

INTERVIEWEE: Claude Stoller  
INTERVIEWER: Mary Emma Harris  
PARTICIPANT: Rosemary Raymond Lax Stoller  
LOCATION: Berkeley, California  
DATE: December 6, 2012  
INTERVIEW NO.: 381  
MEDIA: Digital  
TRANSCRIPTION: Mary Emma Harris, November 2017

The interview was conducted on a visit with Claude Stoller to select Black Mountain College related materials which Claude wished to donate to the Western Regional Archives in North Carolina. I asked Claude to identify individuals in photographs. He was going through them quickly, but I tried to capture often fleeting images. In some cases, Stoller was holding slides from which I tried to capture images. When possible, I have substituted images that I have from other sources. Some photos were made by Stoller. Some by others. The selection includes photographs made in 1995 at a Black Mountain college reunion at Lake Eden. MEH

**[BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW. BEGINNING OF VIDEO SECTION 1.]**

**MEH:** Made of paperboard?

**CS:** Yes

**MEH:** And this was at St. Louis?

**CS:** Yeah. And Bucky thought that to use St. Louis's resources would be good. Well, the paperboard was used for beer cartons, and so there was an industry. And so, Bucky and the kids got the companies to cut out – stamp out pieces that could be folded into elements to make a paperboard dome. I get too complicated. And so, they put the dome up and they were very excited about it. And then I – they put it up. It rained. It rained heavily which it can do in St. Louis. And in the morning the dome was collapsed – flat. And so, the kids were very, very unhappy and Bucky came and said, “Why are you so unhappy? Now we

know something definite. That doesn't work. And we should be happy. We discovered something." Just a marvelous teacher. A wonderful teacher.  
[LOOKING DOWN.] Yeah, all this – I guess I collected whatever I could find. Do you know Sim Van der Ryn?

**MEH:** I'm not sure that I do.

**CS:** Well, he and Bucky became friendly. Sim was a colleague on the faculty at the University of California, and he's the guy that originally worked for me – worked in my office. And he's just come out with a book. But he knew Bucky and knew of Bucky.

**MEH:** Is some of your work in this book? [REPEATS QUESTION]

**CS:** No. No, no. This is all Sim's –

**MEH:** All his work. Okay.

**CS:** Yeah, yeah. Anyway, okay. I'll go upstairs and see if I can find Bucky's handwritten letter.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 1. BEGINNING OF SECTION 2.]**



**CS:** That's Nancy Smith.

**MEH:** Who's beside her?

**CS:** Emil Willimetz. And that's Sandra Kocher.

**MEH:** Sandra Kocher.

**CS:** And that's Larry Junior. That's Don Page.

**MEH:** And on the right?

**CS:** I can't tell. I don't know.

**MEH:** Okay. That's pretty good



**MEH:** Who is that?

**CS:** Oh, that's Schindler.

**MEH:** Oh, Mark Schindler.

**CS:** Mark Schindler, yeah.



**CS:** And this is Rudy. And that's – we were talking about her Renate. [ON RIGHT]

**MEH:** Renate.

**CS:** Rudy helped her a lot.

**MEH:** Oh, is that Ruth O'Neill?

**CS:** Ruth O'Neill.

**MEH:** Okay. I didn't realize she was still living at that point. He'd helped her a lot I understand.

**CS:** I think she died pretty soon – this was '49 –

**MEH:** '95 I think.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 2. BEGINNING OF SECTION 3.]**



**MEH:** Tell me – identify the people.

**CS:** That's Swackhamer. [STANDING LEFT] That's Slats. [SITTING IN FRONT] That's Morris Simon. That's Jerry Wolpert. That's me. That's Nan. [SITTING RIGHT] And that's – his father was at Columbia. Oh –

**MEH:** It'll come to you.

**CS:** Oh, dammit.

**MEH:** What were you doing there? You obviously were imitating a monument. Was it a particular monument?

**CS:** Just fooling around.

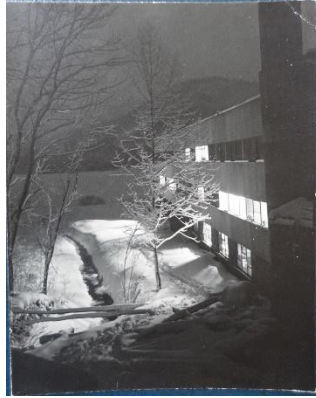
**MEH:** Just fooling around. I mean, with the wreath there – the ladder.

**CS:** Yeah.

**MEH:** Do you remember where it was? Where you were?

**CS:** No, I don't. Maybe Nan does. I don't know. Will Hamlin. [REFERRING TO MAN STANDING ON UPPER RIGHT]

**MEH:** Will Hamlin. Well, yes, now that I look closely, I recognize him.



**CS:** This is the Studies Building.

**MEH:** This is the photo I love.

**CS:** I put the print up on the bulletin board where it said – the bulletin board said “Opinions.” And I just put that up. And Albers was so delighted. He said, “That’s an opinion!”



**CS:** And that’s my [UNINTEL WORDS]

**MEH:** Right.

**CS:** Do you know who that is? The boys called her [UNINTEL]

**MEH:** Eva Zhitlowsky. I wonder if she’s still living. I sort of doubt it.



**MEH:** And that's Gropius – done later.

**CS:** Yeah.

**MEH:** A classic photo.

**CS:** And Freddie took that. It's wonderful.

**CS:** Oh, this is the Jalowetz House under construction. That's –



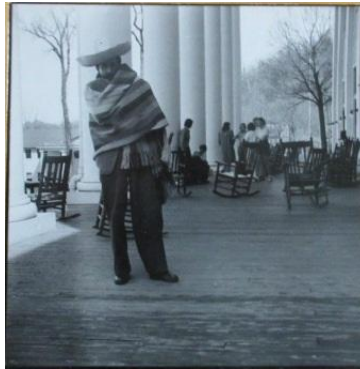
**MEH:** Bill Reed.

**CS:** Bill Reed.



**MEH:** Bill Reed.

**CS:** And I don't know what that is. Nothing.



**MEH:** Merida.

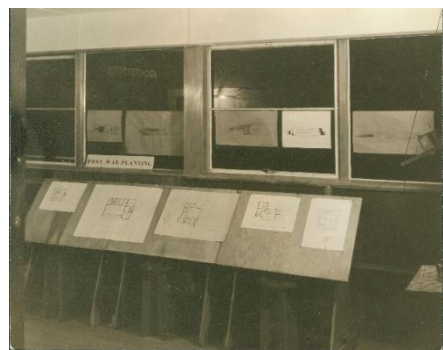
**CS:** Yeah.



**CS:** That's the Studies Building.

**MEH:** That's what's-his-name who was in the photo. He's an architect. Dick Wyke.

**CS:** Dick Wyke. Yeah.

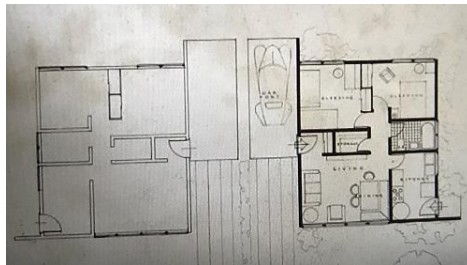


**MEH:** This is housing exhibition.



**CS:** Yeah. This was –

**MEH:** -- the cars again.



**CS:** Yeah, this is a classroom.

**MEH:** That was the housing exhibition.

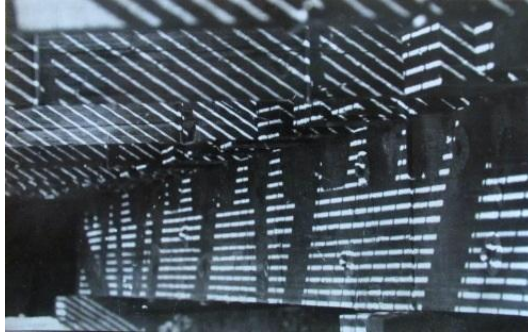
**CS:** Yeah, well it was a class problem.

**MEH:** It was a class.

#### **PHOTO OF DUPLEX PLAN**

**MEH:** Small housing I think it was. Or low-cost housing.





**MEH:** This was – this was behind Lee Hall.

**CS:** Lee Hall, yeah. It's underneath the deck.

**MEH:** Right. The reflection.



**MEH:** And this is Lucian and Jane on that trip when you went with them to Italy.

**CS:** Yeah, we went on –



[ONE OF SEVERAL PHOTOS OF REED]

**CS:** These are both Alex.

**MEH:** Right. Alex Reed.



**CS:** And this is Eva.



**CS:** I can't remember his name.

**MEH:** One of the Murphy twins? Dan or Dave. I think.

**CS:** His father was a professor somewhere – at the university. I can't remember his name.



**MEH:** Right.

**CS:** There she is.

**MEH:** And this was –

**CS:** Sophie.

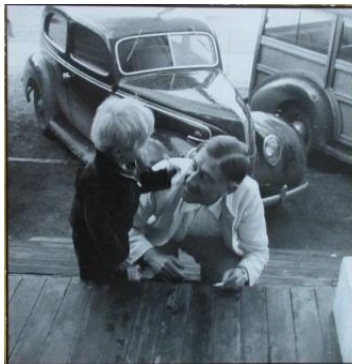
**MEH:** Sophie French.



**MEH:** And these were labeled in another photo. I don't remember who they were.

**CS:** That's – let's see. There was an Ibsen play.

**MEH:** I think there was a smaller print that was labelled. Let me see. We'll figure it out later.



**MEH:** Albers and Eddie Dreier.



**CS:** And this is the view from the –

**MEH:** Is that Eva's hand? Do you know whose hand that is?

**CS:** It could be. I don't know. Somebody in the shop. This was –



**MEH:** The fireplace.

**CS:** In the basement of the – under the –

**MEH:** Studies Building.

**CS:** Under the stair tower.

**CS:** I don't know what this is. If anything.

**MEH:** Paper.



**CS:** This is nothing.

**MEH:** Well, it looks like a matière study of some kind.

**CS:** Yeah, well –

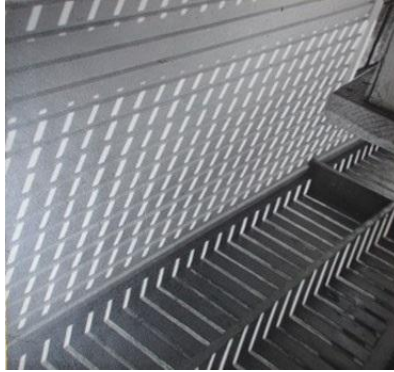


**MEH:** The cars again.



**CS:** Here she is [Eva Zhitlowisky]. She was beautiful.

**MEH:** Beautiful, yeah.



**MEH:** And this is behind Lee Hall reflections [shadows].

**CS:** Yeah.



**CS:** And this is the Jalowetz cottage. See, this is transite.

**MEH:** Right.

**CS:** Asbestos.



**MEH:** That's the Jalowetz under construction. You were straw boss on that, weren't you?

**CS:** What?

**MEH:** You were in charge of the building there, weren't you?



**MEH:** Bill Reed.

**CS:** Yeah.



**CS:** That's the Jalowetz Cottage.



**CS:** Now this is –

**MEH:** Bob Wunsch.

**CS:** Fred –

**MEH:** Fred Mangold [BACK OF HEAD]

**CS:** That was Dick Carpenter.

**MEH:** Right.

**CS:** Bob.

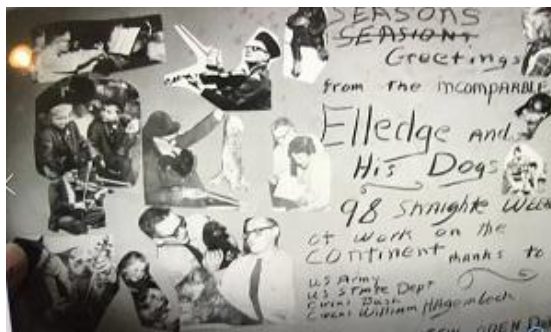
**MEH:** Do you know who the lady is?

**CS:** Yes. That's Straus's wife.

**MEH:** Trudi.

**CS:** Trudi. [GERMAN PRONUNCIATION]

**MEH:** Trudi. Trudi Straus. [IMITATING]



**CS:** And this is – Bruce sent this.

**MEH:** Bruce Elledge. Okay.

**CS:** A character. He once – he got to know Nan's father in New York, and he once sent him a telegram saying "Buy up all the hay in the district. I'm arriving with my elephants." He always had a thing about circuses.



[LEAFS THROUGH DUPLICATE PHOTOS PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED.] This is looking  
up in the windows –

**MEH:** Right. In the Studies Building.



**CS:** And this is me working on a –

**MEH:** Another picture – on the door.



**CS:** This is somebody else's study. I don't know whose it is. Do you want this one?

**MEH:** Might as well. I mean, it shows that all studies were not really fancy.

**CS:** No, it's not fancy. Did we look at this? Yeah, we looked at that already. So, what  
have we got?

**MEH:** So, those are the photos.

**CS:** Yeah.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 3. BEGINNING OF SECTION 4.]**



**CS:** Hattie Engelhardt.

**MEH:** Right. Hattie Engelhardt.

**CS:** She was killed in the war.

**MEH:** Right.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 4. BEGINNING OF SECTION 5.]**

**MEH:** Connie Spencer

**CS:** Connie Spencer. Yes.



**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 5. BEGINNING OF SECTION 6.]**



**MEH:** This is Eva. Somehow it doesn't look like her.

**CS:** Yeah, she was tackling –

**MEH:** You remember, I guess.

**CS:** It didn't work.

**MEH:** She had you down for the moment.



**MEH:** And who are the people in this photo are –

**CS:** This me [RIGHT], Eva [NEXT TO STOLLER]. That's Wil Hamlin [FAR LEFT] and that's Dodie Harrison. You know Dodie.

**MEH:** I know who she was.

**CS:** Well, she married one of –

**MEH:** Brett Weston, I think.

**CS:** -- married one of Weston's daughters – sons.

**MEH:** Apparently, she was a model for some of the nude photos that they did – both she –

**CS:** Yeah. I heard that, but I didn't see –

**MEH:** I don't – I've never seen her in the buff so I don't know,

**CS:** Yeah, I don't know. [TECHNICAL COMMENTS NOT TRANSCRIBED.]

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 6. BEGINNING OF SECTION 7.]**

**MEH:** About Fred Stone. You said you worked with him.

**CS:** Oh, well, Fred was always a consummate actor. I mean, he – and I think that was what he was basically interested in. He did some acting at Black Mountain and so on. And he and I were good buddies, and I started a darkroom at Black Mountain and Freddie was very interested. So, he came in, and at the beginning I taught him everything he knew. And he went on after Black Mountain and started doing photography first in New York and then in Cambridge. And a photo of Gropius is one of his pictures. But he took a lot of pictures for Gropius' office and so on. And then Carl Koch had a firm -- I was working – architect – and had a job which was classified – a government job which was classified, and the photos had to be made in-house. He couldn't send them out. So, he set up a darkroom in the basement and Freddie and I ran it. And then after –

**MEH:** Is this when you were in architectural school?

**CS:** Ah, yeah. I guess so, or a little after. Yeah. And then Fred started his own business which he called Fred Stone Reprographics. And then he started a business called – oh, an architectural term, Charette. It was called Charette, and he was a terrible business man, and his partners kind of eased him out. And he ended up having nothing more to do with Charette. I think it still goes on. Anyway Fred – I guess that was it. He worked the rest of his life really in Fred Stone Reprographics in Berkeley – in Cambridge.

**MEH:** So, Fred Stone Reprographics continued even after he started Charette?

**CS:** After what? After he started Charette. Oh, yes, he continued.

**MEH:** He continued. Okay.

**CS:** I'm not sure which was first. I think Charette may have been first and Fred Stone Reprographics. I'm not sure about that. But, anyway, that's what he continued with.

**MEH:** And Fred Stone Reprographics did basically architectural stuff? What did they basically do?

**CS:** Yeah. Mostly architectural stuff and – you know, I'm not familiar with the scope of their work. I know he photographed jobs for the Architects Collaborative and various architects around Cambridge. And what can I say? He was a dear friend.

**MEH:** I just don't know that much about him. So, I was curious.

**CS:** You don't know that much about him?

**MEH:** I know bits and pieces but not that much.

**CS:** Well, Freddie's mother was from a fine old Virginia family. The Dabneys. Annette Dabney, and she was beautiful and sweet. Very charming lady. And his father was an engineer. I think he was related to the Stone of Stone & Webster. But anyway, he was not part of that firm, but he was – he was an engineer. And Freddie had a brother – an older brother I never met. And his parents divorced somewhat acrimoniously, I believe. And when the war came, his brother went in first and was in the air force and was killed. And when Freddie went in the army, I think he never went overseas. He was in the signal corps or something like that. And then Annette moved to Cambridge. She bought a house. A Greek Revival house. A beautiful house on a street near the yard. Athens Street? I'm not sure. Anyway, and that was – that was the house she lived in until she died.

And she left it to Freddie, and Freddie demolished it. He loved to take things apart. The trouble is he never got them put back together again. And my brother-in-law knew him. A big eight by ten view camera and Freddie took it apart. When my brother needed it, it was in pieces, so my brother never forgave Freddie. And Fred was just a charmer, but he was like that. And he and Janie had three kids or four kids. Two girls – Robin and – I think, two boys. And the girls – one of them – the older one – I can't remember her name – married into sort of a very horsy Virginia family and raised her own family. And Robin, I think, married a sort of a back-to-nature buff, and they lived up in Oregon. And the two boys – one of them went to Hollywood. He was actor and I don't know what happened to him. The other one – the younger one – died in an automobile crash, which was a terrible tragedy for Fred. Freddie remarried after Janie died and married a psychiatrist I believe. Anyway, by that time, I was out on the West Coast and it wasn't the same Freddie. He came once to visit us. He was very [UNINTEL WORD] me with a coffee machine, which was typical Freddie. A coffee machine. You put water in and you put beans in and turn the switch on and out came coffee. It was typical of Freddie, but it was also typical of Freddie, it didn't work. [LAUGHTER] So, but he was – he was a lovely guy. Anyway, that's all I know, right. I met him – the last time I met him was at that reunion with those pictures with Bob Bliss and Mouse [Morris Simon]. And Freddie died from some ailment. I can't remember. And that was that. I'm really not in contact with the kids so I really don't know what's going on with them. But, Fred Stone.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 7. BEGINNING OF SECTION 8.]**

[TECHNICAL COMMENTS NOT TRANSCRIBED.]



**MEH:** Now, tell me the story behind it.

**CS:** Fred Stone, who had been in Nashville knew about a cave nearby, and so, he invited Swackhamer – Jack Swackhamer and me – to explore the cave which was probably foolish. And we took Nan and Slat and somebody else? Janie. Janie Stone. And we on a rope went down into the cave. And I was terrified. It was very, you know, deep down and slimy and stuff. Anyway, we crawled around through the chambers, and then came back and climbed up this slippery road. And I tell you, it was terrifying. But we got to the top and I – maybe Slat took that picture of us, but we were triumphant. We made it.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 8. VIDEO SECTION 9 TECHNICAL. BEGINNING OF SECTION 10.]**



**CS:** Nan would know. You haven't seen Nan have you.

**MEH:** No, not on this trip.

**CS:** Well, Nan gave me that photo of Sam Brown. What did I do with it?

**MEH:** Yes, there it is.

**CS:** That's Sam.

**MEH:** Right. Okay.



**CS:** That's on the deck. Larry Kocher. Anni Albers' niece is leaning on the railing.  
What's her name?

**MEH:** Renate Benfey.

**CS:** Who?

**MEH:** Renate Benfey.

**CS:** Yeah. Renate. And the standing girl – blonde – is – She was a good friend of  
Nan's.

**MEH:** Is it Miriam French?

**CS:** No.

**MEH:** Okay.

**CS:** She – I think after the war she moved to Florida or someplace and had three  
children or something. Mimi. Mimi.

**MEH:** Mimi French. Yeah.



**CS:** Mimi French, yeah. And in the front is – anyway, he – I think he’s gone on to be a – he went in the army or in the secret service or something like that.

**MEH:** Okay.

**CS:** What was his name? And he operated the tractor. He was very good.

**MEH:** Is it Danny Deaver?

**CS:** Danny Deaver. Yeah.

**MEH:** With curly brown hair.

**CS:** Yeah. With a – and there’s a Brooks.

**MEH:** Tommy Brooks.

**CS:** Tommy Brooks with his hand up and elbow. And sitting down with the blonde hair is – He’s an architect. He and I had our first job together in Asheville. Wyke. Dick Wyke.

**MEH:** Dick Wyke. Yes. You know that’s – I think Tommy Brooks was the person whose name I was trying to remember who is 90 years old also or 91 now.

**CS:** [SOUNDS LIKE “Where’s Tommy?”]

**MEH:** I said there were four of you. I think – if it’s the right person, then Rudy knows.

**CS:** Where?

**MEH:** If it’s the right person, Rudy knows. If it is Tommy, Rudy – Rudy Haase – knows.

**CS:** Rudy knows.

**MEH:** Yeah.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 10. BEGINNING OF SECTION 11.]**



**MEH:** And you said this is Sophie French?

**CS:** Yes.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 11. BEGINNING OF SECTION 12.]**



**MEH:** You say this is Alex Reed and Nan Oldenburg Stoller [Black]?

**CS:** Yes.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 12. BEGINNING OF SECTION 13.]**

[THE IMAGE ON THE VIDEO IS NOT READABLE. THE WESTERN REGIONAL ARCHIVES HAS A NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE EXHIBITION.]

**CS:** We did a house.

**MEH:** Small house exhibition.

**CS:** Yes.

**MEH:** There actually is a lot of documentation on that at the archive.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 13. BEGINNING OF SECTION 14.]**

**MEH:** A station wagon.

[OVERTALK]



**RRS:** It had things growing in it. It was a wooden station wagon that they left over the winter.

**CS:** No, I can't tell you. One of the cars is John Evarts' and one of the cars is the biology teacher.

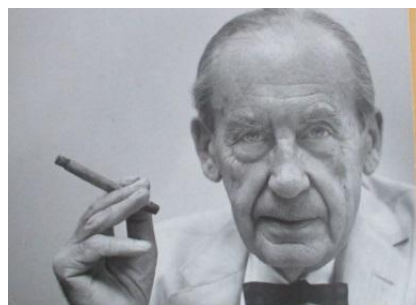
**MEH:** Oh –

**CS:** Dick Carpenter?

**MEH:** Yes.

**CS:** And he paid eleven dollars for it and drove it here from Detroit – drove it to Black Mountain from Detroit. But I can't tell who the rest of them – I guess Bob.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 14. BEGINNING OF SECTION 15.]**



**MEH:** Okay, this is Walter Gropius.

**CS:** Walter Gropius by Fred Stone.

**MEH:** In Cambridge.

**CS:** In Cambridge.

**MEH:** Okay.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 15. BEGINNING OF SECTION 16.]**



[THE UNREADABLE IMAGE ON THE SLIDE IS THE SAME STUDY BUT WITH NO ONE SEATED AT THE DESK. MEH]

**MEH:** Was that Molly Gregory's study? Do you remember?

**CS:** No. No. That's – what did you say Anni's niece was?

**MEH:** Oh, Renate Benfey.

**CS:** Renate. That's Renate's study.

**MEH:** Renate. That was used in a lot –

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 16. BEGINNING OF SECTION 17.]**

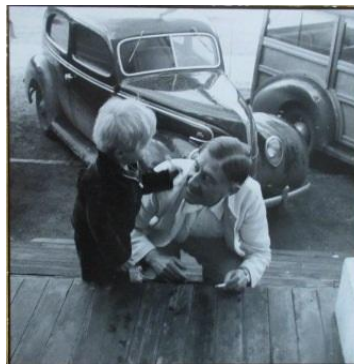


**CS:** -- Zhitlowsky Milton.

**MEH:** Eva Zhitlowsky.

**CS:** Is she still with us? I can't remember.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 17. BEGINNING OF SECTION 18.]**



**MEH:** Do you have any particular memories or comments on that photo of Eddie Dreier and Albers?

**CS:** Oh, yeah. No, but Jimmie Jamieson's car – station wagon is there.

**MEH:** Okay.

**CS:** And that's on the steps of Lee Hall, and the kid was cute as a button and died.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 18. BEGINNING OF SECTION 19.]**



**CS:** It's either Freddie or Will Hamlin. [REFERS TO THE PERSON WHO MADE THE COLLAGE]

**MEH:** Okay.

**CS:** It's either Fred Stone or Will Hamlin. I think, you know, they misrepresented it. They said it was Albers. [REFERRING TO COLLAGE OF FACES]

**MEH:** Right. Somebody did.

**CS:** They had it on the T-shirts [Black Mountain College Museum & Arts Center] that it was Albers actually. I contested it and she said, "Well, Ike Nakata's wife told me it was Albers." And I said, "No, no, no."

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 19. BEGINNING OF SECTION 20.]**



**CS:** Gave it to me for my birthday.

**MEH:** Was that at Black Mountain?

**CS:** No, I think it was in the Village in New York.

**MEH:** Oh, okay.

**CS:** And that's Sam Brown on the right with a guitar. I've never seen him with a guitar before. And I think that may be the Almanacs.

**MEH:** Spell it. Almanacs.

**CS:** Almanacs. You don't know the Almanacs? Yep. They were a folk group. Very progressive. There was a thing on the TV recently. Rosemary. [ADDRESSING WIFE]

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 20. BEGINNING OF SECTION 21.]**

**CS:** Bess Lomax. Did you see it maybe? And she has the Almanacs in there. She talks a lot about it.

**MEH:** Were they like folksingers of the period?

**CS:** Yeah. Yeah. But very radical, very –

**MEH:** Progressive.

**CS:** Far left. Progressive [INDICATING THAT IS TOO MILD].

**MEH:** Were they like Pete Seeger's generation or –

**CS:** Yeah. Pete knew them very well.

**MEH:** I'm sure. Yeah.

**CS:** And, what's his name. Woody Guthrie. In that TV thing she talks a lot about Woody Guthrie.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 21. BEGINNING OF SECTION 22.]**



**CS:** Really liked each other, but they didn't have a common language [Carlos Merida]. There was nothing they could speak. So, they sat together on the porch at Lee Hall and drew pictures for each other. We'd hear them laughing and laughing.

**MEH:** Wouldn't we love to have those pictures? And this is Carlos Merida.

**CS:** Merida. I don't know. I don't know who –

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 22. BEGINNING OF SECTION 23.]**



**CS:** The reunion, yes.

**MEH:** And that's Bob Bliss, you and Rudy.

**CS:** Freddie.

**MEH:** Freddie. Fred Stone.

**CS:** Yeah.



**MEH:** Right. It's amazing how people have remained good friends all of these years.

**CS:** Oh, Freddie was a dear friend, and Bob and I are dear friends. Yeah.

**MEH:** But everybody loved Fred.

**CS:** Except – what's her name?

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 23. BEGINNING OF SECTION 24.]**

**CS:** She came from the South. From North Carolina, I think.

**MEH:** Was that Maude Dabbs?

**CS:** Maude.

**MEH:** She didn't like Fred.

**CS:** She didn't like Freddie. When I saw Maude at – I was in Asheville. They interviewed me. I don't know something. And I was there with, with, with – oh, who was the guy at Yale that worked with Albers. Who taught with Albers?

**MEH:** Bill Reed?

**CS:** No, no.

**MEH:** Not Bill Reed at Yale

**CS:** Who?

**MEH:** Oh, Sewell Sillman. Si Sillman?

**CS:** No, it wasn't Si, but it was somebody – kind of a typographer. But anyway, he taught with –

**MEH:** Okay.

**CS:** And anyway, he and his wife were being interviewed. His wife I should remember. She was at Black Mountain. She was a very pretty girl and she –

**MEH:** Lives at Black Mountain now? [REPEATS QUESTION]

**CS:** Oh, no. I think –

**MEH:** I think, I know who you're talking – do they live up near – in Connecticut.

**CS:** Yeah.

**MEH:** I know who you're talking about. Eisenman. Hope.

**CS:** Eisenman.

**MEH:** Hope Eisenman and her husband.

**CS:** Hope. Hope Greer.

**MEH:** Yeah. I think its Albert or something like that. Eisenman.

**CS:** Eisenman. Anyway, we know who we're talking about.

**CS:** Yeah. Eisenman. And any way there was sort of an exhibit and things, and at the exhibit Maude was there in a wheelchair, and her daughter wanted us to come for breakfast the next day. So, we went to her house. Maude was – I think she's had a stroke because she was kind of not in very good shape. But she was delighted to see us, to see me. And I remembered the thing she and Jalowetz played together on the piano. She was so – she loved that that I remember. It was a Brahms Variations on Haydn [Variations on a Theme by Haydn]. And she – I have a picture of her somewhere if you want it.

**MEH:** Okay. Let's just go and – let's finish looking at these now.

**CS:** To save time. And she died soon after. And her daughter – she married, you know, she had married one of the people at Black Mountain.

**MEH:** Right.

**CS:** A printer.

**MEH:** Haas. Yes.

**CS:** And she calls herself Maude Dabbs Haas. And, anyway, she died soon after, and her daughter writes music.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 24. BEGINNING OF SECTION 25.]**



**MEH:** And you were going to identify the people in this photo.

**CS:** Yes.

**MEH:** That's Rudy.

**CS:** Rudy. Mickie Haase. Fred Stone and Bob Bliss.

**MEH:** Okay. At the reunion at Lake Eden. [REPEATS]

**CS:** Yeah. Yeah.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 25. BEGINNING OF SECTION 26.]**



**MEH:** That's Bob Bliss and Emil Willimetz at the reunion.

**CS:** Yeah, yeah.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 26. BEGINNING OF SECTION 27.]**



**MEH:** Bob.

**CS:** [LEFT TO RIGHT] Fred Stone, Nancy –

**MEH:** Smith. That was her name.

**CS:** Yes, she was “Nanky” Smith at Black Mountain.

**MEH:** At Black Mountain. I can’t think of her married name.

**CS:** And Bob Bliss. And she married – how can I forget?

**MEH:** I can’t think of her married –

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 27. BEGINNING OF SECTION 28.]**



**MEH:** Why don’t you identify people from this end to this. This is Mickie Haase

**CS:** No.

**MEH:** On the left.

**CS:** On the left, yes. Mickie, Rudy. That’s –

**MEH:** Is that Fernando?

**CS:** Fernando de Leon. That's Bob Bliss. And that's Fernando's wife who I can't –

**MEH:** Ellie.

**CS:** Oh, Ellie.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 28. BEGINNING OF SECTION 29.]**

**[SECTION 29 IS DISCUSSION OF PAPERS WHEN RECORDER WAS LEFT ON BY MISTAKE. SECTION 30 IS ONLY A FEW SECONDS.]**

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 28. BEGINNING OF SECTION 31.]**



**MEH:** This is the Walter Barnes who taught at Black Mountain.

**CS:** Yes, but I don't believe there was a Barnes connection – a Barnes Collection.

**MEH:** No, no. Now what about the other people. There's Bobby on the left. Do you know who the other people were?

**CS:** Bobbie Dreier.

**MEH:** Right. Do you know who that is? She reappears there.

**CS:** No. I don't know. Walter Barnes is in all these pictures.

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

**CS:** Ooo.

**MEH:** It's most probably a student. I think that's the same guy according to the dress.  
And who this guy is. They both probably were students.

**CS:** Yeah. It's the same one. I don't know. That's this guy here.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 31. BEGINNING OF SECTION 32.]**

**CS:** Was a disciple of Paul Radin. He waited on him hand and foot.

**MEH:** These are letters and copies of letters from Roman.

**CS:** Yes.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 32. BEGINNING OF SECTION 33.]**

**MEH:** These are from Ike Nakata.

**CS:** I've a couple of stories that Ike wrote.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 33. BEGINNING OF SECTION 34.]**

**MEH:** You were going to tell me the story about Ike coming to Black Mountain.

**CS:** Yeah. Ike was working on a sugar plantation in Hawaii. And he was of Japanese descent. And his greatest ambition in life was to go stateside. And especially to go to college stateside. And so, he did a lot of investigation. I think it was unusual at that time for somebody to be that cerebral. And he heard about Black Mountain and decided that was where he wanted to go. And so, he took a boat to San Francisco and in San Francisco I guess he got a plane to North – to Asheville. [SOUNDS LIKE "A plane's" or "A train's"] possible. Anyway, he came to Black Mountain. Had no contact with anybody in the states at all. Just managed to travel through, and he got to Black Mountain, and he was a very jolly guy with a very loud laugh. And we all took to him immediately. He was very popular. And he was the life of the party. He'd never been before, I guess, and it

was – We wondered how his name happened to be “Ike,” and he said, well, his name was Susumi. And Susumi Nakata. And he got the name Ike because on the sugar plantation, they used to carry railroad ties for the little railroads that they made. He was strong as an ox, and he saved all his money. He wouldn’t go out drinking with the other guys. So, they called him “Ike, the Jew” because he was – okay. And – but “Ike” kept. “Ike” stuck. And we all called him Ike. We didn’t know [UNINTEL] a Jew.

**MEH:** Until later.

**CS:** And then, of course – and then when we went into the war in ’41, Ike was so in love with the country by then – all he knew was Black Mountain – that he immediately enlisted and was sent to Texas. And you know about that, I guess?

**MEH:** Not really.

**CS:** He was reviled and beaten and just –

**MEH:** Because of his [UNINTEL WORD] –

**CS:** -- and just “dirty Jap” and it was just – He had never experienced anything like that. And he got discharged. I don’t know why they discharged him, but they discharged him. He came back to Black Mountain a totally changed person. Totally changed. No more the life of the party. Just very hurt and brooding. But when the time came for a Japanese battalion, to – you know, an American-Japanese battalion – he immediately re-enlisted and was sent, I guess, to Italy. I’m not sure. And – but Ike was – he was still friendly. He and I were buddies. I mean, we used to go frog-gigging in the lake at night and so on. He could move through the water. Very good in the water, you know. Wonderful

swimmer. He could move through the water so quietly that I couldn't hear him, you know. Oh, he was a lovely guy. Anyway, he was a changed person after the war, and he got a job with the postal service in Chicago. The post office. And I guess he worked there until he retired. He married, as you know, and I can't remember whether they had kids or not.

**MEH:** I was wondering.

**CS:** If there was a child. Yeah. And I saw him a few times and tried to get him to come to Black Mountain reunions. He said, "No." Everybody else was a success and he was a failure. So, he couldn't come. And I argued and argued, but he just wouldn't come. And I think that his stories are very nice and very revealing of the creative, wonderful person. And so, we corresponded for a while and I guess he died.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 34. BEGINNING OF SECTION 36.]**

**[SECTION 35 ONLY A SECOND OR TWO.]**

**MEH:** -- connection to Bucky.

**CS:** Well, I was teaching in St. Louis at Washington University, and I knew about Bucky, of course, and for some reason he knew about me. And we immediately did a project together with my students. I just gave my class to Bucky, and we worked together, and I have photos of what we did.

**MEH:** Oh, great.

**CS:** A 38 foot diameter 5/8's of a sphere, and it was made out of cedar and aircraft cable and plywood and some bolts.

**MEH:** About what year would that have been?



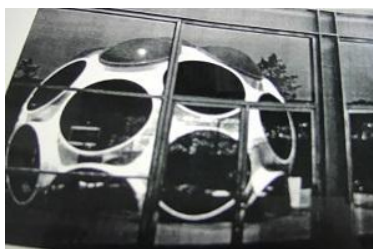
**CS:** Yeah, that was in '55. And I have pictures of that stuff, and so – and there was some problem with the dean who was not totally supportive. But our headquarters was the shop where we fabricated the whole thing. We turned the whole building into a factory to make this dome. And the dean wasn't pleased, and he locked the shop at night. And I got a key. We went in anyway. So, Bucky and I were good buddies. And, oh, he used to visit us a lot – Nan and I – in our little tiny house. And I remember I picked him up at the airport one time, and sitting between us in the front seat was my son Coby who was six I guess. And he and Bucky got into a conversation. Bucky had this wonderful way with children. And Bucky wanted information from Coby because Coby's generation were the ones that knew the kinds of things he wanted to know. And he wanted to know what people ate is space travel. And Coby thought about it for a while, and he said, "Baked beans." And Bucky said – you know, he accepted that information. "Yes, I can understand that" or something. And it turns out that Coby hated baked beans, and we always had to persuade him to eat the beans. And he figured since they were so good for him, they must have been good for the space travelers. It was very sweet. Bucky was incredible with kids. He'd teach kids how to dive and so on. Anyway, what we were about was – he was very interested in what he called a transportable standard of living. As you know, Bucky always felt as long as 50% of the world or more were have-nots, there could be no stability in the world. And so, he was a technocrat. He believed that technology could solve this. And so, he designed a standard of living module which was a bathroom and a kitchen and all very beautifully, tightly designed

small unit. And the idea then would be to enclose it in a very economical or most efficient thing, and, of course, most efficient closure. And, of course, the most efficient shape in terms of use of materials was a dome. And so, what he wanted was – and he already knew how to take the standard of living and lower it on a cable from a helicopter or a balloon or whatever. And he wanted to have the enclosure – the dome – that could be carried. And the marine corps had already carried some, but it was, you know, the kind of clumsy. And what he wanted was a folding dome, something that would fold up. And he figured if it would work, it would be a bundle of stuff about four feet, I think he'd say, diameter and about eight feet long. Something like that. And if you could lower this thing from a helicopter and pull a cable, the whole thing would unfold, and then you could put it over the standard of living that you had. Well, so, he came to St. Louis and he lectured. And my students were fascinated by him. And although he talked for days on end. And I think after about three days – two-and-a-half days or something – he said, "Okay. I guess that's about it." And the students said, "What about the dome?" And he said, "What dome?" And they said, "Wouldn't the dome be –" "Yeah," he said. "As a matter of fact –" What he was curious about was whether you could make a folding dome. And he had the basic structure in mind. It was a series of tetrahedra with the compression members being some kind of struts. And the tension would be aircraft cable, and there would be a piston in the middle – a pneumatic piston – and it would – you could when this thing was folded up, you could pressure the pneumatic piston and it would open the whole thing. So, the kids, of course, were fascinated. I mean, he

was a marvelous teacher. Very exciting. So, we went to work. As I said, we turned the building into a factory, and we made the compression members out of red cedar and the tension members were aircraft cable. And there was a connector made of plywood. And so, the first thing we did was built this thing. It was thirty-eight feet in diameter, and it stood on the lower campus at the Washington University. And the structural engineers that had buildings up on the campus came down and they looked at it, and they said, well, this thing wouldn't have any strength at all because it was statically indeterminate. That was the term they used, "statically indeterminate." So, Bucky shrugged. And the kids were mad, so they climbed on the dome and jumped on it. Of course, it was very strong. That was the answer to the structural engineers. Anyway, then we set about making the thing out of aluminum, and Bucky managed – and the kids also – contacted – there were big manufacturing firms in the area. An outfit making bottling machinery because there was a beer industry. And managed to get these various industrialists interested. Somebody – a firm that made raincoats was interested in the covering, and so it went. There were a lot of details. What was amazing was that the kids weren't kids anymore. They were – well, the first thing Bucky did was organized the group. So, there was a financial group. There was a – oh, I can't even remember what the groups, but the tasks were. And so, it ended up that the kids were supposed to contact the industries get into the office and get onto some of the department phones. And I heard one kid say, "Is this the so-and-so manufacturing company? I'd like to talk to the president, please." [LAUGHS] Washington University was kind of well-respected

and the kids played on that. Anyway, it was just amazing. Well, we managed to make I think three unfolding parts. And we had to determine experimentally whether the joints could be simple joints or whether they had to be ball-and-socket joints. Because of the rotation, I believe they had to be ball-and-socket joints. And we made three of the units. It would take I don't know how many to make the dome, and there are photos of the thing expanding. Movies of the thing expanding. And at the end, Bucky invited all these industrialists to come.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 36. BEGINNING OF SECTION 37.]**



**MEH:** This is the “fly’s eye dome.”

**CS:** Yeah, “flies eye.” We vacuum-formed the parts. I think this is one of the original ones that Bucky made, but we made one here which was about – I think it was thirteen feet in diameter. Twelve, thirteen feet in diameter. And it was about half of a sphere. And it was made of plastic which my students vacuum-formed in the shop. We had the tools to do that. And the – we had it. I mean, we had it for years and then the foundation – the Bucky Foundation – asked if they could borrow it. And I knew what that meant. [LAUGHS] So, I said okay. That was the end of that.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 37. BEGINNING OF SECTION 38.]**

**CS:** Up to Washington University. And as I say, the university was very high esteem. So, they came. And Bucky lectured them and showed the kids – it was just incredible. He had done something similar at Black Mountain, of course. And from then on Bucky and I were very close. And he used to come up here in California, and we used to visit him. Oh, he was at Southern Illinois and he'd come out once a year to visit Allegra in Los Angeles, and then he would come up here and visit us.

**MEH:** Why don't we – go ahead.

**CS:** . And came up with the idea of making a sphere on Alcatraz – I have – must have – which had all the continents of the world on it and lights. And in the middle of the sphere was a tower with an elevator. It was a big thing. And if you stood at the top, of the platform in the middle, at night you could see a continent. You could look through the continent and you would see just the constellations that they could see. So, it got a little publicity. I think I have clippings about that.

**MEH:** Okay. Let's look at the boxes.

**[END OF SECTION 38. END OF TRANSCRIPT. END OF INTERVIEW.]**