

INTERVIEWEE: Nan Oldenburg Stoller Black  
INTERVIEWER: Mary Emma Harris'  
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**[BEGINNING OF TRANSCRIPT. BEGINNING OF VIDEO SEGMENT 1.]**

**[IDENTIFICATION COMMENTS NOT TRANSCRIBED.]**

**MEH:** Nan, how did you come to this country?

**NOB:** I came by ship from England. It was easy for me to leave Nazi Germany because we were American citizens at birth. So, that was easy. I came on the Rotterdam – Holland-American Line to New York.

**MEH:** Okay. And what did you do when you arrived?

**NOB:** I had to take a term in high school because I didn't have a diploma from my school in Germany. So, I went to George Washington High School in Washington Heights, which was rather a nightmare. It was very much like reading a Kafka book for me, but I made it and graduated along with probably 999 others in just one year.

**MEH:** So, how was it that you were American born? Had you family been here and then gone to Germany?

**NOB:** My father was born in New York City, and he went to school – Collegiate School – and he actually was one of the few people I know who were completely bilingual. He could not tell one language. I mean, they were both perfect. And when he was a teenager, his parents moved to Hamburg, Germany for

business reasons. So, this is how he was American always. And when he married my mother – in those days it became automatic to become the same citizen as your husband. And the children also would have the same citizenship until they were I think sixteen years of age, or maybe twenty-one. Yeah. Because I was sixteen when I left. Yeah, okay.

**MEH:** So, at this point you had to make a choice.

**NOB:** Yes.

**MEH:** Okay. So, how did your mother come to be at the Window Shop?

**NOB:** My mother was never at the Window Shop.

**MEH:** Oh, I thought she was.

**NOB:** No, never.

**MEH:** Who was there?

**NOB:** Well, I don't know how I got introduced to the Window Shop, but they gave me a scholarship to go to Radcliffe after I was at Black Mountain College and spent a year in New York.

**MEH:** So, let's go back. You graduated from high school.

**NOB:** I graduated from high school, and then I was searching for a college and almost went to the Quaker college near New York – Sarah Lawrence or –

**MEH:** One of them. Okay.

**NOB:** Then I met Xanti Schawinsky, and he said, "There's only one place to go. It's Black Mountain College. So, I applied, and they did give me a scholarship at the time.

**MEH:** And how long did you stay?

**NOB:** Two years.

**MEH:** And you met Claude there?

**NOB:** Yes.

**MEH:** Your first husband.

**NOB:** Yes.

**MEH:** What was it? You had really felt like you were in Kafka-land at the high school. When you arrived at Black Mountain, what was your reaction?

**NOB:** It was much more like home. I was used to – I grew up in a household that had lots of music and lots of artists visiting and important people who were also in a symphony or conductors or something. So, in a way it was “Oh, well, here’s the conductor of the Prague Symphony teaching the choir. That’s fine.” But it didn’t impress me as much as some of the other students like my friend Jane and Claude, who came from a totally different background. For them it was just magical. And I liked it very much, but I liked it because it was familiar to me.

**MEH:** Right. With whom did you study?

**NOB:** I studied mostly with the English department. Ken Kurtz, who was a Rhodes scholar, and did literature – reading and discussion. And Bob Wunsch taught creative writing, and I loved that. So, those were my main subjects. I also took American History with Ronny Boyden. Fascinating. And I think I took French. And I sang in the choir. We did I think the Brahms Requiem.

**MEH:** Was Dr. Jalowetz there when you were there?

**NOB:** Yes, Dr. Jalowetz was there. And I was very enthusiastic about the building program. And I built the Jalowetz – the patio you call it.

**MEH:** The stone.

**NOB:** The veranda of their cottage which was stone masonry.

**MEH:** Has you every done manual labor before?

**NOB:** My grandfather had a farm in Germany, and we went every summer, and I loved it. And I, you know, went down where there was a mill and there were chickens and horses and cows and everything else. So, I was familiar with a farm. But I learned to milk I think from the farmer at Black Mountain.

**MEH:** Okay.

**NOB:** Yes.

**MEH:** We'll come back to Black Mountain.

**NOB:** Okay.

**MEH:** When you left Black Mountain, you went to Radcliffe directly?

**NOB:** No, I worked in New York City for a year. First, I worked in a place called the Recording and Statistical Corporation which tabulated questionnaires in the old way. There were girls who worked on a keyboard, and I ran a machine that sorted things out. It said, "This many people use this toothpaste because of this and so forth." Then I got a job at the Nierendorf Gallery which was wonderful. And I filed cards and I did all kinds of things. I did not sell paintings. But I did lead people in. So – he was – he mostly had Paul Klee paintings.

**MEH:** And, so –

**NOB:** And so, I did that for a year to make a little money. And at that time my mother arrived from Germany.

**MEH:** So, you came a little before your parents or –?

**NOB:** Yeah, I came on my own. I had been in England where I met **Tim**

Black, so –

**MEH:** Where you met –?

**NOB:** My second husband.

**MEH:** Your second husband. So, you knew him from child –

**NOB:** I knew him when I was fifteen and sixteen.

**MEH:** Okay. Was he a refugee?

**NOB:** No, he was English.

**MEH:** Okay.

**NOB:** And he was a Conscientious Objector, but he enlisted in the London Fire Service.

So, he was in the thick of the war. And anyway, so –

**MEH:** Okay.

**NOB:** Anyway.

**MEH:** And so, you went to Radcliffe after a year.

**NOB:** Yes. Then I met Karl Friedrich and his wife. And they were actually looking for a house-daughter. They had one, two, three, four or five children then. And, no, four children. And they said I could live with them in Concord, Massachusetts. And he, you know, kind of got me an interview with the Dean at Radcliffe. And an interesting little tidbit is that she interviewed me, and I told her that I took a course with Josef Albers. And she said, “Well, did you have art history?” And I

said, “No, we learned to draw.” And she said, “Oh, I can’t give you credit for that. It’s too practical.” I thought, “They should hear about that a little bit later.”

**MEH:** Most schools at that time would give credit for history courses in the arts –

**NOB:** Yes, yes.

**MEH:** -- but not [OVERTALK] for the practice of the arts.

**NOB:** Yes, and Radcliffe was known to be a “blue-stocking” place. So yes, but still I always have to think about that and laugh. So, I didn’t get much credit, and I did three years in Radcliffe.

**MEH:** And your degree was in –?

**NOB:** Anthropology.

**MEH:** Okay. Did you ever work in the field?

**NOB:** I did. When I walked out of my oral exam, which you have to take if you write an honor’s thesis, as they say. My professor was [SOUNDS LIKE: “**Cleg Clegrun**”] turned around and said, “Would you like a job?” Those things don’t happen anymore nowadays. It was wonderful. I said, “Of course.” I processed field notes from people who were working with Navajo Indians. He was writing a book about Navajo Indians, and there were people in the field who sent field notes back.

**MEH:** And you don’t recall what your connection with the Window Shop was.

**NOB:** The Window Shop gave me a scholarship for Radcliffe. Now I remember. I worked as a waitress. I waited on my –

**MEH:** You worked as a waitress at the Window Shop.

**NOB:** Yes, I worked – waited on my fellow students who I didn't know. I didn't know anyone really because I lived off campus.

**MEH:** That would explain how Lore Kadden knew you because she was working there. [OVERTALK]

**NOB:** Well, she may – Was she a waitress too, maybe?

**MEH:** I'm not sure. She had learned embroidery in the Netherlands. Her father wanted her to learn something practical –

**NOB:** Yes.

**MEH:** -- while they were waiting to get to the United States. And I'd have to review my notes to see. Her mother worked there also. And I don't know whether she was doing embroidery things or whether she was – I think she was waiting tables maybe. [OVERTALK] I'm not sure. Yeah. [OVERTALK] I know she –

**NOB:** I have no connection with that. I just – you know, I worked as a waitress and I also was a student at Radcliffe and, so I didn't spend much extra time there.

**MEH:** Right. It would just take, you know, a casual conversation.

**NOB:** Yeah.

**MEH:** Unless I'm mistaken, it was through you that she heard about Black Mountain.

**NOB:** I see. Yeah. Well, that's possible that we – you know, just one conversation once or twice.

**MEH:** Exactly. Yeah. So that's – when did you and Claude get married?

**NOB:** We got married the day I graduated from Radcliffe.

**MEH:** Okay. Was he –

**NOB:** In 1946.

**MEH:** Was he still at Harvard then?

**NOB:** He was a graduate student at the School of Design.

**MEH:** Okay.

**NOB:** And he had another year to go. And I was – I had my job waiting at the Peabody Museum in Cambridge.

**MEH:** Okay. Good. Going back to Black Mountain, do you have particular memories – anecdotes? You said you studied with Albers.

**NOB:** Yes, I had a course with him. Well, my memories – I think it was the first time I felt a certain freedom, you know, after living in Germany and after that high school experience. We had dances on Saturday – I loved all that. I loved all the extra things. I loved the work program. I loved going to the farm and talking to the farmer and learning how to milk. I probably neglected academics a little bit even though I did – I was very interested in the American History class, and I did love creative writing. And I've always written since then, so maybe it stuck – something.

**MEH:** Right. Did you go off campus at all?



**NOB:** Very little. I went once with a group of students to Roy's where everybody went to have beer, and they called me One-Beer-Oldenburg because I guess I got kind of jolly after one beer, and I never went again. That's the one time. I – we did during one of the vacations go and – go to some caves. Not in North Carolina. [OVERTALK]

**MEH:** Maybe in Virginia. Maybe Linville Caverns or something like that.

**NOB:** Not Virginia but another state –

**MEH:** Okay.

**NOB:** -- that's right next to, and it was Fred Stone and Jerry Wolpert and Claude Stoller.

**MEH:** I remember other people talking about –

**NOB:** Yeah. And there's a picture of them.

**MEH:** Right. The three guys.

**NOB:** The went down into the caves, and Jane and I stayed up – oh, Jack Swackhamer was a friend of Jane's – was there too. And they went down. And I remember we thought, "What if they never come out?" [LAUGHTER] But we had ropes and things. So, I – But I don't think she and I ever went down, but we were on the trip. So, that was the only trip I took. My father had a car, and he picked me up once I think for the summer. I worked part of one summer I think digging ditches and things. So, I was very intent on working. [LAUGHTER]

**MEH:** Right. Did you take part in any of the theater activities?

**NOB:** Any of the what?

**MEH:** Drama activities.

**NOB:** No. It wasn't – you know, the drama was very – going very strong the year before I came. That's when Claude was Fleance, I think, in *Macbeth*. And there was a play going though when I was there, but I did not. No, no. I was in the choir. I loved that. That was wonderful. And –

**MEH:** Did you speak English fluently when you came?

**NOB:** More or less because I had been in England twice before that. I was there as a house daughter to the Black family. That's how I came there.

**MEH:** Oh, to the Black family. That's how you knew your future husband.

**NOB:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's where I met Tim. And so, you know, I had two – one summer, and I was actually there the next summer when they had invited me to visit the Isle of Wight where they were. And when we came back – they always rented houses. They never bought houses. So, to their next rental house – I know Tim and Jill, one of the daughters, and I had gone for a walk, and when we came back, there was the King's speech that was recorded in the famous film – *The King's Speech*.

**MEH:** Right.

**NOB:** Of course, you know, we knew it was going to happen. And Tim immediately said, "I'm going to enlist in the Fire Service." In the London Fire Service. And I wanted to stay in England. Join the Red Cross. Work in England. But my

parents insisted that I finish school, come to America where, after all, I belonged. And so, I went on my own to this country.

**MEH:** And after you and Claude married you had three children.

**NOB:** Yes.

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

**MEH:** Did you continue to work or take care of the family/

**NOB:** No, I took care of the children until my youngest was – Lisa was in kindergarten, and I started volunteering in the library. And again, threw myself into it. And when one professional librarian was hired for the whole district, she said to me, “You’re crazy to work as a volunteer. Go to library school.” So, I went to library school. And then I got my Master’s. But I got the master’s quite a bit later.

**MEH:** Okay.

**NOB:** I got first a – you know, a school librarian’s credential.

**MEH:** How did you become involved in doing calligraphy?

**NOB:** I think it was my brother who was a graphic designer. And I used to look and see what he was doing. He worked for various publishers, and in the end he worked for the Metropolitan Museum. He did a lot of their books. And I used to raid his wastebasket because I loved writing – beautiful writing – and I do love literature. So, this was the combination. And I think when I saw an extension course was offered in calligraphy in Berkeley, I decided to take it. It was taught

by David Goines, who has become very famous. He does all the posters for Alice Waters' restaurant. And he's very good. And it was actually very amusing. I don't know whether you want to hear sidelines, but the class was mostly, you know, middle-aged, maybe a little younger, but still, you know, we were all grown up. And in walked David Goines. Tight blue jeans, smoking a cigarette, looking around at this crowd of people and saying, "There will be no talking in this class." I've often thought about that. [LAUGHS]

**MEH:** He wanted total concentration. [OVERTALK] He wanted focus.

**NOB:** Yeah. He was a good teacher. A good teacher. And he had a system of progression that you first use a thick pen – a wide pen – and so your hand learns the shaping, and then you can try it with a smaller one. And we started with italic, [UNINTEL: **chansive** WORD] cursive and then did [**anchul**] and then did finally Roman, which is the hardest. And I do the same for my students.

**MEH:** And you teach at a middle school now.

**NOB:** At the middle school. Yeah. I was librarian at the middle school.

**MEH:** Okay.

**NOB:** After getting my degree for twenty-five years, but that was before computers and before – you know, when you still pulled out a drawer and [UNINTEL] and you look and you see what else is there. The same alphabet. Which is very nice actually, you know.

**MEH:** And now you still teach as a before-school program.

**NOB:** Well, I – now I teach – after I quit – I quit when I was sixty-five because I thought I should. I’ve done a lot of things because I thought I should. Because I was brought up as a Lutheran. So, I got a – sort of a position that was given to me by the superintendent to work with literature with any of the classes. So, I did a lot of wandering around among the classes and doing *Charlotte’s Web* with the third grade and maybe a historical fiction book with the fourth and fifth and so forth. And after that I got involved in the middle school partly – well, of course, then I was librarian, of course. Let’s see. No, this was after I was librarian. Okay, I always kept up the calligraphy class because there was always demand for it. At first it was part of the core curriculum. It was in the middle of the day, and then they decided to make it as a special class. So, that’s what I do now in the early mornings. And the Shakespeare, of course, is when teachers choose to have me there. And Haiku the same. So, it’s part-time now.

**MEH:** Okay. Do the students get credit for the calligraphy?

**NOB:** No, they don’t anymore which is unfortunate. They used to do it when it was what is called the “gifted” program which was a funding – was funded by the state. And then people found it wasn’t democratic enough to have gifted students, and they had to forego the money. But when it was funded, we had a big program, and I was in charge of it actually. And we had all kinds of things like architecture and veterinary medicine. A veterinarian actually came and taught the kids. They were fascinated. And aeronautics. It was wonderful. And we did fill the classes not just with the officially testing gifted kids, but they

abandoned the system unfortunately, I think. So, now it's, you know – whatever happens, it has to be funded. But the school – middle school – has a big fundraising organization called Kido.

**MEH:** Okay. Looking back, what do you think was the importance of Black Mountain to your life, besides meeting your first husband there?

**NOB:** Yeah, I think that was – I think writing. It really gave me some push and ideas and the love to write things down. I think definitely that happened at Black Mountain College. That wasn't there before. And I think also an appreciation for art through Albers. Definitely. Yeah. And I mean, he was a marvelous teacher. Absolutely unbelievable. Yeah.

**MEH:** Were you familiar with the Bauhaus before?

**NOB:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Of course, when I was still in Germany, I heard a lot about the Bauhaus, and I had, you know, friends or whatever who had Bauhaus pottery and, you know, so that was very well known. Yeah.

**MEH:** Where did you live in Germany?

**NOB:** Hamburg. Outside of Hamburg in a suburb.

**MEH:** What did your father do?

**NOB:** My father was what he called an architectural designer. Because he didn't have an engineering degree, he couldn't be an official architect. So, he did a lot of remodeling – a lot of designing of furniture and that kind of thing. He did it in Germany at a studio, and then later on he worked for some firms in New York.

**MEH:** There was one other question I had and it – oh, you also make lasting friends at Black Mountain. Lucian and Slats –

**NOB:** Oh, yes. Lucian and Jane, you know. Forever. We became so close that when we moved to the West Coast, we made a vow with them that we would spend Easter and Christmas together. They were then at Eugene, Oregon. Lucian was teaching at the University of Oregon, and we used to do it. Either we would drive up or they would drive down. We'd have it together, and we told the children they were "cousins of choice," like Thomas Mann, who wrote about "cousins of choice."

**MEH:** So, are there any other memories of Black Mountain that you have that I haven't asked about?

**NOB:** Yeah, I'm sorry. I – you know everything is – of course, the people who were there, you know, and I mean, Bob Bliss is also a good friend but, of course, he lived elsewhere and so forth. And had another life so I didn't know. We kept things up with Lucian and Jane. I mean, I was just there a week ago to see Jane. And, yeah, I always feel bad because I don't – Black Mountain wasn't as important to me as it was for Jane or Claude or many others. It was – I liked it. I felt wonderful there, but it was more my kind of life anyway.

**MEH:** Right. Do you remember how you first traveled to Black Mountain? Did you take the train?

**NOB:** Yes. Ja. I took the train. Long train ride. Yeah.

**MEH:** Right.

**NOB:** And I always took the train back and forth. Christmas vacation I would take the train. I think maybe there was there was one car – once when a fellow student had a car. But not many people had cars at Black Mountain College.

**MEH:** And when you were there, there was probably gas rationing. Well, the war hadn't started yet when you were there

**NOB:** No, it hadn't started but – no, I think there was one or maybe two who had cars. That was it, you know. Nobody had cars. They piled into the cars and went down to have beer

**MEH:** Right. I think Jimmie Jamieson had a car.

**NOB:** Maybe.

**MEH:** And he would drive people back and forth. Was he there when you were at the college?

**NOB:** Yes, he was. I remember him.

**MEH:** Right.

**NOB:** Yeah, yeah. Music I think I also – but then music, I was brought up on. But music continued at Black Mountain, and I loved it.

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

**MEH:** So, you were – you said there's something else you remembered about the college?



**NOB:** **[SAN FRANCISCO REUNION?]** Well, I remember one of the meetings that we had afterwards, and I remember particularly the whole thing of art versus liberal arts because Lucian was here. I went with Lucian and Jane, and Lucian had written a speech, a very good speech. And it was in some auditorium, and people were all talking about art. Nothing else but art. And I remember Lucian looking more and more sort of furtive. You know, “When are they going to call on me?” They called on him last, and he was rather taken aback. It was all right, but he felt pushed aside, and I think it’s the first time I realized that the place had changed completely since our being there. I remember one of the very amusing and wonderful things was that Professor Straus – Dr. Straus – was teaching philosophy, and he had a group of boys who were very learned. And they always said, “We’re going up in Dr. Straus’s balloon.” They had, you know, afternoon classes. And Jerry Wolpert and Lucian and some others – that was something nobody else touched. But then, of course, there was also this very good science teacher. What was his name? He became an atomic scientist.

**MEH:** Oh, was Hansgirg there when –?

**NOB:** Bergmann. Bergmann. Bergmann.

**MEH:** Right. Right. He was there when you were there. Right.

**NOB:** Yeah, yeah. And I’m sure someone told you a story of a cold morning where he told his class how the people wherever he came from, you know, in Poland or wherever – how they would get warm despite going like this [SHOWS ARMS

ACROSS CHEST POUNDING SHOULDERS] and he backed up against a whole shelf of flasks because he taught a science class – a chemistry class.

**MEH:** Did everything come tumbling down?

**NOB:** Yeah.

**MEH:** Right.

**NOB:** So, anyway. There are all kinds of wonderful stories like that. And that was a subject that was certainly taught. And then mathematics also, you know. Dreier taught mathematics, and I'm trying to figure out some other classes that were there.

**MEH:** What was the effect of having your own study?

**NOB:** Well, for me it was just a place to study and read, but a lot of kids had very social studies. I remember Jane Slater having beautiful color mugs that she served cocoa or coffee or something in. And all kinds of stuff. People used to hang out in each other's studies. I was never – well, I just wasn't popular. I wasn't [LAUGHS] – I wasn't very social and always doing something. So, I didn't have any gatherings in my study or anything, but I think it was a good idea, and, of course, it was great fun working on the building. Again, I always enjoyed the work – the work program – the doing.

**MEH:** What about mealtimes? Do you have particular memories?

**NOB:** Oh, yes. Mealtimes. Well, I remember something amusing about Dr. Jalowetz, who took a tray to take to his wife because she was ill. And he was a little

absentminded, and he put the tray down and started eating that. [LAUGHS]  
And we knew he was taking it to his wife. But I don't remember the quality of the food. It didn't matter to me even though now I love cooking, baking, everything. So, I liked the staff. I always liked the staff. I liked the building people staff, too. The contractor and the mason and everyone else. Yeah.

**MEH:** Do you have memories of Lawrence Kocher?

**NOB:** Oh, yeah, yeah. Though, you know, he taught architecture, and I didn't take that, so – but I knew him. You know, he was around, of course. Yeah, yeah. But I wish they would say a bit more about the other part of Black Mountain in the beginning, because that was very impressive how they began the college as a revolt from Rollins College and how all these people gathered. People needed jobs and didn't look for big salaries and came because they loved doing this and being there. I think this was impressive, you know. And they taught vigorously. Jalowetz was just wonderful with music and Albers, of course. Yeah.

**MEH:** Do you have any memories of snakes at Black Mountain?

**NOB:** Teenage?

**MEH:** Snakes. Snakes.

**NOB:** Snakes.

**MEH:** Like copperheads or rattlesnakes.

**NOB:** No, not really. I remember winters and going skiing with Lucian, and I remember going down – they weren't big mountains because we just hiked up.

You know, we went up and then down. But it was snowing so hard that I couldn't see his tracks, and I was hoping I was in the right place coming down behind him. That was wonderful and – Other people were important I think maybe of my age that I may not have made connections as much in Germany, you know, because of the Nazi times. And, of course, I wasn't, you know, in the Hitler Jugend or anything like that. So, I think that was important. What else do I remember? Yeah, it's pretty wonderful to sit next to your professor at a meal, you know. That was wonderful. Yeah. It was very nice. Long time ago.

**MEH:** Yeah.

**NOB:** And so many things, you know. There were so many new experiences for me being, you know, just simple little German girl.

**MEH:** Did you think of yourself then as being a German even though you had American citizenship?

**NOB:** Yes. I was very reluctant to come to this country and thought, "I won't stay very long. [LAUGHS] I'll go back as soon as the war's over." But, yeah, it's different. I had, you know, lots of cousins in Germany, but I wouldn't live there now. No.

**MEH:** I think your father maybe was right.

**NOB:** Yeah. I would live in England. Yes. Or on the east coast. I like the east coast. So, we lived in Cambridge for quite a while, you know, while Claude was finishing. And then we, you know, went to Florence, Italy with Lucian and Jane.

**MEH:** Right.

**NOB:** You probably heard about that.

**MEH:** Yes. I've heard bits and pieces. Tell me what you remember about that trip.

**NOB:** Oh, that was just a dream. We planned it long, long ahead of time. I know we were sitting in restaurant, I think, in New York. And Claude and I were saying to Lucian and Jane, "We're going to go to Italy. You have to come with us." So, they said, "Yes." And I remember asking my mother, "Where in Italy should we go?" She said, "Florence, of course." And my parents had friends in Florence who actually had an apartment that was facing the place that we then rented which was a former monastery that was turned into living quarters by Napoleon and his army, but very, you know, still the structure of a cloister and cold, cold, cold in the winter. And we were six, and the rent was a hundred dollars a month.

**MEH:** How long did you stay?

**NOB:** Claude and I stayed six months and took one quick trip to Sicily, and I think Lucian and Jane stayed a little bit shorter. And I remember Lucian saying, "I have to go back and work because that's what life is all about." But it was just fabulous. In those days it was possible to do it on a shoestring.

**MEH:** Right.

**NOB:** Have that place. Do our own cooking on charcoal. And bicycle down to Florence. Go to the market every single day. And the neighbor who was a – working at a gas station was brilliant. He rebuilt a vesper for Sam Brown, who

was lame from the waist down and made it so he could maneuver it by hand totally. And it was a different life for Sam. It was fabulous.

**MEH:** So, you – it was you and Claude, Lucian and Jane –

**NOB:** And Bob, Lucian's brother –

**MEH:** Okay.

**NOB:** And Sam Brown.

**MEH:** Sam Brown. Okay. Six of you.

**NOB:** Yeah, yeah.

**MEH:** It must have been fabulous.

**NOB:** It was fabulous. That was an unforgettable experience. And I didn't go back.

Lucian and Jane went back several times. But I always have this feeling of you can't go home again. [LAUGHS] Which is true. They didn't keep the – that place the same way.

**MEH:** It would not have been the same without the six – the group of six.

**NOB:** Yeah, yeah. So –

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

**MEH:** You were talking about John Evarts.

**NOB:** Yes. And how I well remember him sitting at the piano and pounding on it for the dances. And wonderfully. One after the other. And he was always cheerful. And then every once in a while he would turn around and say, "Change your

partners.” And what I loved most was the Virginia reel. The folk dancing. Yeah. It was great fun. And, you know, dressing up for Saturday night dances was a special thing. It was totally new to me. I had to have long dresses, and it was – I even remember one very well.

**MEH:** Were these things you made? Or things you brought?

**NOB:** No, I think that I had a – I don’t know. Somebody made it, my parents friend or maybe even a dressmaker, you know, in those days. It was a red dress with lots of hearts on it and little black velvet ribbons. Wonderful. Yeah, so anyway.

**MEH:** Good. Are there other students you remember in particular? You’d mentioned –

**NOB:** Yeah. I remember Mimi French because I had to instruct her into the secrets of life. She didn’t know. Which is odd to send your child to college as a, you know, teenager – upper teenager. Yeah. Anyway. But she was very nice. And I remember. Oh, I remember a lot of students. Who else do I remember? Bob Bliss, of course. We – I lived in the attic when we were at Lake Eden at first. Well, we were at Lake Eden. I was in the attic and Connie Spencer, whose father worked for the weather service. I remember I always wanted to work for the weather service. I thought, “My next life. That’s what I would like to do.” And everyone had their own habits. And, of course, when you live in an attic, and there’s one bed after another, you know, there were probably six beds. And Frances Koontz was there. She was very serious. I don’t know what she studied.

**MEH:** I think she was in theater.

**NOB:** Oh, yes. That's right. Yeah, yeah. And Jane and Connie Spencer, and there was another girl I liked very much, and I can't think of her name. These things happen with the years. Ja. And you sort of remember little glimpses. Like there was one girl who loved to iron, and she said, "I love ironing," and I often think of her when I iron, you know, because it is a peaceful occupation. Yeah. And everybody claims I stomped around with boots, very audibly. But I remember something odd about Dr. Straus because he was also the doctor. But he quite old then. And I remember I was running down the hall and got a big splinter in between my sole and foot. I mean, it was in the foot. Big wide splinter. And somebody said, "Have it taken out by Dr. Straus." And somebody else said, "Don't do that. We'll take you down to the town." And I remember somebody took me to the town. And his wife. Did she play the violin? Yes. Badly. Right?

**MEH:** I don't know.

**NOB:** Did somebody say yes. I think so. Yeah.

**MEH:** How did you do your laundry? Did they have a washing machine? Do you remember?

**NOB:** I think we had washing machines. Yeah, I'm pretty sure we had washing machines. But we probably hung them up. I don't think they had dryers in those days. No. We hung them up and probably they were hanging all over the attic. Yeah, I think there were washing machines. Definitely. Oh, Rudy Haase, of course, was a big connection. And he was sort of – he was always available. If



nobody came to dance with me, he would dance with me. He still calls me on my birthday. I call him. His birthday is on April 1<sup>st</sup>. He's in Nova Scotia.

**MEH:** Right.

**NOB:** And he married a girl who came from Belmont, Massachusetts – from a substantial family. The Wellingtons and the Underwoods. And they lived on this big estate that they let Claude and me live in when they were on a trip. So, when Coby was born – our first boy – we were living there. I remember that. I took it away from Black Mountain again, you see. I always [UNINTELL]

**MEH:** Did you – were Leslie Katz and Jane Mayhall – were they there when you were there?

**NOB:** No.

**MEH:** Okay.

**NOB:** Leslie Katz. No, no. They were not. John Stix was.

**MEH:** Right.

**NOB:** But Leslie Katz and Jane May- -- no, I heard about them so much, but they were not there. I don't know whether it was before. Yeah, I think so. Yeah. Who were the actors? There were a few who were – and I knew them. Like –

**MEH:** Was Sue Spayth there?

**NOB:** Malek.

**MEH:** Yeah. Bernard Malek.

**NOB:** Yeah. Bernard Malek. A tall fellow. Yeah. And someone else. And then I remember Alex Reed very well. He was a wonderful fellow. Did beautiful work and was a very, very quiet man for such a tall and handsome man. I remember Einstein visiting.

**MEH:** What do you remember about that visit?

**NOB:** I just remember how excited people were. And I remember Morris Simon, who was sort of a – he was – there was something very humorous about him. He was a very nice fellow, and he said, “I’m not going to wash my hands ever again.” I shook hands with Einstein. I remember Einstein sitting with the youngest boy of the Dreiers. I think there’s a photograph of it. It’s beautiful. Yeah. But I don’t – you know, I certainly didn’t talk to him. I wouldn’t have dared talk to him, you know. And I wasn’t there when Bucky Fuller came.

**MEH:** Right.

**NOB:** Bucky Fuller came to see us later in St. Louis, when we were there for two years.

**MEH:** Okay.

**NOB:** And I remember living in a little pre-fab in St. Louis. All crowded in on Faculty Lane, and Bucky Fuller sitting at our kitchen table and lecturing as he always lectured.

**MEH:** Always lectured.

**NOB:** Always lectured. So, yeah, there are probably more things that I will remember, you know, but –

**MEH:** You like to write. You can write them down and send them to me.

**NOB:** I will do that. Yeah. I do like to write. I'll probably type them up.

**MEH:** That's okay.

**NOB:** I have an old typewriter

**MEH:** Good. Good for you.

**NOB:** A wonderful office typewriter I like to use.

**MEH:** Good.

**[END OF VIDEO SECTION 4. END OF TRANSCRIPT. END OF INTERVIEW.]**