So one of the local masons was teaching him who had no great sense of design. So they would work on it together during the day and the mason would leave at five and then Bill would tear down what the other guy had done and put in some beautiful masonry. But it was just an extraordinary building. Then it had, you may be familiar with this piece that Betty Brett wrote that she sent about how it affected the community too, which I wasn't so much aware of then. But it –

MEH: Well, that was an interesting observation of hers at the moment. Of course it's one person's –

TD: Yes, that's right.

MEH: It's really how one person was affected, you know, by it.

TD: True. Though she gave some little quotes of other people and people getting around and talking about it.

MEH: [OVERTALK] I think the whole community was stunned and affected. Your comments, I mean, it was like a light that had gone out – this very lively, perceptive child. Now one thing that I've heard, also, and never – It's interesting because what you had told me about what preceded the accident, that your family had been together – because generally kids, the kids say well, he had been at the farm with the farmer or something like that, and you have your own correct memory of what had preceded it. Now one thing that students have told me, a couple of people, was that there was concern about anger in Black Mountain and Asheville that a black man had been driving the truck when he was killed and that your father had gone into Asheville the night he died and –

TD: There was a car, yeah –

MEH: Do you remember anything about that? To quell any disturbance.

TD: What I do remember is that Mother telling me that they had gone to see Jack, but she didn't mention any of the political kind of fears. It seemed more just like a human touching base. She quoted the conversation. She said, "You know," he said "Miz Dreier, why couldn't it have been me! I've lived my life." She said something comforting to him, can't remember. But she did say to me at one point, you know, I don't know if he might have been drinking or something. I mean, in fact it maybe crossed her mind. So that was the – It's possible there could have been some concern about that because periodically we would, you know, hear about possible anger because we were "nice to blacks" or something like that. But I don't have a specific memory about that.

MEH: I should ask your mother, because she would remember whether he actually did that, went in town or not.

TD: Whether my dad did, yeah. Yeah.

MEH: She would know. Because just the year before, Frank Nacke had died at the college.

TD: That's right. Yes.

MEH: So it was really a –

TD: That's right. We were up at New York, New York state at our summer place at Lake George, and my father got this telegram, I remember, that included "Frank Nacke drowned," something, and he was asked him to come back I think. I think he was actually on a sabbatical and then there was the problem with Bob Wunsch who had to resign suddenly, and then so Dad was elected to be Rector even though he was going to be away on sabbatical. It was all very awkward but then they wanted him to come back at least for that. [UNINTELLI WORD] So, so he [Frank Nacke] and Morton Steinau had gone out because there was concern that the lake was overflowing this dam and that it would be overflowing, not just the concrete dam, but the dirt shoulders and maybe break through and wreck the lake. There was a drain, but you had to go out in a boat to undo it. So, Morton Steinau and Frank went out to try to do that, and they were swept over – the boat – and Frank was drowned and Morton was not drowned but quite exhausted by experiencing it.

MEH: Thinking of, I was going to ask you about –

TD: I think Jalowetz died, it seemed like it was sometime around that time.

MEH: It was about four or five years later.

TD: Was it? Yeah. Okay.

MEH: At Black Mountain – There was someone who – of course, the first year –

TD: Shot himself?

MEH: Yeah, there was a student who shot himself [OVERTALK] Richard Montgomery Sears Porter, I think was his name. Dick Porter.

TD: Maybe.

MEH: I hope I'm using the right name. But then the first year –

TD: I remember just about then we all – The whole community used to sit out in back of Lee Hall in the sun, you know, and then there was this sun porch and everything. I was at a cowboy-playing game age, and I thought I'd bring my little toy six-shooter around, and Mother said, "Let's put that away and I'll tell you

later.” So I didn’t know what it was. I said, “Gee, what was it?” “It’s not that nice, you know, it was – people are sensitive to guns because so-and-so shot himself.”

MEH: It seems that –

TD: And apparently he had told somebody, a girl, and she – but made her promise not to tell anybody, and she hadn’t, so people were feeling critical towards her and stuff.

MEH: But it seems that Black Mountain was truly a community, and I guess any close community is in that it experienced, you know, death and birth and all of the various things that happen in a community and in families. The young and the old.

TD: Right. Yeah, I think – People felt it, yeah, and would come together for a memorial and feel affected by it.

MEH: Did you, in the summers when you were at Lee Hall, and the building was closed down so the Christians could come in, what did you do in the summertimes?

TD: Mostly our family went north and stayed with other family. One summer we stayed at least part of the summer in a farmhouse at Blue Ridge. There was a little farmhouse. I mean, the college didn’t really have much of a farm there. I can’t remember if they had a little bit of a work – I don’t think they had much of a formal work program [at that time], but there was some involvement with – Anyway, I think our family rented that house and stayed in it for a few months. I was quite young, I don’t remember much. Usually we drove north and then, in fact, that’s when we would – it was my memory of family time. We’d go up to a little camp that my parents kept at Lake George and live together, eat together, swim together, go on canoe paddles together, so [or] all go to Martha’s Vineyard and visit my other grandmother [Loines], or Long Island to visit those grandparents [Dreier]. So that was sort of our family time, in a way. Some summers, a couple of summers I went to camp – three summers, I guess, to camp. There was the French’s camp up in Maine that had some connection with other students there. There were three members of the French family – the son of John R. P. French, who was the head, who started the Cambridge School of Weston and his wife, Somebody French, known as “the Admiral,” who ran the camp. A little stocky bossy woman. Then, her three children all came to Black Mountain – Nathaniel French, who then went on and taught history or something, or sociology, somewhere in Connecticut. He said, “You know, I’m teaching Ph.D.s but I only have a Black Mountain certificate.” [LAUGHS] Then John R. P. French, Jr., who went on to a professorship in psychology. Caroline French, known as “Froggy.” They all came. They suggested, said “Why don’t you send Quintus” – as I was then known – “up to my mother’s camp. I think he’d enjoy it.” I did. It was great. Molly Gregory had been a counselor there. Other connections there were Rudy Haase, also a counselor there, and I don’t know – other people maybe too. All the French boys were there.

MEH: I recently talked to Peggy French, Nathaniel’s wife.

TD: Did you? First wife, yes.

MEH: And she was talking about the camp.
TD: Yes. She was a close friend of my mother's, Peggy Barton. Yeah.
MEH: Okay, so, what year – You went to Putney. Do you remember the year?
TD: Yes. I have to think back a second. Let's see, summer of – It was the fall of '44 [actually '42], I think. I mean Christmas '44 [actually '42] and January of '45 [actually '43], I guess.
MEH: Now at that time did you come back to Black Mountain for the summers?
TD: Yes. I don't know if we did that summer. But the summer, those institutes, my parents decided to stay. Well, they had the institutes so they [OVERTALK]
MEH: Right, the summer of '44 was the summer of the Big Split, and that summer in the art faculty, that was the summer Feininger was there. [Feininger was there in the summer of 1945. MEH]
TD: Yeah, I was there for that summer.
MEH: You were there for that summer.
TD: And the next one. [OVERTALK]
MEH: And the next summer – Roland Hayes was there the next summer?
TD: Yeah. I was there for most of those summers anyway, yeah.
MEH: What – Well you were still high school age.
TD: I was still high school age, yeah. But I sort of, I joined in some of that. I would go to – I went to some of the concerts and the rehearsals, and sat in on some of the lectures, music lectures.
MEH: And you were very interested in music then.
TD: Getting so, yes, right, especially in the '46 and '47, I guess, yeah, I think so.
MEH: So, when you graduated from Putney, you decided to do what?
TD: Well, that was – yeah, that was in June of '47, so I had been accepted at Harvard and at Swarthmore and at Black Mountain, and I decided to go to Black Mountain and just partly my – I didn't quite know what I wanted to do, but I was sort of leaning towards music, and I had been caught up in kind of some [way] the exciting music that was going on there. My parents kind of encouraged me. I wanted to do that, to there to there. So, I decided to do that. I think they also felt, you know, Black Mountain is a special place for young people. My dad used to say he wished he had a place like Black Mountain to go to rather than just go to Harvard at age seventeen – sixteen or seventeen. He skipped a year or something, so he was young and immature and felt not connected, didn't know what he wanted to do. He thought – He didn't get into art or anything, or music, and he always wished he had. So, he sort of wished I could have some of those things. But I sort of bought into it because I was quite interested and excited in that too. Looking back a little later, you know, having gone to Putney was somewhat like Black Mountain but – Had an informal, with an emphasis on the arts, music and art, there and [one] never knew any grades there. Black Mountain was sort of like that, too. But I missed out on learning how to be a good competitor, in a way. That side of things. I think that's one aspect [from] the kind of liberal education [I had] that I missed out on I think, although certainly when I transferred to Harvard I got quite a cold water jolt. Everybody was called "Mister," and I had a grade on every paper [LAUGHS] and – But I also saw there were a lot of people there. I would have liked to have

known, some of these people too, so, I mean, I was glad I had both, but I would have maybe have liked a little more of the competitive training along the way – kind of the good sportsmanlike competitive training stuff.

[INTERRUPTION AND IRRELEVANT REMARKS NOT TRANSCRIBED]

MEH: So you were – Now when you came back to Black Mountain as a student, did you live in the dorm or did you live with your family?

TD: Lived in the dorm.

MEH: And how was it different then to be back as a student?

TD: Well, it was interesting to be sort of a student, but I think I sort of had felt I had almost started to become a student by going to these classes and things in the summer institute. By then I began to have my own territory more there. I mean I lived in the top of – one-half of South Lodge with Robert Rauschenberg and a few other people and about six or eight of us all in there, in a big open dorm room. But then we each had our own study, and it was our own place and we could make our study the way we wanted and so that was kind of exciting. I, you know, then I began to affiliate more with the students, but I had sort of a double affiliation and I would go home a fair amount, and to some extent I became a conduit of information of what was going on with the students a little bit – or something like that – but not a great deal but some way.

MEH: What courses were you taking?

TD: Well, let's see, the first year – Albers was away my first year so I did take an art course with Bolotowsky – drawing. I was always very poor at drawing. I learned a little bit. I think I took the Introduction to Mathematics with Max Dehn. I'm trying to think if it was that year or not – I guess it was the next year I took actually a class with my dad, an Introduction to Calculus, and I took a first-year sort of a writing workshop with M.C. Richards. Trying to remember, I think there were some other things but I can't remember. The next year Albers was there. At least I think he came back in the middle of the year. I took Color and Design with him. Oh, I took music with Bimbus Schlesinger both years, and then when Charles Olson came, I took writing with him and that was interesting and exciting and made quite an impact on me, too. Oh, I took Latin with Theodore Rondthaler. Learned Latin. Those were some of the things I remember. Oh, and dance, I took dance, yeah, and physics with Natasha Goldowski. Boy, did I have an interesting experience trying to get credit for these things at Harvard! The dean, when I first, "You're going to give me some credit?" I'd been two years to Black Mountain, I went to Harvard. At first they were going to give me a year's credit or something like that. Then they announced I wasn't going to get any credit, and they were going to admit me on the basis of my earlier admission as a freshman and then they would see what happened. So, I talked to the dean, and he said, "Well, I mean, look at these things. How would we match these in our catalogue?" Something like that. I said, "Well gee, I heard that so-and-so came up, you know, and got all these credits and everything." They said, "Well these stories get around, you know, 'So-and-So comes up and –' You know, let's see how your grades are or something like that. Come back and see me." So, I went away – I was a freshman. Then I came back later and I had an A and two Bs and a C-minus or something [LAUGHS], and he said

,"Well, not too bad, you know, I guess. I mean we could give you some credits, but I still don't know how we'd know how to make any equivalents." He sort of didn't want to bother with it too much, but he was wanting to be friendly, too. So, I said, "Suppose I go and talk with the teachers of the Harvard classes and get them to write you a note and just say if from what I describe it sounds like it," and he says, "Well that wouldn't establish anything." I said, "Well it wouldn't hurt if I did it, would it?" and he said, "Well do it if you want to." So I went around to these various teachers and some were very nice and said "Yeah, that sounds like what we have, so I'll write a little note: 'I've talked to Theodore Dreier. It sounds like what he had equals course HR 107,'" or something. Then one of the guys, a very crusty English teacher, "Oh, you took it with Charles Olson!" and he said, "I was trying to remember his name," and he went and made some notes. He said, "Okay, well you did a course – how many papers did you write? How many words in each one?" Actually I'd done sort of like more spot writing, but I said, "Well I did write [a paper] on Billy Budd." "Well, how many pages was that?" [LAUGHS] I said, "I think it was two and a half." [The English teacher said,] "Oh, listen, I'm not going to give you any credit for English." But then I got credit for all these other things so I got a year and a half worth [of credits based on] that the people said, but then I had also some nice backers in the music department. The chairman wrote and said, "If you give him credit, we will recommend that he not have to take quite as many courses the next year so he can practice his cello," or something. The dean called me back and said, "Well, I have this letter from the chairman of music and all that. I don't see why this shouldn't go through," he said [LAUGHS] [There is, was] a whole change of tone when the hierarchy gets on your side.

MEH: But you had to really fight.

TD: I had to fight to do it [get credit], right, yeah. But I mean just thinking of the names of the courses reminded me that they don't offer those at Harvard.

MEH: How – having gone from Black Mountain to Harvard, how would you compare – having fought to get credit for those courses, how would you compare the courses with the sort of thing you were doing at Harvard? Do you think academically they measured up? Do you think they measured up in other ways?

TD: I don't think they – there wasn't an emphasis on producing a measurable amount and testing you on it at Black Mountain. So, there wasn't that kind of, you know, "We can guarantee this person has done such-and-such." But some of the – just the ideas and drawing on the imagination and learning, that kind of thing, was what I have used very greatly [from what I learned] there and did cover a lot of the same material. For instance, I took freshman English at Harvard, which we were all required to, and he was – the teacher was just thrilled that I would sort of write interesting themes. He kept giving me these A-minuses and things – "Well, you need some grammar here and you need to know this and that." But he would really [not heavily criticize my grammar and] all the other things. All the other students, most of them were writing kind of boring stuff. The history teacher, on the other hand, was appalled at the lack of structure and outlining and everything in my history essays, and he ended up

giving me D-pluses and stuff like that. He couldn't believe I was getting good writing grades, when I went and saw him. I had to sort of learn then a whole kind of structured kind of approach too, so it was good that I had both. Of course, I mean, the art at Black Mountain was living art. You did things. The art at Harvard – I mean, I think it [has] changed but it was sort of learning about, commenting on, using a trick, an adroit phrase to impress people with your perceptions or something, and it wasn't this kind of vital contact of seeing, so – But that's – some of that did go on at Harvard University, and the architectural school was there and Gropius was there, and Albers came up sometime, and there have been others, you know, courses since then that have sort of developed that way, but this was back in the forties.

MEH: Coming back to your student days at Black Mountain, are there students that you remember in particular that you were especially friendly with?

TD: Let's see. Of course, one student, just before I became a student our family was friendly with the Gropius, and Ati Gropius then. So I took a – I think I took – sat in on Albers's course, I think, in the summer before, actually, that I became a student officially. So, I would sort of hang out in her study a little and do some of the things then and became very good friends with her. And she's been a long-time close friend of our family. So, I'm trying to think. Some of the other people who were studying music there, Stanley Cooke was kind of a roommate of mine and sort of a nice guy. I remember him. Quite a few I really liked a lot but I really didn't develop close friends. Not very many, really. Friendly, friendly, but not close friends. I was into dance quite a lot then, and there was kind of a close teacher-student relationship with Betty Jennerjahn, who was teaching dance. Some of the other students who were doing that.

MEH: Was Nick Cernovich there when you were there?

TD: He was there the last year, right, yeah. Nice guy. Very talented guy, I remember him. I remember Albers saying as he was doing some drawing, "You know, I predict Nick will come very soon to it," he said. He made these wonderful sort of drawings.

MEH: Do you remember classes in particular. I mean you've named the classes that you took. Did you take any classes with Max Dehn?

TD: First year I did.

MEH: You took –

TD: I took a course with him.

MEH: In – ?

TD: In math – it was Introduction to Mathematics, and he would – He didn't assign any homework. He'd give you these talks, and he taught you about functions, and he'd draw these graphs all over and teach you to think how they would behave with certain values in them. That was great to sort of get this overview. Then he taught the basic ideas of certain mathematical ideas, and he liked the philosophical thinking side of mathematics. He was an outstanding person in that way. When I was actually looking at colleges to transfer, besides Harvard, I wondered about the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He was having a half year visiting professorship there so I stayed with them, and I visited some classes there. I heard him talking about the students there and how faculty

were saying, "You should be giving more tests?" and all that thing, and he said "My students' took –" [TECHNICAL INTERRUPTION]

MEH: Okay.

TD: Max Dehn was talking about one of his students talking about in the other classes he had to do all these drill problems. He [Max Dehn] said, "I wouldn't do that," he said, "that's boring," or something like that. At times he'd talk about, "When I learned calculus, by myself," he said [LAUGHS] "back at such-and-such –" So, he kept [being] inspired [by mathematics], and he really got into the basic ideas. I just remember he was like an old German professor, kind of. He would take these walks with people and he would talk over ideas, and you could see him talking mathematical ideas, talking philosophical ideas, into the intellectual side of it. He was a warm, lovable, just lovely person, but he didn't zero in on practical issues very much. I remember Albers once saying, he says, "Ja, you know Max, I don't know, like how is his thinking in this kind of situation." He says, "You know, he'll make a statement like 'We're all good,' but then how does that help you in that situation" or something. I could sort of see that if you had to deal with an administrative or political or something situation, people would be feeling he was a little wishy-washy. But if you wanted a person with a big heart, that was him. If you wanted a person with a beautiful sense of the beauty in mathematics, that was him, too. He loved it and he could convey that love to people.

MEH: For the summer sessions, do you remember any of the guest faculty in particular?

TD: Well, yes, sure. Buckminster Fuller and –

MEH: Now, don't just name people. Tell me what you remember. He was there the summer of '48 when you were there.

TD: Right. That's right. Well, I remember him doing the dome, working on that, and I remember some of his talks. He would just like he would ramble – He'd start out and you'd wonder "What are we talking about? Where are we going?" and then he'd get somewhere and you didn't know it til the end. By then you felt you'd really heard something from him. He would mix in all kinds of autobiographical material and philosophical dictums and natural laws and everything and just keep talking and talking and talking. People were impressed. I was a little skeptical of him that year, and I kept a little bit of a distance, which I sort of wish I hadn't, in retrospect. I mean I kind of liked him. My dad thought he was great, and then he went to some of his things. But I thought it was a little bit full of hot air or something, but I was certainly interested in his ideas and what he was doing. I don't know. I sort of made that judgment, and I think it would have been fun to see him in action a little bit more. But he certainly got people excited. I remember him coming up to our little dining area at Roadside once. Mother had invited him up, and he says, "No liquor. But I'll come up for some juice, grapefruit juice." So he came up and he talked, he began to hold forth again. He told a little story at one point. He said "I was walking along and I saw this flash of light and that's when the Almighty was talking to me, and that's the one time," he said – or something like that. I remember him saying that. But he was kind of fun and exciting to be around

and he got a lot of people excited. The whole idea of, you know, revolutionary ideas and that you could go with that and think of a new way to make a building. How much should it weigh and how would it affect the wind and how good it was that he had studied naval architecture or something, because he would think that everything [that he had studied] got to be used and so forth.

MEH: Do you remember Cage and Cunningham from that summer?

TD: Yes. Of course, I took Cunningham's courses, and I thought he was an excellent dancer. I was a little disappointed I didn't get into some of the photograph things they did or whatever. They had to just quickly set those up. But it was interesting to study with him. I liked that.

MEH: How did he conduct his class?

TD: Well, he mostly – I mean, first there were masses of people there. There must have been –

MEH: Oh, really. Did most of – did all the people –

TD: Twenty or thirty people in the class, so he'd – you know, he'd just line them up, and we did things in place. Then occasionally we'd do a few things around. I remember one of the other students who was there, a guy named Dick Spahn, who had also – I was friendly with, and he said, "Ah, I'm disappointed we're not doing a dance!" or something. He wanted to do a performance. So – Then he [Merce Cunningham] decided to stop the big classes and then sort of work on some performance. Then they did the Monkey Dances and the Medusa thing [a play with music by Erik Satie]. Then I remember John Cage, and how he got into a little bit of a competition with Erwin Bodky by giving a Satie Festival. He, in the course of it, was making a lot of fun of Beethoven, and that riled all the traditional musicians and so they would make these little side comments during concerts and things like that. But it sort of added a little zest and spirit to the summer, too. It was kind of a friendly competition, but – But he [John Cage] was sort of very articulate and humorous, and so people liked to hear him talk. I was impressed too. I remember de Kooning. I liked him. He was kind of solid and quiet, and he didn't talk a whole lot but sort of produced. I sort of had a – felt a kind of integrity about him. He was less of a self-advertising person than quite a few people who were there I liked – I enjoyed [Beaumont] Newhall a lot, and I took a photography course with him and I enjoyed – learned a lot from his history of photography lectures. Enjoyed them a lot. Motherwell was there, and I remember he was a very sort of articulate young painter. I guess Ozenfant was his teacher? I'm trying to remember. No, it wasn't. Anyway there was the Frenchman who had been his teacher, and he persuaded people to invite him down as a possible candidate for the faculty position, and people were not impressed with that Frenchman. I can't remember his name.

MEH: Was it Zadkine? Not Ozenfant. Was it Zadkine? Oh, I know, the guy, his name started with C.

TD: He was only there a short time.

MEH: Right. I know who you're talking about. He came a visitor, really.

TD: A visitor, and he had done some of these white lines on dark glass or something. But he wasn't that exciting or dynamic or interesting a person, though he certainly had something. But I just remember that little incident and

then visiting up in our place. Then I remember the Kolisch Quartet, and the excitement about that and those musicians. Then the next summer there was Grauder, Hugo –

MEH: Kauder.

TD: Kauder. Kauder. How they played a lot of his quartets, and they would sandwich them in between things we wanted to hear so nobody would leave [LAUGHS]. But they were okay. They weren't very exciting. But it was fun to have all that music there.

MEH: Do you remember Eddie Lowinsky in any particular way?

TD: Yeah.

MEH: Did you take classes with him?

TD: He wasn't teaching there, or – I don't think so. No. I don't think so. But I remember that he, you know, was sort of admired as a teacher of early music and that he had one little incident where the same students were singing in the chorus and that he had drilled them on some of these early motets and they came off very well in the concert. Then Bimbus, I guess – I wasn't there – gave a concert with the same people and she hadn't drilled them so much and it didn't come off very well. She was so discouraged then, that was sort of a contrast of methods. But she, on the other hand, was more informal what – She had a very exciting and very sensitive musical quality and wonderful to hear play, even though he was technically better. He was kind of precise and a little rigid and a little opinionated, but an impressive scholar. I think they didn't get along so well or something, so he left and then they came back and people said "Ah, [groans] they're coming back!" [LAUGHS] But I liked him, the little contacts I had. I had just started the cello and he said, "Oh, you're playing the cello. Come up, we'll play trios." I'd just started, and he very graciously brought me in, and Gretel, his wife, playing the violin. He helped me find the notes right and then – Very nice though, I mean to me at that time. So I – that's what I remember, yeah.

MEH: You took most of your music with Bimbus?

TD: Yes, and during the summer I went to Bodky's lectures on the Well-Tempered Clavichord and Sonatas of Beethoven. I took – I sat in on those during the summer institutes but I didn't study with him during the winter but did study mostly with Bimbus, yeah.

MEH: So the year '48-'49 when you were there as a student and all of this other political stuff was happening that led to your parents' resignation – it must have been difficult to be both family and student and to be in the middle of all of this.

TD: It was. Right. There was a period there where I – Everybody was talking about my dad, but I wasn't part of it. Then some people felt sort of awkward about that, and so at one point they were writing a petition, you know, suggesting that he resign – some of the students were. They said, "Well, we wanted you to at least see that." So I said "Well, yeah, okay. Thanks for showing it to me." So, it was kind of awkward, and I felt sort of separated from things then. I mean, from a lot of those student meetings. But then there was sort of a wider student meeting, the more formal meetings, so I went to that. Then I heard a lot of other students speak up and then someone said, "Well, Theodore Dreier wants to

close the college,” but then another student said “Oh, is that known? How is that known?” And, you know, other people were talking that too so it wasn’t everybody. But it was kind of awkward and then my parents did leave and it was sort of a more moot situation then. I just kind of focused on the work.

MEH: Did you leave with them? Or did you finish the term?

TD: No, I finished the term. They left in the spring of ’49, went down to Florida, stayed at my uncle’s place. Then they were going to sort of take a break, go on a trip out west, and so I went out to meet them and met them in California and drove out west with three others – Trude Jalowetz Guermonprez and Don Droll, both of whom were going to be in a workshop in California and Bimbus Schlesinger, who wanted to go out west and look for a job. She had resigned, too. So we all drove out in Don’s new car and met my parents in Yosemite. Then I hitched up with them.

MEH: So, when you left the college in the spring of ‘49, did you – you applied to return to Harvard at that point?

TD: Yes. I had been considered – I had more or less, after a little bit of soul-searching and all, decided I did want to concentrate in music, at least at that time.

MEH: You did or did not.

TD: Did. Then there was the question of whether I should go to a place that would be mostly theory or where I’d get some more practical experience, and so Bimbus particularly had grown up in a music school, “But, you know, you need to really learn more how to play and these things, too.” So it was a question whether I could transfer to Yale as a student. So I did apply there.

MEH: Did they have a better music program?

TD: Well, they have an actual music conservatory associated with them, so I would have gotten credit for actually learning to play music. But I did not get into there. I had more or less decided I might do that. Hindemith was there, and so I did not get into there. So then I went to Harvard and actually Hindemith came to Harvard [LAUGHS] so that was sort of a little pleasant joke at that time. I later, talking to an interesting faculty named Richard French, who was an advisor of mine at Harvard, and I sort of reviewed that whole train of thought. Suppose I do want to be a music teacher or something. Should I go to a music school now, you know, instead? He said “No, no,” he said “you should finish your college,” you know. So it turned out to be maybe okay, and then actually after finishing Harvard I did spend a year in a music school in Germany, at Detmold, Nordwest Deutsche Musik Akademie, to try playing the cello full-time, which was great. I learned some cello but I also learned I wasn’t going to be that good a cello player, so I decided on a change of direction.

MEH: So that change of direction was –

TD: Well, it went toward psychiatry, actually. I began to get interested in that and read about it. Then I worked as a psychiatric helper or aide for a while and then decided I would like to go to medical school and become a psychiatrist. So, I had to do a lot of pre-med work. I had stayed away pretty much from science. I think I had this one course in calculus with my father and that one flamboyant beautiful course in math from Max Dehn and sort of a course with Natasha

Goldowski in physics. But I had to do – re-do, a lot of that and so I part-time went back to the University of Pennsylvania night school and did pre-med for a year and a half and then went to medical school. I interned in San Francisco, saw some old Black Mountain friends out there – Ruth Asawa and Alfred Lanier and then came to Boston, Mass General Hospital, McLean Hospital, Children’s Hospital, and settled here, first in adult and child psychiatry and now more geriatric psychiatry and still working full time.

MEH: And you met your wife, Kit, after you came back to Boston?

TD: That’s right. That’s right, yeah. She actually went to Alamoosook Island Camp, way back, but I didn’t know her then. She was there as a counselor some later year, I think, yeah. But just another little crossing of paths there.

MEH: Looking back, I was talking to a Black Mountain student last week. He was in New York and he was saying that Black Mountain failed because it closed.

TD: “Failed because it closed”?

MEH: Right. I was arguing with him. But obviously it did fail in many ways. It was a perfect – it was not a Utopia, and a lot of things went – I was telling him, I was saying that I think it simultaneously succeeded and failed and then it closed. [LAUGHTER] He wouldn’t agree. (?) But looking back, how do you see the college now? Just – What do you think its importance was? Do you think it really worked?

TD: It’s interesting, I have like an intellectual view of it. Just to tell you my sort of childhood view along the way? That first when I went to Harvard I had this whole urge to become more conformist and get into that other world I’d missed, so I didn’t tell people I’d been here. I became a little more ashamed. I wouldn’t put it on my resumé or anything like that, it made it more complicated anyway. Then later when it became famous, I said, “Gosh, you know,” and people would say “You went to Black Mountain! Tell me this, tell me that.” So, that was kind of an interesting switch. But, I mean, any place is such a mixture of things. I mean – and in the experiences. There’s going to be moments in it or things in it that sort of persist or are specially valuable a lot that’s nondescript, some that are unpleasant or not good. So – But I mean as an institution it certainly was a place where a lot of exciting people came together or crossed paths or had a contact and there was something nurturing about it and that grew elsewhere. So, I mean, I think that’s success. That’s success, like the Renaissance was a success, Shakespeare was a success. Not everybody in his time was a success. I mean, there’s lots of things it could have done – As an institution, if you wanted to have that physical place continue, you would have had to have the things they didn’t have. You would have to have trustees and an emphasis on money raising and contacts and alumni program. You’d have to have things that would bring in money, and build buildings and pay taxes and pay salaries and retirements and pensions. All that starts to bring in things that aren’t so flexible, and then they don’t seek out the new and the exciting and the radically different or the challenging, or whatever. You don’t want to rock the boat if you want to play safe. So, people – these people took risks and they had a kind of an idealism and youth. Even when they were older, they remembered that they believed in it. [LAUGHS] That they’d get older too (?). I happened to be looking

in what you were writing in the early part of your book just earlier to refresh myself looking at some of the pictures, but you were talking about John Andrew Rice and Albers and my dad and in a way the different aspects that they may have contributed there. I mean – and there's some different interesting quotes you had there. You know, Rice as sort of a radical challenger but also a little bit intellectual mesmerizer that would get things going. Then Albers coming in with some really high quality exciting new ideas in art that somehow also had an inclusive aspect. He liked to teach as well as have his ideas. So, that sort of – both this kind of verbal and the nonverbal and a great new dynamic interaction, just like the right and the left hemisphere [of the brain]. They work together and stimulate each other and check each other out and fight with each other and so forth. Then my dad said, "We've got to make this work somehow!" and he had somehow this sense of responsibility, sense of organization, plus the idealism to want to do it. A kind of a faith and idealism, you know, "It's worth doing. We can do it." A kind of behind-the-scenes political skill. He was never a polished speaker, and he would sort of mumble and stuff a little bit like that, and he wished he could have been a flashy academic, in a way, but he had a big heart. [EMOTIONAL PAUSE]

MEH: He did.

TD: And he had a sort of sense of recognition of what was important and good and he got very excited about the intellectual ideas and the nonverbal ones. He sort of wished he had more art and more music. He had more training in the verbal. But he got excited. He sort of wanted to make it work, and he would sort of get money, and he'd take responsibility, and he carried tremendous burdens doing that.

MEH: Do you think that was really appreciated generally at Black Mountain?

TD: Not really. No. I mean he was a behind-the-scenes person. Lots of –

[END OF VIDEO CASSETTE 1, BEGINNING OF VIDEOCASSETTE 2]

MEH: Okay.

TD: So, yeah, I mean we were talking about my dad. I was thinking about it. I think he had an integrative effect on the verbal half and the nonverbal half, the arts – Both were needed, and he was excited by both. So – I think in a way he then tried to keep the people representing both working together, because there tended to be a little bit of schisms in that. He also wasn't somebody who would go out and say, you know, "I stayed up till three this morning trying to figure this out and doing all this work and doing this." You know, he would sort of go and do work and then – A lot of people wouldn't know he was doing it that much. He didn't self-advertise much. But they kind of knew they had to turn to him for certain things. I think the students didn't have as much an awareness of that because it wasn't so verbally visible or politically visible. When he was, it was more through kind of, you know, trying to make some important point in a brief way. But it wouldn't come across as a groundbreaking speech exactly, though it might be addressing some very important thing. He was a troubleshooter, and he kept – You know, if the farm was in trouble, then he would go and deal with that, and if the work program wasn't working, he'd go deal with that, and if you know couldn't get this faculty or that faculty, he'd go and he'd try to raise some

money for that or something like that, and talk to people. He also was an educator and he had this concept that really being where good people could develop, excited people could develop – he had a belief and faith in that, and he conveyed that to people and that's why people were willing to give money to the place.

MEH: Now one thing – this I really should probably ask your mother more directly, I hear things when I'm talking to people which I feel are hearsay and are not correct. I've been through lots of financial records, things up in the Vineyard, in your father's papers, and all the books that are at the State Archive in North Carolina. People will say – that certainly the Dreiers and the Loines could make contributions to Black Mountain College, you know, a thousand dollars, which was a lot of money back then. But not – they weren't supporting the college. But people will say to me, "Oh, you know, the Dreier family was supporting the college, that's how it survived." I'd say, "Well the books don't indicate this. The books that I've been through indicate that they made contributions but that they were not funding the college." Then people will say, "Oh well there must have been a second set of books you haven't seen." [LAUGHS] So I would really like to know for sure whether they were making contributions that just were not listed or whether, you know, the contributions made were really the contributions. I know that they during the war, when everything was falling apart and the students were, you know, a sudden drop in enrollment, that they did take, you know, provide the second mortgage –

TD: A second mortgage, yeah –

MEH: – which enabled – But that's very clearly documented.

TD: And that was paid off, I think. I think –

MEH: That was finally paid off, I think, by Stephen Forbes or Paul Williams, one or the other. I can't remember now. Because it had become an issue, the fact that, you know, a faculty member's family held demand notes on the college.

TD: Well, I –

MEH: And then these people were paid off, whoever had –

TD: Right. I think when my father resigned being Rector, then Bill Levi became Rector. I kind of heard that – I mean, I think the second mortgage was still there, and something needed to be done about the financial situation at the college. So Bill Levi, according to my dad, anyway, said – began to hint to people – "If we don't pay this off, the Dreiers' family, you know, could just run the college" or something like that. So, my dad said "Well yes, it should be paid off, but he should have gone and raised the money to do it." But what my dad said, I think he didn't really raise the money but used a lot of money that was supposed to be used for other things in the college to pay that off rather than making a real effort to go and do some fundraising to do it. So, other than that, I would – I think, everything must be probably documented, and it was certainly not my sense that they had any ongoing inflow of money – just periodic gifts, whatever it might have been.

MEH: That's how it would appear to me.

TD: Yeah, that was my impression, yeah.

MEH: Do you have any other particular memories of the college that we haven't covered that you think are important? Anecdotes or –

TD: The whole Charles Olson period was an interesting period, and he was somebody I really valued as a writing teacher because – I mean, M.C. Richards had got me going on a journal. But then I sort of didn't know how to do, what to do with it exactly, and he spent some time going over what I'd written with me and he said "Yeah, now this gets it – and this doesn't. This gets it and this doesn't." But the fact of his sort of conveying some sense of value and excitement about something I had written was very infectious and supportive and made me, stirred me on to do it. I began to also see what he was talking about – the kind of cadences and things in writing. Also listening to him read some of the poems – Williams and Pound and things – was really exciting. Then I was rather torn about this other side of him, where he wanted to tie the whole together, world together, in an anthropological literary concept. He would go on and on and on about it, and I think it was too bad. [LAUGHS] But anyway, I forgive him that and I thank him so much for what he did give me. That was exciting. Also he was – he wrote me a nice warm letter later when I needed transcripts and he was the head. He said, "I'm sending it and I hope things are going well." But he was somebody who came in who had a kind of a stature of not only of writing but of human concept, you know. I mean, he didn't take sides with this thing or that thing or that thing. He saw it all as part of one world in a way, so he in that way was kind of suited to be a leader, I think. But he, you know, in some other ways maybe didn't organize things as much as could have been done at that time. But anyway, that was certainly a meaningful part of the college to me. The whole setting, you know, it was a special place. I don't know how much that comes across [UNINTEL] but being there in these mountains and that – In the earlier Blue Ridge part, that was a part of the community too. I mean, my Father loved to hike and quite a few other students did, too. The faculty and Morton Steinau and other people, and they would organize these hikes and they would all go up to the Craggies. It would be a whole unifying thing together, and people found it a very exhilarating place to be. The other was to – I mean, I talked a little negatively about being in the South in public school as a young kid, but there was another aspect of things in the South because it was so rich that I've come to treasure – and which my parents loved too – both the country and then some of the people that we got to know there. I know my dad was very great friends with Bas Allen, who was our maintenance man, and they used to be hiking buddies. His wife worked in the post office. But he was just a kind of a lovely warmhearted regular guy, you know, and everybody liked him. I don't know, then just something else that having been in the South has been a sort of a valuable thing for me too. There were unsettling parts of it there where the college's liberalism would run, stir up hate talk. It was kind of scary when the black students come, people threatening to burn it down. We did have a fire one night – oh I remember that – but coming – That's when I was a student, and suddenly there was a siren and a big light and the whole science building was going up in the air, and it just went up in flames. Somebody once said "Oh those terrible seven minutes till Ted Dreier got there"

– the other Ted Dreier [LAUGHS], I guess. But then – and there was an explosion too. So that might have been set by a disgruntled workman or something like that. Don't know.

MEH: Do you remember any woods fires around the college during that period?

TD: Only in the distance, I think.

MEH: But not on the college campus.

TD: Not on the campus that I recall. I don't know if it's a faint memory that somebody found one once and wondered about it. That's a very vague memory. I don't have a direct memory of it. But we used to see these mountain fires from Blue Ridge at night all over the place, and back during the Depression people would set them and then get paid to go put them out. But then it would be dry weather, and it would happen other ways, too. So but that was an exhilarating part, the countryside too.

MEH: You really haven't talked about Bimbus.

TD: Yeah. Well she was an exciting music teacher in that she loved music, had a wonderful sense of phrase. Well, it was just beautiful, the way she could play it and convey things. But she, I mean she was somebody who had been a child prodigy I think in Germany, never really studied the piano very hard but could play things that weren't too technically difficult beautifully, and studied composition. I mean, she studied all these – I mean composed all of these very modern dissonant pieces and was friends with Hindemith and all these people in Germany. Then came over to this country and I think taught at a girls' school for a while and then came and taught at Black Mountain, and then turned down some other college places to stay there. She was handicapped by having very poor vision – I think retinal detachment – that weren't treated so well in those days. So, she couldn't get around at night so somebody led her – so somebody would always have to lead her back and forth. She lived in the Studies Building in that apartment at the end that had been Bob Wunsch's apartment. She had two pianos in there. It was great. She was a good teacher. Not a lecturer – but she would get you in and sort of teach you the harmony and show and work with you on it. She was intelligent and he had a good artistic sense. She did – was a good choral conductor though not in a real skilled technical way but because she loved the music and knew how it should be. She had a terrific ear and would convey that, and because people really respected her knowledge and vision of the music. She – One of the most exciting pieces, I'll never forget, was her, was she and Merv Lane playing the Bach Double Concerto in C Major. They played it – I think it was that last, maybe it was the next to the last year – I guess it must have been the next to the last year. Because I don't think Merv was there the last year. Anyway, he was terrific on that and we just had a wonderful – they worked on it so hard and it was so beautiful and I'll never forget that. So she was a great addition.

MEH: Just another sort of general question. Do you think – and it's really hard to say because who knows what would have happened – but if Black Mountain had gone on just as an educational experiment without all of the really exciting and notable people, the refugees and the people who followed, do you think it would

be – do you think that's primarily why it's remembered? Do you think it would have been remembered as an exciting educational venture?

TD: You mean, in a sense, if the arts had not come in as fully?

MEH: Yeah. I mean who knows what would have happened then, so it's really a hypothetical question.

TD: Right, and certainly John Andrew Rice was putting the arts in his theoretical goals as deserving much more – a greater place in the curriculum, I think, and my dad was thinking that way. Yeah, that's an interesting question. My guess is that it would have been whatever it would have been, would have been much more verbal. [LAUGHS] I mean that's sort of begging the question. But I think it thereby might not have developed as much excitement and therefore as much momentum and therefore as much of a success, because there have been quite a few other colleges, I think, that have gotten going on the verbal track, you know, and that have had a good, exciting idea person there – a poet or some writers – and they have been known for a while with that sort of [special person] there, but it hasn't become all community usually as much. I'm overgeneralizing, but I think that having this duality really – and having it held together with both aspects, though it emphasized at different times, I think that created a sort of a cross-fertilization or cross-excitement, giving that. It made it much more than it would have been is my guess.

MEH: Now do you think there are topics we haven't covered? Things we should talk about?

TD: Well, I was there sixteen years! [LAUGHS] There's one thing that jumped to my mind that came up at the reunion, the one just a few years ago – how to make available whatever happened to future people, I guess. I remember at that time they were talking about, well, should there be a museum as a place? Or should they use some of the new technology and so forth? I don't know, I've sort of recently been getting involved in the new technology and the internet and all that.

MEH: It's exciting.

TD: So, it's quite exciting, and it's exciting to be able to come to primary material, you know, in that way.

MEH: I agree totally.

TD: It's so often what's not available because when you get a second-hand or third-hand or fourth-hand version, you miss something. I mean it's always digested a little bit and often what might be especially exciting to me or you might not be there. If you see that original material, you might find it. So if there's a way of do that – I think that would be interesting. But also to somehow not have it be dissipated or just a lot of fragments or to be misused either. I mean there needs to be somehow a sense of the coherence of the place needs to be preserved somewhere too. So I don't know. That just crossed my mind. I think your book on the arts is just wonderful.

MEH: Well, like you say you know, a book – we'll talk about it. I'm very excited about doing digital publication right now. So that's maybe a good time for us to take a break and see what else –

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]