

Interviewee: Mary Fitton Fiore
Interviewer: Mary Emma Harris
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[BEGINNING OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE.]

Interviewer's note: At the time of the interview, I was coming to terms with strong individuals such as Charles Olson and Martin Duberman's *Black Mountain College: An Exploration in Community* (Dutton, 1972). Generally, I limit my participation in interviews to questions, but in this interview I am a participant. I was using Mary as a sounding-board, testing ideas, many of which I would now modify. In some cases I have stricken text as unreleased for publication but left it as a record of my thinking at the time. In some cases I have annotated the text.

In some cases Mary Fiore is showing photographs and I am using them to stimulate memories.

MEH: I think – You said you had very strong feelings about Jack.

MFF: Well, I think – Oh, I think with the guys, partly, he did I think represent a kind of manliness that they admired, and I don't know exactly how to characterize it. He had very strong genuine feelings, and I think – I don't know. The last time I spoke to Dan [Rice] I asked about Jack [Rice]. And he said, "Well, Jack, in a sense, never found a place for himself." And then said, "Well, he thinks he's too big a guide to fit –" Well, this is fond brother speaking, but I think –

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: You know, there's a point to it. You felt he did have a dimension to him that he somehow never quite got the use of. And it – There was a – He had a moving quality.

MEH: Yeah. Well, apparently, at Black Mountain – I did talk to Jack.

MFF: Oh, you did?

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And it's very – It's difficult to put together what happened with him at Black Mountain, because, apparently, from his resignation, he felt very much as if he had been brought there under false pretenses, that he had been brought to the college really to teach architecture, and whatever, and they really just wanted him to be maintenance man and direct the work program.

MFF: Oh, see, I don't remember all that so well.

MEH: You don't remember. Yeah.

MFF: In fact, I forget probably, Mary. [OVERTALK] maybe there was a level of a personality conflict going, or whether, you know –

MFF: Well, you see, I think he got disillusioned with Olson at one point.

MEH: I think so. For sure.

MFF: And, of course, that happened a lot. People came there with their ideals, which they thought were finally gonna' find a home. And, of course, that doesn't ever work out quite that clearly. And I think Olson idealized Jack. Jack was kind of a tough American male to him, I think, which, you know, probably

Olson overdid, in a sense. And, also, Jack was married and had a family at the time, which I think – I don't know. I think it lent a certain interest to him. And he was at sort of a different stage in his life, I'd say. I didn't – He was brought there to teach architecture? I don't remember that.

MEH: Yeah. I think there were some grand plans at that point for building a theater at the college. And it just – It never came to anything.

MFF: Hmm. That's too bad. I don't remember that.

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: And then Barbara – A lot of the men were scared of his wife. They thought she was a bitch, which she wasn't.

MEH: Hmm.

MFF: You know. Did you meet her?

MEH: Yeah. She doesn't impress me as being –

MFF: No.

MEH: – a bitch.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Of course, this is twenty years later.

MFF: Well –

MEH: And people mellow with age.

MFF: Yeah. They have certain, you know – I think their marriage interested people because they sort of fought a lot, and yet they were very fond of each other. And, it was just – I don't know. I think they interested people. [TAPE

INTERRUPTION] Well, then he – I think this picture shows him working. Or is it that –?

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: On that addition to the pot shop –

MEH: Right.

MFF: – which, as I recall, didn't work out very well as a workspace. But it did have a beautiful quality as a, you know, as an architectural space. And I think there was bad feeling about that, and I don't remember the particulars.

MEH: Yeah. I'm not sure. I agree with you that when I first saw it in a photograph, I thought it had a very nice visual look to it. But then, apparently, you know, the floor was so unlevel that they couldn't put a table on it without cutting the legs to fit the shape of the floor. I think there were some feelings of –

MFF: Now, I don't know whether that also led to bad feelings between Jack and the Weinribs. It may have. But I'm not sure.

MEH: Yeah. I don't know.

MFF: Because I think they were pretty close, too.

MEH: I think his bad feelings were really more toward the power structure, which the Weinribs were sort of outside of. You know. It was more toward Olson and the people around him. This is Jack Rice. [Refers to photo]

MFF: Well, of course, Olson – I mean, I'm sure you've heard this from other people. He liked to assign roles to people. And some people didn't see this, or were just so honored to be playing a role for this fantastic guy, and would do it. And then – I think that happened, must've happened to Jack, somewhat. And then

you begin to see, really, you were being used. And, you know, maybe this wasn't your entire self, anyway. And then that could be quite a bitter experience. So, I'm sure that was something of what happened to Jack.

MEH: It's difficult to – for me to gain any real concept of what Olson's role was at the college during the '50s.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I come up with so many contradictions.

MFF: Well, now, you know, she started as a visiting teacher.

MEH: Right. The last year the Alberses were there.

MFF: Yeah. Now what year did he start? Was it in the fall of '40 –?

MEH: That was the fall of '48.

MFF: Well, I came February '49. And I never – I never had a clear – That was when all the conflict with the Alberses leaving. And I never did get a clear understanding of any of that. I started taking Olson's classes then. And they – Well, his classes were very powerful. And at that time he just came as a – You know, is a visiting teacher. Now, I read someplace, which I don't remember at all, that Joel and I helped raise money so that he could come teach again for the next summer? Do you know whether that's true?

MEH: Well, students did. I don't know if it was you and Joel –

MFF: Oh.

MEH: – or who.

MFF: Well, whoever. I don't remember.

MEH: You might – You know, you very possibly did.

- MFF:** Okay. So that was the summer of – No. [OVERTALK]
- MFF:** He wasn't there the summer of '49.
- MEH:** Yes, he was. That was the summer – But I'm sure that's the summer you raised money. I think it's like a couple of summers later, like '51, maybe. But the summer of '49, he was there and –
- MFF:** He took M.C.'s place?
- MEH:** Yeah. Later. But the summer of '49 – See, M.C. had not been there '48-'49.
- MFF:** Yeah.
- MEH:** She and Bill Levi were gone. And then the summer of '49, of course, the Alberses had gone. And Bucky Fuller came that summer.
- MFF:** And Olson was there?
- MEH:** And Olson was there. Emerson Woelffer was there. He definitely was there.
- MFF:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I – I – That was – I don't know. I remember Joe, mostly.
- MEH:** Others sort of fade.
- MFF:** Yeah. Okay. And then what year did Olson go to Yucatán?
- MEH:** He went to Yucatán –
- MFF:** Not the following winter?
- MEH:** Wait. '50/'51? It's hard to say off the top of my head, but it was '50/'51 or '51/'52. '51/'52, I think. [MEH: Olson returned to the college in the summer of 1951.] Because he came back the summer of '52 ['51], and he had – He came back from the Yucatán to Black Mountain.
- MFF:** Yeah.
- MEH:** I think it was '52.

MFF: Yeah. You see, I don't know that I have, Mary – I don't know that I have a grasp of the power situation there. I mean, Joe – Whether he's spoken – I mean, he went to Board meetings and would – Or certainly Wes would have very intimate knowledge of that. I think Olson certainly at one point identified very strongly with the school. I mean, I think he saw the school partly as a projection of his – of himself and his interests. And this I think had good and bad effects on the school. I think it was more a power thing just in the same sense of his – In the sense that he was so gripped by his – I don't want to use the word "vision" – his sense of, you know, of man and just the size of the area in which Olson was able to work. And I think there he found himself in an institution where he wasn't squeezed, say, as he may have felt in his graduate school days at Harvard. And, well, he did get – He wrote, I think Jung loaned his name in some – Was he called "an advisor" for some –?

MEH: Yeah. I'm not sure whether he actually ever joined the Advisory Board.

MFF: Know, but he and Carl Sauer – Now, I don't think any of these people really had anything to do with the college. But I think Olson had enough sense of his own size and his own concerns that he was able to think and act on a scale that, you know, not everyone there did. And I don't think it was just a power thing in the sense of his own ego. Although, he certainly had a strong ego. Or I don't think it was a power thing in the sense of, you know, sort of wanting to impose – I don't know. I mean, I think he did have a grandiose idea of Black Mountain, which I think was true in a way. I mean, it did have a – I mean, I felt that way for years. Now, maybe it was just a glamour, but I did have the

sense, “Really, this is a terribly important little place, and we’re just doing things here that—” And I think that was partly Olson. And I think it could – I think in the later years it – Well, it got (a) bloated, and (b) not really sufficiently supported. I mean, it just – You know, it became too expanded an idea and not grounded, really, in actuality. Now, you see, others – You know, I took Charles’s classes for many years. And, you know, I don’t think I can speak well on a lot of aspects that other people would feel more violently about our would know more about. I think – I remember Jack did put a notice up on the bulletin board. And it was sort of like – Well, I’m not to put it on that scale. But it was kind of a proclamation of – That – Something about “Wes cleaned the dirty toilets for Olson,” or something. And, I mean, I think Wes is the one who – I don’t know whether he would speak bitterly, but I think he could. But he also played that role of keeping the books scrupulously. I mean, just sort of keeping the school going financially by – because of his really marvelous, you know, and meticulous care of the financial aspects of the school. And, you know, Wes, really, he put on amazing plays, when I look back at it. And Charles never kind of acknowledged that in a full manner. I think Olson found it difficult to be totally generous to others. I mean, he could appreciate other people’s qualities, but he did like to be the – sort of the central and in a sense controlling, figure. He – the one summer – What was the summer Connie was gone?

MEH: I think that was the summer of ‘54.

MFF: Uh-huh. Well, Wes, I don't know. I thought that was a very ugly summer. And
–

MEH: Was that the summer he did *Peer Gynt*?

MFF: Yes.

MEH: That's the summer I recall.

MFF: And I loathed that, because Wes also had a thing of sort of typecasting
people in the plays. And he sort of got to do that more and more.

MEH: And how –?

MFF: And Charles played the – what is it? The Bøyg? The button-molder.

MEH: Ah-so. I haven't read *Peer Gynt* so I don't –

MFF: Yeah. Well, take a look at it just –

MEH: I will.

MFF: – if this interests you enough to do so. And Olson, dammit. He sure had the
sense I think he had – I mean, I think he was proud that he had been given
that role. And I don't think it was a matter for pride, myself. And then Betty
was the part of – Solveig – whatever the woman is who – And she – And
there was beautiful music that Stefan wrote. And Betty sings a song of "I will
cradle thee. I will cradle thee." And she was having an affair with Olson at the
time, and it was as if, "I will care for you," you know, "no matter what, because
–?" And, I don't know. The whole thing just put me in a rage, somehow. I
mean, I just – I didn't like that, anyway, that whole thing of Wes typecasting
people. There was something kind of mean about it in a – I don't know. It got
very –

MEH: It's a very – It gives the director a greater sense of power than simply directing. I mean, he's really dealing with the personality of the people he's involved with. And, in a sense, that Olson assigned roles, here he is assigning roles

MFF: Yeah. No, I think there was a very complex relationship with, you know, between them. For instance, well, then I guess that fall after Betty left – Well, maybe Connie didn't come back right away. I know Huss has told – We all ate at home at that point. And Huss's told Charles they could – That he could it with them at any time. Well, I would never have done that. And yet, I think – Then I think Bea began to resent it somehow, because Charles was a very – you know, like Connie told me he was hell to live with. I mean, he was very – You know, he took his own – His own rhythm came first and his own, you know, and to invite him sort of into your intimate household on that basis, I think would have been pretty hard. I don't know. Do other people speak sort of the power thing with Olson?

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: I mean, in a political –?

MEH: One of the things that I greatly disagree with Duberman in his book Just in concept is the idea – Two things: One, the idea that the college became an anarchy during the later years, that Olson was not interested in power, that he was not interested in control, that he was not interested in structure. And, see, I see it as being entirely different. I see Olson as fully understanding a certain concept of power, which isn't based on a structure or a constitution, but it's

really the power of his – the quality of his personality to control a situation and to dominate it and to manipulate it, and that this other structure is something that could just get in his way, really.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: That – That –

MFF: No. I think you're – I think that's accurate.

MEH: I mean, I see him as being very understanding of concepts of power, but not in the traditional sense. And I see him as being – Reading his letters I get very angry, and listening to some of the interviews, because he totally could manipulate a situation to distort it into being something that it never was.

MFF: Hmm.

MEH: But he can take a situation and restructure it so that it fits into a pattern that eventually serves his end.

MFF: But, Mary, how would you characterize his end? That, to me – that's the crucial point.

MEH: Oh, I – There, I agree. I thought that his end at Black Mountain was that – I agree with you that he had this grandiose concept of Black Mountain which is tied up in this incredible mythology having to do with John Rice and with the founders and the development of the college, as well as his own historical searchings in other areas. And that he has this incredible concept of the college and that often it has nothing to do with what the college is, even though often there's a striving, you know, toward reaching this. And then I

disagree with something you said earlier. I think it's tied up in his own ego, to a certain extent.

MFF: Yeah. No. Yeah. I'm sure –

MEH: That Black Mountain was Olson –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: – to Olson. And, you know, there's this thing that people were apparently taken into the spell. And he was verbally a very articulate man, and simply verbally he could dominate any scene as well as physically. And so I see his concept of Black Mountain as a school never really being clear. It was a very vaguely defined thing, which often he would change to meet the situation. And, I mean, but not wholly in a selfish way. I mean, I think he really loved the school and he had his idea, but he had his own needs. I mean, he would leave when his own personal life demanded it.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I mean, when his own professional life demanded it. And expect the people left to take over and pick up loose ends.

MFF: Now, Mary, I must say that I think I do think his grandiose conception had a –It was not completely false.

MEH: Oh, I don't think so. In fact –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I think – I think it was necessary.

MFF: But I do think he had a vision of man on a scale that I think is reentering the human race. I mean, I do think he had an intuition for a lot of those, a lot of

disciplines – and a lot of attitudes that are becoming more and more evident, really.

MEH: Oh, I do, too. I mean, I think this is Olson’s strength –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: – to a large extent.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: ~~He really — Not so much as an historian. He really was lousy when it came to being a good scholar and bringing things together accurately and that sort of thing. But he was able to envision and to develop concepts of man and of history and of the future in the movement.~~ **[NOT RELEASED:** I would not now describe Olson as a “lousy” historian, although his process was “quest” on a grand scale, and a specialist in the areas he explored could easily take issue with some of his conclusions.]

MFF: Well, and that mythic scale is what he –

MEH: Yeah. But the college always thrived on this.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: ~~I mean, I get mad as hell at Theodore Dreier, but his concept of the college is incredibly stupid idea of what a college to be, I mean, it would just did. People because it was just totally impractical. I mean, but he was really the one who concedes that this idea of the arts in education and of....~~ **[MEH: NOT RELEASED: Dreier was a complicated man, an idealist, but the proper description of his concept of the college as “incredibly stupid” is**

wrong. At the same time he was the one person who understood the necessity of raising money and the importance of balancing the books.]

MFF: Oh. Dreier was?

MEH: Yeah. Dreier was and of not having – Of not having the trustees. That came – The idea of not have trustees and having a different type of structure came from many people. But Dreier could never really be pinned down as to what his concept of education was. It constantly changed, and it was very idealistic, and often very – You know, it eluded any real definition. But yet it was this vision that kept the place going.

MFF: Yeah. Well, I –

MEH: There's a contradiction there. They – Black Mountain always needed a vision.

MFF: But I – I – Well, I tended to –

MEH: ~~It had little else.~~ **[NOT CORRECT. NOT RELEASED. Of course it had more than a vision. It had a faculty and students and a program.]**

MFF: I tend to admire that. And I think the fact that the school ended is fine.

MEH: Oh, yes.

MFF: I think that's a point – Not a proof of its validity, but a – I mean, a living thing dies after a while. And if it had gone on, it would have – I mean, if it existed now – I mean, everybody's "hip" now, and a lot of, you know, things that people look back and think, "Ah-ha, it was at Black Mountain." But it was in a – You see, I still say the school had an innocent quality, in a sense, and I'm not sure exactly what I mean by that. What I mean is partly a lack of

self-consciousness about people's visions and struggles with what they were working toward. And I think it began to lose that at the end

MEH: I think it had begun to develop a self-consciousness toward the end.

MFF: Yeah. Which – I mean, I mean, self-consciousness is also a beautiful – You know, but another quality. And the school would have had to become a very different thing

MEH: Yes. I agree with you that the fact that it ended up is just fine, you know. Whatever, and the reasons that it did end, I'm trying to get some concept of.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And it's very difficult, because the people who were there in the later years have built this mythology about its ending, and have made it a very heroic death

MFF: Oh, it wasn't heroic.

MEH: In fact, he just seems to me it just gradually –

MFF: But there was a lot of fresh blood. And I think you could lay that partly at Olson's door, that he, perhaps, wasn't willing – Well, I'm not sure about this, Mary. This may or may not be, but I think it may be partly so, that he wasn't willing to have people with the kind of energy – You know, the fresh energy there, who might have gone in directions, yeah, that he couldn't have controlled. And, well, I don't know. Joe, himself, I think would say that he probably should have left sooner, and he just – I mean, Joe's own nature is that he doesn't move swiftly from one thing to another. And I think Wes just was fed up with the whole thing. And there wasn't that – You had to care

about the place to keep it going. I mean, people had to feed into it. And I think also a lot of people began to care more for their private lives. And that was kind of frowned upon, it seems to me, when I first went there. I think people with children had a hard time. And I think the whole – There really weren't outside monies coming in at the end, were there?

MEH: No. Not the last few years.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Not really after Paul Williams, you know, went to Stony Point.

MFF: Yeah. And so I think Ted Dreier had, of course, many connections, sources of money in the earlier years. And, see, I think if Paul – Well, this is just a little private theory of mine. I think Cage, in a sense, wooed Paul away, and partly for the money – Cage being Cage. And I think Olson kind of made a play – I mean, I know he did – to keep Paul there, partly for his money. And I think Cage and Olson didn't hit it off all that well. And I think Olson may even have put down in print someplace that he would have been willing to have Cage, and pay that price to – And so that became really manipulative.

MEH: Right.

MFF: And, oh, there was an unrealistic sense about a lot of things. When the science lab was built. I mean, that building never really functioned, did it?

MEH: I think –

MFF: Or was there and not a science teacher after it was built? [MEH: Natasha Goldowski was there but she refused to teach in the building because she feared it was structurally unsound.]

MEH: I think both.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Eventually – weren't the looms moved there eventually?

MFF: Maybe.

MEH: But then there was no weaving teacher. [MEH: There was. Tony Landreau.]

MFF: Yeah. See, I think when the Germans were there, they had a good enough sense of structure and discipline that really serve the school. I mean, there was really a good music collection there that was kept locked. There was a music librarian, and the music was loaned out. And it was cared for. And then I guess the notion of locked cupboards became distasteful to some people, and the music was not cared for. The pianos were not cared for properly. And I don't – I'm not sure that that began to happen when Mrs. Jalowetz was still there.

MEH: Okay. Duberman – There was – I thought –There were two points I really disagreed with Duberman on.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: One thing, the idea that the college was an anarchy during the '50s deliberately, you know, that this evolved under Olson's thumb – Olson's direction. The other being that he says in his book that "Olson, like Rice, did not feel that the college should own property" and that he deliberately dismantled the property for this reason. And also the idea that's parallel to this, that the college flourished creatively during the '50s because of its physical disintegration. **[MEH: The exact quote from Duberman reads:**

“...in the fifties – the astonishing variety, the number of exotic plants that bloomed even as (no, probably *because*) the physical plant around them disintegrated.” I take issue with the “because.”)

MFF: Umm. I don't know about that.

MEH: And this relates to things not being taking care of, you know, just the plant being allowed to disintegrate, which I disagree with wholly.

MFF: Umm. Yeah.

MEH: I mean, they had no choice but to sell the property –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: – because there was no other money coming in. And insofar – I mean, I really disagreed with this business of not caring for your possessions, and this being a sign of some creative genius.

MFF: Now, I don't – Do you think that was Olson's his attitude? I can't....

MEH: Oh, no! I don't. I don't think so.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I don't think that Olson wanted to be bothered with keeping the property up. I mean, that was a lot of property to keep up, especially when you had so few people there in the later years, and to maintain. And, apparently, there was a lot of feeling of, “We're here, and we're poor, and we're suffering for the college.” You know, “Whatever's here is ours.” And then there was – It seems to me there were a lot of just destructive urges before the college closed. I mean, people destructive within themselves..

MFF: Yeah. Oh, yeah. I think that's true. I think Creeley – Well, he – I think he was having a difficult time, personally. And I think he did foster that at the college, definitely. Now, I think Olson's general attitude toward ownership of property may – I know that – didn't he die without a will which might sort of indicate attitudes he had toward property?

MEH: It could indicate attitudes he had toward death, also.

MFF: Yeah. I'm not sure. Now, on the other hand, this, to me, was a curious fact, which I never quite understood. After the house – Which was the house that burned down? Black Dwarf.

MEH: The one you lived in – [MEH: It was Roadside Cottage.]

MFF: Yeah. Well, there was a – I think the chimney, the stone chimney, was standing, and certain pipes and, you know, just a certain amount of structure was standing. And Olson, whose house was somewhat near there, cleaned up that whole area, which was very uncharacteristic. He always got out of the physical work. Now, whether it was some kind of archaeological feeling or whether it did disturb him to, you know, to see that mess, really, there, I – But he would. He'd go over for a while every day and sort of. I don't know, arrange the bricks and get the pipes down and whatever he did. And I thought that was interesting and curious. And I don't really know his motive for doing that. No. I'm not sure. For instance, he had a big feeling for the – There was a collection of textiles that was given? And Olson had a strong feeling for that, I know.

MEH: Yeah. Well, I think that's because he got sort of – Everything few months he got a letter from Anni Albers checking up on it.

MFF: Oh, is that part of it?

MEH: They have an incredibly amusing correspondence.

MFF: Yeah, those two. I don't know how they would – Well, Olson had a tremendous respect for both Albers.

MEH: Well, their letters indicate a tremendous respect both ways, and a rapport between them. But she was very concerned about the collection. Of course, she had – You know, they were things that she had collected on her travels to Mexico for the college and she cared a lot about it. But I think his concern with it may have had something to do with the fact that she was checking up on it constantly. [MEH: When the college closed, Anni Albers insisted that Olson could not sell the Harriett Engelhardt Textile Collection. A donor purchased it and donated the collection to Yale University.]

MFF: I think what Olson sensed more was that, you know, other lesser mortals could play the role of lackey. And that doesn't necessarily offend me. I mean, I did a lot of lackey work there very happily. I think – I think some people had a problem because they found themselves doing it with some sense of serving the great man for the great cause. And then when they sort of saw through that and didn't really want to, then it became a problem. But I had a very strong feeling for many years that – I mean, I loved this place, and I wanted to serve it, and I mean, just as a person can sometimes feel about his family. Of course, if you don't feel that way, then it can become a very resentful

situation. I don't know. I mean, Charles – I think one of the great things you could learn there was just because somebody, you know, does have the stature that he had, doesn't mean that he is a god or supreme human being or anything. I mean, it was – You could get very clear lessons on the fact that, yes, he did wonderful – You know, he – I mean, I learned things from him that sustained to me to this day. But that does not mean that he – That I should listen to him as the guide to how to lead my life or, you know, that all his pronouncements are to be followed, and, oh, just funny little things I think of. I remember once we were invited to supper at the Wolpes and Connie and Charles were there. And Stefan or Hilda asked Charles to cut up the meat. They had a big steak, I think. And Charles cut it up. And you could just see it in his face. And he very carefully gave Connie and himself the two choicest pieces. And I thought it was very funny, really, because it was such a really clear instance of his – You know, that he did serve himself quite well, and then he – The thing is, Mary, I mean, it becomes – It does, it enters that area of myth now. It becomes like one's childhood, or something. I mean, I feel that way. Because I'm not passionately entangled in it. And, you know, it's like a place in your head, these very clear images that I have. Also, I don't know, I think I'm one – I had mostly good experiences there. And I don't know if that was just the time in my life I happened to go, or – whatever?

MEH: How did you happen to go to the college?

MFF: My father is a lifetime subscriber to *The New Republic*, and so during high school I began to read it. And they had a little ad once about the summer

program, and I sent – I was a big sender away for catalogs, so I sent away for this – for the catalog, the announcement of the summer, and it appealed to me tremendously. But I thought, “Well, I don’t have any particular – I mean, musical or art abilities strong enough that they’d never let me go there.” But I just kept these – And then I went away to Radcliffe, and I join the WACs. And then I was sort of in a mess and drifting around, and not knowing what to do. And somehow I thought of Black Mountain. And I applied, and I went. And, well, the thing that amuses me is that I’m the only student they ever got from ads they put in the magazines.

MEH: They did get some more.

MFF: Did they? [OVERTALK] Or maybe *The New Republic*.

MEH: *The New Republic*, and quite a few from *Reader’s Digest*.. [MEH: Actually the *Reader’s Digest* article was a condensation of an essay by Louis Adamic, “Education on a Mountain.”]

MFF: Oh, they did?

MEH: That’s the one that really amuses me. The *Reader’s Digest* crowd. But they didn’t get that many. They got some for summer sessions –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: – especially. Yeah. But you didn’t go there with the idea of studying anything in particular?

MFF: No. And, I mean, I wasn’t, you know, even – I don’t know. Olson didn’t encourage his – the members of his class to think they were writers.

MEH: Hmm.

MFF: And we had to hand it pieces of writing, you know, as a part of the requirement. But I may have sort of thought of myself as a writer for a while. I don't think I did, really. I was – writing was more a process of self-discovery. You see, that's another thing. I – People tend to think of it as an art school now. I don't think of it in that way. I think it was a school where the arts were one of the important disciplines. I think at one point the school – Maybe – I think in order, maybe, to get money, they emphasized, "Now this is a professional art school," but I didn't think that was really an accurate sense of it.

MEH: I think it depends. Like, a lot of people I meet now don't really know that artists were there. You know, the poets have become so well-known now as The Black Mountain Poets. You don't have The Black Mountain Artists.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And they've never heard that there was anything else there, you know, besides the poets.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And then there's another professional art crowd, you know, that knows about the artists who were there.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: But there is a lot of misconception as to the fact that it was a liberal arts school until the last years.

MFF: Well, there's a lot of nonsense about the Black Mountain Poets. I mean, do they, themselves – Do the poets, themselves like that sense of it, or –?

MEH: Oh, I'm not sure.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I think yes and no in that –

MFF: I suppose there's a certain glory.

MEH: – there's a certain glory. There's a certain wish to be known in their own right. But then, all the other hand, I think that a lot of the speaking engagements that people get and a lot of the attention comes from their being associated with Black Mountain. So it has its advantages. I think there's a mixed reaction amongst them.

MFF: Did you –? Had Natasha died before you –?

MEH: Um-hm.

MFF: That's too bad, because –

MEH: Right –

MFF: – she would have given you a very – She was very anti-Olson, I think, and, you know, and probably would have – And very thoughtful and articulate as to why she was.

MEH: What about Olson's classes? How did he conduct his classes?

MFF: Well, they met in the evening after supper. And, we – Well, you know that downstairs room in the study building with the big table?

MEH: Right.

MFF: Yeah. We met there. And, oh, sometimes he would begin by reading in the material that the students had handed in. I don't think that was – I don't think most classes began that way, but – Well, he would just take off. And then we

were assigned – you know, we had certain reading to do. But a lot of it was just an Olson monologue covering the blackboard. And the classes would go on, oh, until midnight or later, usually. And Olson would just develop his own themes. I would say that was the main – But, again, I thought, really, you saw the working process, really, you know, of a man – You know, he was – It was the materials that he was concerned with right then. It wasn't something he had all figured out and got into a nice layout. And I thought that was a privilege to hear him. I mean, you know, here is a man of a certain stature, and you solve how he went about – And you didn't have to agree or disagree or feel "how puny I am." And I think – Mark Heddon and I agree – that we talked about this a little bit after Olson died. But, really, the thing you could learn from him was to follow your own – You know, and he did say this explicitly to the students, really, to follow your own true interests in your – you know, your real desires and that that – And to really dig that, and to – you know, make a subject that engaged you, really find out as much as you – everything you could about it for yourself. And, you know, I don't think anyone would have disgusted Olson more than a lot of little Olson's, because he did his job that no one else could possibly do more. And, well, books that he would suggest that we read, I mean, I always found certainly interesting to read, and some would really get to me.

MEH: Like – do you remember particular books?

MFF: Oh, yeah. He had a little project that I found very interesting. We took different versions of *The Odyssey* and we worked on the – I think it was the

Polyphemus chapter and just – you know, trying to use various English translations to make our own best version. And I really – I learned a lot from that. Oh, you know, Herodotus was one of his big people, Parkman. At one point, he had us read a lot of material. Edgar Snow and a lot of materials on Communist China. And here's another little example, Mary, that amused me. My father sent a subscription to *The New Republic* to the magazine room there, which was very skimpily furnished at that point. Okay, so we had this class, and we were to have read, you know, whatever certain books on Communist China. And we came to the class, and Olson got very disgusted with all of the class members because we didn't have our names and facts just right there (snap, snap,). And he, himself, just came out with them. And that was like another sort of an example of what a stupendous mind this guy had. Well, I discovered later that evidently an issue of *The New Republic* had come, and he'd taken it away before it made its way to the magazine room. And it just so happened to have a neat little one-page survey of the big figures of the Chinese – you know, the revolution. And so he'd been able to refresh his memory very neatly. And I thought," Well, okay. He conned us, but it's a good thing to learn."

MEH: You learned you could be conned.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: And also to learn, yeah, sure he had a terrific brain, but, I mean, you know, we were all just these little dumbbells, and he wasn't this really –

MEH: He had his sources, too.

MFF: Yeah. And he – As you – He knew how to make use of circumstances, and he was very willing to just act as if he had it all filed away someplace in here (points to head). And another thing, he – When Olson shut up, then you could be very impressed. You know, he gave this course – this course where we read the newspaper? Have you –?

MEH: I wanted to ask you about that.

MFF: Yeah. That was really interesting. I learned a lot from that, too.

MEH: What newspapers did you read?

MFF: We read the *Asheville* –

MEH: *Citizen-Times*.

MFF: *Citizen-Times*.

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: And somebody'd go down to the – I think the – by Oteen, by the – not Oteen, Swannanoa. And I guess the bus would leave off a bundle of papers. I think Jonathan did that, but I'm not sure. And bring them back. And we'd quickly skim through the paper. Now that –

MEH: Like what sorts of items would have caught his interest which you remember?

MFF: Well, now, that was when the French were fighting in Vietnam – Or Indochina.

MEH: Their war.

MFF: Yeah. And Dien Bien. I had clippings of all this. I sort of wish I had kept all that.

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: And it was also the time of the McCarthy hearings and so we – You know, he got us to try to – you know, read between the lines and see what was really happening, and to get a sense of the whole background of these events. And then also – Oh, I remember just one little thing that caught his interest. A snake – You know, one of the religious – the cults that handle snakes. And, oh, we didn't make a big thing about that. But, of course, something like that would engage his attention. I think the point of that course was to – instead of – to have the sense, instead of just events falling on us, that, you know, as human beings we are able to understand them, in a sense, and that that leads to, you know, to making events ourselves, not just thinking that society is something that slaps us down. I mean, I think it had very much to do with his, you know, his general attitudes as a person, as a poet, as a teacher. And at the end of the course, he had us read Jung and [Károli] Kerényi *Essays Toward a You Science of Mythology* [*Essays on a Science of Mythology*]. I think that it had just been newly translated. And, well, I started reading Jung then, which meant a great deal to me in the years after. And I can't remember just how this happened, but I remember after the class had ended, in some way it ended up with God. I don't know. Just sort of – I can't make the link there for you. And I remember asking Charles, just sort of one of these – You know, you'd see him in the Hall and just sort of asking him, "Well, was Christ born perfect or did he become perfect?" And Charles said, "Yeah, that's the question, isn't it?" And he didn't say another word. And, you know, that was great, because, you know, he could've made a 24-hour – You see, I still say,

you didn't have to take all that crap from him. You know, you didn't. And you could just learn as much as you could and also see how a guy like that operated on his own work, which – you know, it's a privilege, really. And, also, and you could sort of learn to trust, you know, going your own weird way, somehow. I – You know, from seeing somebody who did it, who followed up his own – Thank God, I never fell for that guy. I mean, you know, because – I think, in particular – Well, I think his attitude toward women was half-goddess and half-charlady. But he – There is one poem, Mary – I think that's a poem, in which he does direct himself to women, something about – I forget the exact lines, but something "You two lay about –" Or slay, or something like that. I mean, I think he – In some part of himself he had an inkling that – You know, that a woman also, you know, might exist in terms of other than a relationship to a man or serving. And, no. And he also says in someplace in his writing that, how does he put it? Yeah, that love was given to him, that he didn't – You know, that sort of whole side of – He didn't create that side of his life, so to speak, that –

MEH: Hmm. Interesting.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Yeah. I was arguing with George Butterick at Storrs over a reference he [Olson] made in an interview about the three women who sued the college in the end, as "three horny cows." And in that interview he's laying the total blame [MEH: The quote is from an interview by Andrew Leinhof. The transcript is in the Special Collections of the University of Connecticut at

Storrs. In the interview Olson refers to the three women who sued for contingent salaries as “ these three horny things – cows.”]

MFF: Did Charles refer to them –?

MEH: Charles. Yes. Which could be interpreted two ways, as either a sex – I mean, “horny” is a word that can mean different things.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And it can either have a sexual orientation or just the idea of a woman’s aggressiveness –

MFF: Right. No. That was a –

MEH: – which he greatly resented, apparently.

MFF: Well, he – Look – Excuse me. Go on.

MEH: Yeah. But we argued. You know, I was just very offended by this.

MFF: Well, that makes me very – of course!

MEH: I was very offended. And George was very defensive of Olson.

MFF: Oh, but see, that’s the bullshit!

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: Then you would have to defend every utterance and act of this man!

MEH: Yeah. This was – That infuriated me, because, for one thing, in that interview he lays the entire closing of the college to society –

MFF: Oh, no.

MEH: – to these people who sued the college. And so far as I’m concerned....

MFF: That’s completely inaccurate.

MEH: Yeah. Totally inaccurate.

MFF: And, also, it's defensive on Charles's his part, which he –

MEH: Oh, well, he's speaking to other people, and he's building his mythology and his own self, you know, concept of himself. But that just – that phrase, you know, it just infuriated me! It was so degrading, you know, to these women.

MFF: Now who was that? Nell?

MEH: To Natasha, Nell, and Hazel. [Natasha Goldowski Renner, Nell Aydelotte Rice, Hazel Larsen Archer]

MFF: Oh, was Hazel one of those?

MEH: But that really –

MFF: Oh, that makes me – That puts me in a rage right this minute.

MEH: Yeah. It did me, too. Infuriated me! And –

MFF: Know. And there's no defense of that.

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: There's no defense.

MEH: I agree totally. But there are other – Going through that interview, there are quite a few references to – I mean, they're just very degrading to people and especially to women. And it's – And, you know, George says it's my own, you know, feelings as a woman –

MFF: No.

MEH: – of offense.

MFF: Don't accept that, Mary!

MEH: And I feel that anyone should be – I feel anyone should be offended by this.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: He's dismissing these people as being insignificant by demeaning them.

MFF: Oh, no. He – Look –

MEH: And –

MFF: Charles never admired Joe. I mean, I don't know what he's – if he said anything in public. And, you know, I mean, I – [OVERTALK] Yeah. But, you know, my respected, admired teacher. And, you know, I mean, I suppose I would have been happy to have – You know, if he had admired the man I loved, somehow. But, again, I was able to somehow, you know – I don't know – not confuse these two issues. But the reason I bring that up – Oh, the woman who worked in the office for a while. I can think of her name. She'd been a WAC.

MEH: Oh, I can't either.

MFF: And she wasn't, you know – Just – She looked alright, but she wasn't sort of loaded with, you know, physical attractions maybe. And also she had sort of an efficient office manner, which I guess Olson wasn't about to put up with. And he really almost persecuted her. And I resented that. I mean, I had been a WAC. And I think he sort of thought of that as, you know, a really ugly thing. I think Charles – I think he never resolved his relationship with his mother. I mean, I hate to bring things down to this level but that –

MEH: A lot of people feel this.

MFF: Old! It's definitely – And I think also he – His mother was a Catholic. Charles had a lot of – He had a lot of – I remember he said once I think in print he wished somebody'd really do a job on Christ. Which, okay, I mean, I think it's

a good suggestion in a way, and I mean that was such a loaded subject for him.

MEH: Uh-huh. A certain vengeance in it.

MFF: Yeah. And I think it was partly the association with his mother and his – And he had a false sense, really, I think, of the Christ figure even, that – a sense of Christ suffering for other people's sins, which is not a very advanced notion for a man who really thought beyond the clichés in so many other areas. He just stopped at that kind of very pedestrian notion of a – You know, I mean, you know, Christ is a figure in our society that – And he does have a size. We are in some sense a Christian world, and anyone who's interested in that whole area of myth and history –

MEH: Has to confront it.

MFF: Yeah. In a – Really a – You know, not in such a shallow way as that, I think.

MEH: I was talking to the secretary at Storrs, who's read through Olson's papers, and whatever. And she feels that – his mother died about '52, or something like that.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And she feels that in his personal life, this was a real turning point, that – I mean, he led a fairly structured life up until that point. And then it was after this that his personal life just became more and more disheveled.

MFF: I don't know.

MEH: Yeah. She had said the same thing. She felt that there was something with his mother that had never really been resolved.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And that he never really coped with her death or his relationship to her or something.

MFF: Well, I think, sort of his, you know, the women that he had a sort of an erotic feeling for tended to me maidenly. I mean, Connie had that maidenly quality. Betty did in a different sense. And I think a woman who had a more – You know, even maybe physically and just, you know, a larger size, so to speak, he – I think he tended to equate with some kind of mother, you know. And I suppose she was a domineering mother. You know, an only son, or something. But – I wish – I didn't ever see Betty and Charles together that much, you know. I would have – See, when I first knew Connie and Charles both, they did – Connie had a goddess quality for me, and she did have that in the beginning. And then later I began to see that – that's not something a human being wants. And Connie, herself, I think was struggling very much to move out of that. And, I don't know, I think probably part of her troubles with Charles, you know, must've been in that area. And, I don't know, I always had the sense that they – If they could have worked that out, that each of them would have entered their human – You know, he would have shrunk down into a human dimension more, and she would have expanded, so to speak. And I think that that would have been really terribly moving and –

MEH: What effect do you think their problems and his affair with Betty and Charles Peter's birth had on the college?

MFF: Oh, I think it did. I think it contributed to just the breakdown of the structure, really. You know, it's hard to remember accurately. For one thing. Well, for one thing, people – You know, people were fond of Connie and sort of felt – She was in a very vulnerable spot there, and I think, you know, felt a certain protective feeling for her. Also, I think it was that sense that, you know, Charles felt free to – I mean, he assumed that his own needs and concerns came first, really. And –

MEH: In the last year at the college when she had – apparently, she left the summer of '54 for a while, and he stayed there. And then he – Maybe Betty stayed partially into the fall, but then she left. But – Charles Peter was born in New York. And – And Connie came back for '54/'55. And then after Charles Peter was born, Charles came to New York, apparently, and Connie stayed the college –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: – and then left like the – You know, later. But you get to this point where Olson's financially – I mean, the college is just very badly off at that point. In the college is – I think Connie came back as librarian or something, simply to give her a salary, because Olson had to have salary in New York. And it's partly – The college is very pressed – The college is going out of the way to accommodate his needs for two families and for travel and all of this, you know. And I wonder if at some point it seems somebody should've said, "Look, man, you know, you've got to get your life in order. We can't support this lifestyle."

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: But, you know, to my knowledge it never happened. And it seems – I mean, Wes is just constantly going out of his way to be helpful to him and concerned, and –

MFF: Even then, hmm?

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: You see, I think that – I think the resentment was building up in Wes, and I think at some point in must have just –

MEH: It broke.

MFF: Say, some – I can't speak too well about these things, Mary, because, you know, I don't know the inside – Are there notes of the faculty meetings of the board meetings?

MEH: Yes. But they're very superficial. They're really summaries of –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: You know, they don't –

MFF: No. That wouldn't –

MEH: The most insight I've of gotten has come really from some limited correspondence.

MFF: Now, maybe – Maybe the school did sort of function – Maybe Duberman has a certain point. I don't know. Maybe at that point the school did function in such a loose – I don't think anarchist is the word.

MEH: It wasn't an anarchy in the sense of a deliberate thing.

MFF: No.

MEH: But there just wasn't –

MFF: But that the structure was so fluid, in a way, that it allowed that.

MEH: But, you know, people realize – Didn't you realize at that point that you weren't really going to revive the college and build it again. I mean, it seems to me that there was just –

MFF: Oh, I think so.

MEH: – very little hope.

MFF: And I think, you know, it wasn't a time when students were that attracted to the college. And parents who could pay weren't – probably saw no reason to send their kids there.

MEH: Yeah. Reading the Paul Robeson obituaries just reminded me what a repressive time it was. I mean, you know, we forget –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: – what McCarthyism was –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: – and how people felt then.

MFF: I'm surprised the school wasn't investigated. I think that's a sign of how little importance it had.

MEH: Well, apparently, the FBI was in and out during the '50s.

MFF: Well – They were –

MEH: Do you remember?

MFF: Yeah. I remember. But I don't think – They would just come – Somebody'd be applying for a job teaching or whatever –

MEH: Oh.

MFF: – and they'd come and – I remember speaking to a couple of people.

MEH: I wonder what they were investigating.

MFF: Well, I think, you know, particular individuals –

MEH: Oh.

MFF: – who maybe applied for a job or the FBI felt needed –

MEH: To see if they were Communist or –?

MFF: Yeah. And so they would just come to find out something about their background.

MEH: Flola was really the only one who was overtly politically inclined during that period, wasn't she?

MFF: Well, Leser.

MEH: Oh, right. Leser would have.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I didn't realize he was that politically oriented though.

MFF: Well, I don't – Leser was kind of an unknown quantity. I mean, he – Now, but, you know, at the time I didn't have the sense to react immediately to this, Mary. But he gave us a talk once about some, you know, customs, sexual customs of savage tribes. He wouldn't have used that term, you know – Of non-Western peoples, or however he would put it. And it was all this stuff about French ticklers and one thing and another. And the point of it as I realized later, was that women really have no – You know, we have no nerve endings, proper nerve endings for sexual feeling. And, you know, the – and so

the men have to go through all these extraordinary – And, really, that was a very serious – you know, it was a really anti-woman –

MEH: Sure. But, he was overtly homosexual, wasn't he?

MFF: Yeah. But I didn't really realize that the first – I remember I took one course with him, and Nick was in it. It was a very small class. And Nick would just sleep through the whole class. And I couldn't understand how Leser would tolerate that because he did have a more academic – You know, he had the academic credentials in a more academic style in a sense. And then later I thought, well, you know, I don't know, maybe Nick – You know, he was Nick's lover. Or something. And so he would just sort of put up with anything. And – Well, I think again, I think Duberman again overemphasizes the whole sexual thing.

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: I really do.

MEH: He overemphasizes it to the point that he sees everything through this one lens.

MFF: That lens. Yeah.

MEH: This one vision.

MFF: I think it's quite inaccurate. I really do. Now I don't know how – That's – I have to get into that was Taylor. I don't know. Right. Why don't we –?

[TAPE INTERRUPTION]

MFF: – Not so well-to-do. My father's a lawyer. And my father being a very noble character, even if I may say so, not noble, but just – You know, he's a nice

human being – felt that – You see, the G.I. Bill didn't cover the full fees of the college. And he thought it was appropriate that he pay the difference, because he could, you know. And that was his sense of – And so, you know, of course, Wes was the treasurer doing this or whoever you it would. And Wes said to me once – dear Wes – he says, “Nobody with money or money in their background could ever amount to anything” or something like that. And, fortunately, my ego was good enough at that point that I wasn't crushed.

MEH: You could handle it.

MFF: And I remember once after Mike had a reading of “The Pipe.” I guess, or “Exit 3.” I don't know. Not “The Pipe.” I think it was “Exit 3.”

MEH: It wasn't “The Judge.” I don't know.

MFF: Anyway. And, you know, of course, Michael's, you know, background is -- I don't know. I hate those class terms, but how do you put it? You know, a very working-class -- You know, a poor people in Philadelphia. And Wes and Olson just sort of preened themselves after this and sort of had this very manly, you know, like... You know, “We're both outta the working-class, buddy, and we sort of --“ I mean – And I thought, “Oh, bullshit! Up yours, you two.”

MEH: Right.

MFF: I mean, it's just a bunch of snobbism some as –

MEH: Oh, yeah.

MFF: – pride a family and –

[END OF SIDE ONE. BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO.]

[The following conversation probably refers to Theodore Dreier.]

MFF: One always lends – He does a bit lend himself to that role, doesn't he? I mean – A bit.

MEH: Yeah. He –

MFF: Not scapegoat. But, I mean, he – I can see sort of that noble –

MEH: He does – There is this feeling of blue-bloodedness.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And of being separate and whatever. On the other hand, there is – which is I think is partially a guilt thing is a whole thing of wanting to be one of the people, which takes sort of a dishonest form. People don't trust him, you know.

MFF: Yes.

MEH: It's very – If he could be more honest about his origins and his background, accept this is a part of himself and the very good things it came out of this –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: — then it would be much – But he also... He's not the sort of person who has the charm, for example that someone like Olson had, you know, who could work himself in and out of situations and this sort of thing. He tends more to just get angry –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: You know. Or to be very blunt and straightforward. And I think he doesn't – In doing this, he doesn't lend a good defense to himself, you know, because he just really turns people off and whatever. No. He lends himself so often unjustly – I mean, often he does his own self damage –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: – in bringing criticism to himself. And this I find running throughout the college. In fact, Duberman said that – Oh, what's the guy's name? The Puerto Rican [Cuban] who was at Black Mountain. And the – Right before – I think he left by the time you got there.

MFF: Oh, thought that was –

MEH: Did you mean him?

MFF: I don't know.

MEH: Oh, was the guy's name? I haven't talked to him. Anyway, he wrote Duberman after Duberman's book was published and said that the whole question at Black Mountain was between the working class and the rich, that this was the Black Mountain question, which is, you know, a very narrow, you know, view of the whole thing, but it was – It always – It came up in strange ways.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: There was this business, since the college essentially was trying to be democratic. And – You know, it presented itself, because there were differences in people's backgrounds, in the resources people had financially to draw from, and their contacts and associates. And I wholly disagree with him –

MFF: Oh, but I don't think – I think that was the – I disagree, because I think the mix of people who were there – not the mix of people, the variety – really was amazing and that really I think more than so many situations I've been in, you

were taken for your own real self and the qualities you had. And I really do think so. I mean, this other stuff, sure, but –

MEH: No. I agree with you totally. I think this other stuff was totally off.

MFF: And you could make use of – Well, I think it was probably because it was a small community, but you could make use of – you know, your talents and the kind of energies that you had. And that's what I loved there so much. Because you felt – You know, the school and the community needed what you had to contribute, and you really could function there using your powers. And that's not a common occurrence it seems to me, in any way –

MEH: Yeah. What did you –? Okay, you came as a student.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: You know. You and Joe later were married. Then you really were sort of a student-wife in a sense. And from what I could tell, you sort of officially dropped out of the student official role, but continued to take courses?

MFF: Well I –

MEH: I mean, what you did do it Black Mountain at that point?

MFF: Well, I think I stayed – You know, I'm sure I wouldn't have stayed so long without Joe, but I – I thought of it as my home, really, after a while. And I think I took course – I mean, I know I used up my G.I. Bill, so I don't know how long – Would that be four years?

MEH: I don't know.

MFF: I suppose it was good for four years. Then, see, I think then before I was married to Joe, I think Wes was kind enough – and, dammit, he was capable

of real acts of human kindness, you know. Yeah, maybe I stayed as – working in the office or – I don't remember it that clearly, Mary. I know I did work in the library, and I worked in the office. And, yeah, then I guess when I got married, it was okay. I was there as a faculty wife.

MEH: What is a faculty wife? Did you really –? I mean, what was your role at the college?

MFF: You mean in sort of a formal sense, or just –?

MEH: I mean, what did you do with your time?

MFF: Well, I took – I think I kept taking courses until – maybe until – No. Until I was pregnant? I might have. I don't remember that well, Mary. Now, I'd have to really sit down – Well, I was always ready to – For instance, if anybody wanted to give a performance and needed people to be in it, I was always, you know, willing to do that. Mark, for instance, put on a lot of performances.

MEH: Like, what do you remember?

MFF: He did one of the Yeats Moon Mystery plays. I think it's – Are you familiar with those plays at all?

MEH: Unt-um. [negative]

MFF: I'd have to look up the exact title. I can't –

MEH: Did he –?

MFF: Have you spoken to Mark?

MEH: No. I want to, but I haven't.

MFF: Oh, you should, really.

MEH: He would put on the play. He directed the play?

MFF: Yeah. He directed, and then he also wrote – He – Oh, one of the things Olson had us read very much was William Carlos Williams' *In the American Grain*, which are – Are you familiar with that book?

MEH: Just by title. I haven't read it.

MFF: Yeah. Well, they're essays on figures in American history that haven't necessarily been considered that much. And it starts with Eric the Red. "Rather the ice than their way." And Mark made a dramatic, you know, thing out of this material and performed it. And, you know, there were a lot of things I – And I'd sing in anybody's – I cooked. This is the one thing I'm really proud of. After Malrey retired, Cornelia was the only cook. And in order to give her a day off, I cooked one day a week for the school. And we still ate in the dining Hall. And, you know, I –

MEH: That's a pretty big task.

MFF: Yeah. Of course, Cornelia did it six days a week, but still I'm proud I could do it for one.

MEH: Right.

MFF: Yeah. What did I do? I probably sat around and read a lot, if you must know the honest truth. Well, you know, I – I don't know, you can – If you're really interested, you can ask anybody else whether this is true, but I think I functioned as one of the more sort of stable personalities at the time. And I do think I had a role there as just [To the side: Look at the guy with a guitar.] I think I represented, in a sense, I don't know, maybe for some of the younger

students, just a person who you could count on to be the same tomorrow as the day before in some sort of –

MEH: I think people have said you were stable.

MFF: – Sense of stability. I think I –

MEH: Sort of an even thread.

MFF: – functioned that way. And I think I even, you know, had little sense of myself in that – You know, when I think of it, I mean, it was such a small school. God knows what we did all winter there in a way. I mean, we did – There were regular – Well, at least for a number of years, we had tea every Wednesday afternoon for the whole community. I did that one year at least. And that was very pleasant. It was in that little house across from the study building which was torn down. So you wouldn't have seen that. What was it called? It was the library at one time. [Community House]

MEH: Oh, you mean one of those long barracks buildings?

MFF: No.

MEH: No.

MFF: You know where you enter the study building?

MEH: Oh, I know which one. [OVERTALKD] It's still there. [No, it was torn down.]

MFF: No, it can't be, because I helped tear – There's a picture of me helping to tear it down.

MEH: I guess it's not still there.

MFF: Someplace. I think. I can't remember the name of it. No. Maybe there isn't that picture. Yeah. Anyway.

MEH: Yeah. But you would have tea there.

MFF: Yeah. And that was a nice thing, because the warring factions would kind of get together over tea. And, you know, it had a certain nice formal quality to it. And then, also, kind of ideas came up there. We had this fabulous medieval party. You know, we put so much energy into everything. And this party, we all wore medieval costume. And we had a long runway down the dining hall that was to be sort of like a street fair in a medieval town. And June Rice and Vera Williams did a dance based on the nursery rhyme, "Three something in black felt hats, three something ducks, three –" It's a standard sort of nursery rhyme.

MEH: I don't know it. I've got a book of nursery rhymes, and I'll check it out.

MFF: Yeah. But, I mean, people would work so – And Jay Watt wrote something based on Valentina's [Spelling ?] for this, which I sang. God help us all. And, I don't know. There were a lot of jugglers. I don't remember. Yeah. And we would – And then there was medieval food. You know, we would make our own entertainment in that way. Every Sunday night there was an exhibit or concert, or something. And that's a – And there were always little announcements in the Dining Hall. Somebody'd make a poster. And some of those were so great.

MEH: I've heard about them.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Do you remember other –?

MFF: But I remember my first semester there quite well. I mean, the students – Well, the study building functioned very much as a student center. That was really a terrific idea that each person had his own room. And, you know, people would be studying or painting, or whatever, or we just – We'd get together and just bullshit and play music. But that – You know, it was really a good thing. I learn – And it was – The people I remember so much from then were Don Alter and Victor Kalos, Nick Cernovich and Bernadine de Julio. And I don't know whether you – And, yeah, I think all of us – Look, I spent hours and hours and hours sitting around listening to Olson. I mean, he'd sit around after the – You know, after lunch, and sometimes just talk the afternoon away. And, you know, I probably spent a lot of time just sitting and listening to him, which I think was time well-spent. Oh, I don't know. At one point – you had to sign up for piano practice hours, and Joe and I would play duets every night after supper. I took piano lessons – I mean, I took singing lessons with Mrs. Jalowetz one year, and I practiced regularly for that. I don't know – Do you – Have you gotten a sense of her?

MEH: Bit by bit, just as a very loving – much loved person.

MFF: Yeah, but she – I think she was an amazing woman.

MEH: There's one interesting card from her. Apparently, there had been a faculty meeting at which there was some change that Olson wanted to put through. And she had objected. And he had implied that those who did not go along with this really didn't care about the college. And she wrote him just a note and said that she didn't appreciate that in the least, that, you know, she cared

a great deal about the college, but that she didn't agree with him on that particular issue. But it was a very – It was a – I did not expect it from her, having heard that much about her. I mean, she really was very frank and curt.

MFF: Oh, yes!

MEH: And it – He – I mean, and it put him – He wrote back. I mean, it really hit home as to what he was doing.

MFF: Now, did he keep that note?

MEH: This was in his papers.

MFF: Hmm. That's interesting.

MEH: I think – It may be in Raleigh, but I think it was in his papers.

MFF: Oh, she was quite fierce, really. Not – Yeah. I mean, not on the surface, but –

MEH: Not maliciously, but –

MFF: No.

MEH: – apparently, she held her own.

MFF: Oh, she had a very strong sense of her own values, and – Well, she ran the bookbindery. You know about that?

MEH: Right.

MFF: Yeah. And I think – I mean, she – Her presence was very felt at any – Well, particularly musical performance, because she was very musical and she loved music deeply. But in anything. I mean, she gave it her full attention. And people were, you know, well aware that Mrs. Jalo's reaction was, you know, was important, and a good reaction on her part was to be valued also. I think this was another thing Mark did. I think he had the idea to put on a Bach

cantata, which – And Rauschenberg and I each were – had solo parts. And, you know, I mean, each of us can do a little more than sing on key. But it was pretty awful. And I think there were people, you know, from the outside there. And I remember going in the kitchen afterwards, and Mrs. Jalo came out and said, “Now, Maryline, do not be discouraged,” you know, acknowledging the horror of it all, but –

MEH: Giving you a little support anyway.

MFF: You see, I think Cor – It’s too bad Cornelia didn’t get – you know, a stronger sense of Cornelia, because she functioned as a very salty –

MEH: I got that sense that she was a very salty person and very determined in her ways and very cutting in her perceptions. But, I mean, I just gathered this from being with her. But in – Actually, her own recollections were just very vague and unsure. I mean, when she didn’t remember Olson –

MFF: Yeah. Well, she must –

MEH: I mean, George did most definitely.

MFF: Mmmm. So she must’ve slipped. Because she was always very sharp. And she – You know, she had a lot of insight into people. And she – If you were troubled, people would sort of go in the kitchen and have a cup of tea, and she’d say something that – You know, not comfort, but she’d make some kind of saying that would, you know, give you heart to continue on for a little bit. Now Malrey more played the – She kind of played up the role of – Oh, I remember the health inspectors would come inspect the kitchen, and that was always a grand moment. And Malrey would sort of carry on all about, “Well,

you know, us colored folks can't really be that clean, because we don't – They don't give us good restrooms," and all, which wasn't pertinent at the school, because there was one john in the dining room that everybody used, and it –

MEH: But she would play this role to the health inspectors?

MFF: Well, I think just – You know, she was aware the attitude in the school was sort of on her side, and so she – You know, she'd make a little hay out of people's sympathy or whatever. I don't know. One thing I remember really with amusement. Her grandson Alvin Charles –

MEH: Few?

MFF: Yeah. His school was having some kind of affair – festival. And a group of us went. I think it was Hazel and Vera and Malrey. I don't know. And I went and maybe others. And it was in the school and they had little booths, different things. And they had a fortuneteller. And I went in, and she told me how many miscarriages I would have through the years. And, you know, that didn't really bother me all that much. But she told – Each one of us white women who had gone, she told the same thing to. And I finally thought, "Yeah, that's really a very cool way of giving us a bad time."

MEH: Well, that was – That is really –

MFF: Yeah. I thought it was very subtle, really, you know. Well – Now, look, M.C. was a very strong figure when she was – You know, I mean, not in the same way as Olson's. But, I mean, she was a very influential teacher there, and her students had a very –

MEH: You took her course?

MFF: I really just took one. I – You know, I'm now friends with M.C. but that – I don't know. We sort of started with Aristotle and ended with T.S. Eliot, and I didn't – You know, it didn't have the same meaning for me at all that Olson's courses had.

MEH: Yeah. Well, this is sort of the image I've gotten of her teaching then.

MFF: Actually, she gave a very academic course.

MEH: Yeah. It was very academic and very interesting, but I have a feeling that her power was really in a personal relationship with people.

MFF: Well, and also in the – She did a lot with theater. She did *Marriage on the Eiffel Tower* when I was there. That was a terrific – But now that I think of it, I mean, there were original sets that different people made, original music, and – You know, I've never – I suppose I'd heard the name of Cocteau, but, I mean, that, for a small group to really take that on – And, of course, there are no records of those things.

MEH: Well, there are some programs.

MFF: Yeah. But I mean –

MEH: There is a program for it. And Andy Oates does have some photographs of that.

MFF: Does he?

MEH: One, maybe two. But I wanted to ask you about some productions, just run through. Okay. *Marriage on the Eiffel Tower*.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: That's one. And she directed that.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Right. Do you remember anything in particular about the sets or the play, in general?

MFF: Well, the play – There are two – I think they got microphones, two speakers. And Don Alter was one speaker, I think, and I was the other. And then the rest is sort of a pantomime. I think Alter – Well, Joe made one part of the sets, and I think he composed some piece of music for it. So did Pete Jennerjahn, I think. Now whether they'd have copies of any of that – I can't – I just remember this. I remember one table that maybe Alter made, and I think it was made – I think two of the legs were shorter than the others so it had kind of a slanted perspective. You know, MC would probably have much clearer memories.

MEH: Okay. What about other –? What about *Noah*?

MFF: Well –

MEH: Go ahead.

MFF: Well, Wes did the André Obey's *Noah*.

MEH: Right. That was –

MFF: And that –There were terrific masks for the animals. I don't remember who made these. Papier-mâché, I think. I was a cow in that. I'm sorry I – You know, one does remember one's own parts. Now, I don't know whether they were speaking, whether Noah and his wife had speaking parts and the animals were pantomime –

MEH: Yeah. I think Noah and his wife and the three sons and the three women did.

MFF: I remember Dorothea Rockburne. I remember her saying something, “To the south,” so she had some – Maybe she was Mrs. Noah. He did Lorca .I think – Or maybe Jack – Jack Rice loved Lorca. Now maybe he did that – Had something to do with performance. I think it was *Blood Wedding*.

MEH: Right. He did –

MFF: Was that Jack?

MEH: Somebody did *Blood Wedding*. I don’t have that jotted down here.

MFF: Or maybe it was another Lorca.

MEH: Well, there was *Blood Wedding*. The plays that I just noted –

MFF: Okay.

MEH: Okay. *Marriage on the Eiffel Tower*, Cocteau. *Noah*. Mark Heddon did a thing of *The Judgment*, a production of *The Judgment*. He dramatized Kafka’s *The Judgment*.

MFF: Oh, he did?

MFF: I don’t remember that.

MEH: Well, there is a program for that.

MFF: When I first came, there was a big – Bernadine di Julio and Don Alter were engaged in hideous altercation – they were both students – because each wanted a dramatic performance of *Metamorphosis*, Kafka. And I think it ended up neither of them did one as I remember. Okay. Well, now, M.C. did – She also did – Oh, Joe would know about this. They did a marvelous performance of – What? Another Cocteau? With Paul Williams and some girl who was his girlfriend at that point. M.C. did a lot with theater.

MEH: I've noted *Cuchulain*.

MFF: Yeah. Is that the one? That was Mark then.

MEH: Is that Mark? And then *The Shewing Up of* – Oh, well, the whole group – That Klein did that summer.

MFF: Oh, we – I wasn't there the Klein summer.

MEH: You were there the Klein summer. And there were two others –

MFF: That's when Cage says the first "happening," wasn't it? [MEH: Cage did the "happening" in 1952.]

MEH: Right, that summer – That was the one summer you [were away]. And there were two other plays.

MFF: Oh, there was a marvelous play with Elaine de Kooning and Bucky Fuller.

MEH: Oh, that's – Yeah.

MFF: Joe saw that.

MEH: Were you there?

MFF: No.

MEH: Yeah. You weren't there that summer. Right. Yeah. That's the Satie play.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Yeah. There are two others Duberman mentioned.

MFF: M.C. did this marvelous – We used the rowboats on the lake, you know, remember how the porch looked out over the lake? And it was for Wes's birthday. And this was getting toward the end of the school.

MEH: This was '53, I think.

MFF: I think she was back visiting.

MEH: Yeah. Okay. Tell me everything you can remember about that.

MFF: And, oh, that was magical.

MEH: Tell me everything you can remember about that.

MFF: Yeah. Okay.

MEH: There are a few vague references –

MFF: Karen. It was scenes, you know, from famous literary works. Karen was Ophelia and she was nude.

MEH: Everyone remembers that.

MFF: It was all in sort of twilight. And she was nude, and she had, you know, flowers wreathed in her hair with her hair dragging in the lake. And I don't know whether it was – Whether we used candles, or whether it was just lit from lights coming out from the porch.

MEH: Was it a barge that was pushed back and forth under the porch?

MFF: No. We just – I think maybe there was just one rowboat, one at a time. And I suppose somebody just paddled out in the lake a little bit. Oh, but I remember that as just –

MEH: Okay. Everyone remembers Karen.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: What are some other scenes?

MFF: There was – I think I was Trilby in Svengali. And I must confess I've never heard of them, so I never –

MEH: I haven't either.

MFF: I didn't – All. You know, MC would remember these things, Mary.

MEH: Well, she didn't remember the –

MFF: She didn't!

MEH: She remembered it. And she remembered – Everybody remembers Karen, but she didn't remember that many of the different scenes.

MFF: God, I can't remember either. You know, that was the difference then. People weren't – Everyone records everything now and –

MEH: Oh, right

MFF: You know, everyone's an archivist now.

MEH: And I wish a few people had been then. Well, there were two plays that I didn't know were given there. I was reading through to Duberman and he had mentioned. What were they?

MFF: Well, Wes did *Good Woman of Setzuan*.

MEH: Right. That had –

MFF: Oh, and beautiful music by Stefan.

MEH: Stefan. Right.

MFF: And Eric Weinberger. He was terrific in that. He was the water carrier, I guess. And he was such a shy guy, you know.

MEH: Ah-so.

MFF: Do you know Eric?

MEH: Umt-hm. I know who he is, but I –

MFF: He never spoke directly to me once the whole time he was there.

MEH: Hmm.

MFF: And he became very – you know, he became a political activist very much.

- MEH:** Right. And that's how I really, you know –
- MFF:** Yeah.
- MEH:** And what about –? Okay, I can't find where I jotted down those plays. What do you remember about the *Peer Gynt* production, specifically?
- MFF:** I think it was done in a circle. I think it was a reading performance only, I believe. And I think it was done in a circle. I think Wes was working with that form then. And it had music by Stefan. Oh, I – I hope Hilda has that music.
- MEH:** Yeah. The music does exist.
- MFF:** Yeah.
- MEH:** I think, even for the *Peer Gynt* performance, that music may have been written before Black Mountain
- MFF:** Really?
- MEH:** I'm not sure. I don't remember. And that may be the one performance, that the music was – Already existed.
- MFF:** All I remember is Betty and Charles. Let me see.
- MEH:** I could be wrong there.
- MFF:** I don't even – All I remember is Betty and Charles. Let's see. I don't remember. Then, there was another – "*Tis a* –" Some English play. Wes wanted me to play a whore, which I turned him down on, I remember. That the same summer?
- MEH:** That would be – No. I would like to know what it is. I don't know what else was –
- MFF:** If I looked through a collection of English plays, I might be able to –

MEH: I don't know of any other plays done.

MFF: I think it was some Restoration comedy or something.

MEH: Hmm.

MFF: There was a marvelous – Now, I wonder if this was a Goodman thing. It was a Noh style play with marvelous music. And Joe and I chanted in that. And he –

MEH: Was that the one –? That wasn't the one that Nick Cernovich did?

MFF: Maybe it was.

MEH: I think it was. This is something that you're gonna be asked about, I'm sure, by Stohr.

MFF: Yeah. Only I wish I remembered more. That was a....

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: Did Nick do the music, too? The chanting?

MEH: I don't know. I just know that he did the performance. And I've got to find – You know, I don't know much about it.

MFF: And you think he wrote it?

MEH: I know that he did one.

MFF: I know that he did write a Noh-style play.

MEH: Yeah. I don't know if this is one you – I don't know if this is –

MFF: Oh, I wish I could kind of hear that in my head. You know, I wonder if I remember these at all accurately, because I do think some of these performances – Okay. Then Wes did *The Maids*.

MEH: Okay. That's one of the ones that I was going to ask about.

MFF: And he did that in the –

MEH: He did. Okay. When would he have done it? Can you remember?

MFF: Yeah. Well, it was after we'd moved up – After the lower property was sold –

MEH: In the later –

MFF: – because it was done on the bottom floor of Meadows Inn. And –

MEH: Hmm. Who would have been in it?

MFF: Let's see. I wonder if Eric was in it again. Or Eloise Mixon. Do you know her?

MEH: Um-hm.

MFF: Might have been. She was in quite a few of the plays. Oh, Lord. You know that might have been Betty Kaiser. Betty was in a lot of – She had a flair for acting. It might very well have been Betty.

MEH: Okay. Do you remember his doing *Waiting for Godot*?

MFF: Yes. I think that was Eric and –

MEH: I have no record of these two performances. I can't really place who or when or –?

MFF: Well, you know, wouldn't Wes remember?

MEH: I haven't asked him, specifically. I need to get this together –

MFF: Oh, yeah.

MEH: And then write –

MFF: Yeah. They did it in that same – In Meadows Inn. I think it was Eric – Grey Stone? Now, there was one drama student, who was a particular student of Wes's – I can't think of his name.

MEH: A male?

MFF: Yeah. Oh. Do you have –? You don't have any –?

MEH: I have a list here. This would have been maybe '54 or '55?

MFF: Wasn't *Faust Foutu* –?

MEH: Okay. I was going to ask – I wanted to ask you that.

MFF: There were more Duncan plays.

MEH: Right. Well, the only two Duncan plays I know about are *Medea*, which he wrote there.

MFF: He wrote *Medea* there, and Eloise Mixon was in that.

MEH: Right.

MFF: And this guy who lived upstairs from us, who had the D.T.s – Oh, my God, he was such a sad guy. Whew! A Southern boy, kind'a young, I think. It was toward the end.

MEH: There's a program – I have a program for that.

MFF: You do?

MEH: Yeah. I could pull that. Okay. Students. Okay, these are students '54/'55.

MFF: You know, Michael might remember some of these things.

MEH: Michael Rumaker?

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Yeah. I'm gonna talk to him. I have yet to.

MFF: Oh, he's a dear. I haven't seen him in so – Where's –? Here's Mike.

MEH: Hmm. Okay. Do you see the guy –? Hmm.

MFF: Did Chamberlain come as a student?

MEH: Who?

MFF: John Chamberlain? I'd forgotten that.

MEH: Did you know he was –?

MFF: Joe Dunn! Joe Dunn! I think he was – No, wait a minute. No. Oh, Lord. Oh, Herb Ross. That was Wes's –

MEH: Oh. That would have been rather–? Oh, he – Was Herb Ross there that late? If he's on the list, he probably was. And, of course, that list is –

MFF: No, I don't think he was there that late. Herb Ross and his wife lived in Minimum House before we lived there, and that was before Black Dwarf [Roadside] burned. So that was –

MEH: Black Dwarf [Roadside] burned in '54? Was that it?

MFF: Yeah. I should know. It burned right after we were married, but since I don't know the year I was married – No, no. I think it was before '54.

MEH: I think it might have been '53.

MFF: About '50 something.

MEH: Unt-hm. It wasn't that early.

MFF: Oh, it couldn't have been '50.

MEH: Umt-um.

MFF: You know, this – Maybe I shouldn't say this for public, but, you know, Wes and Bea lived in the ground floor of Black Dwarf [Roadside] and Joe and I lived on top. And we still ate in the Dining Hall at that point. And it was a very cold night, and I think we took turns stoking the furnace. And we knew the boiler wasn't it in such great shape in that building. And Wes just stoked that furnace to beat the band, and I think it was something semi-deliberate about that. Now I just would like to say that to you, Mary, because I don't know. But I

think that – You know, Wes did have a lot of hostility toward Charles and his whole situation there and maybe himself and who knows. And I just – I don't know. I wondered about that.

MEH: It seems when we were talking about what Wes said to me before, this – None of this really came through in terms of his feeling a hostility or whatever. But he had – You know, it seems that he would have had to have – If he was at all aware of the situation in the world he was playing.

MFF: All – Because he was very aware of roles. I mean, that was part of his interest in the theater.

MEH: Right.

MFF: And –

MEH: Of course, that may have made him more accepting of playing one.

MFF: Well, also, Mary, Wes – You know, he did a lot of amazing productions, and yet he really didn't have that many students in his theater classes

MEH: How would – How do you really characterize – How would you –? I mean, you say these were wonderful productions, I mean, but what was the approach? Was it experimental? Was his psychological? Was it –?

MFF: Well, I think it was partly – I think when I say wonderful, I think just the feeling that came across. I think Wes tended to have a psychological approach, and that interested him. I mean, it may have been partly the setting, that intimate setting. But I think they had a strong feeling – a quality – They did project a – And I, for instance, I don't like that play *The Good Woman of Setzuan* at all.

MEH: I don't either.

MFF: But – And I think that was – No, I think that one was sort of stylized. I mean, the costumes. I think they had masks. And it did have a formal, maybe semi-dance quality. And, well, I think partly – You know, it may have been partly the setting that we all – In a small community we all knew each other, in a sense, so well, and to have people lifted out of that, you know, into a theatrical – you know, and which worked, in which it wasn't just, "Hey, there's ole so-and-so up there," you know. It did become a drama and something removed and something formal. And I think also there was the sense there then that, you know, you didn't have to be a professional actor or actress to – you know, that anyone – you know, there were only so many people to play all the different parts that are needed in a community of, you know, whatever. And, so, well, if you had to be in a Yeats play, by God, you just bring your forces to bear and – you know. And people would give forth, I think, with more than they knew they had. And I think that was part of it, that you weren't just squeezed into, you know, your one talent or whatever. That you could use yourself in many ways.

MEH: What do you remember about the Duncan plays? *Faust Foutu* and *Medea* are the only two I know of that he did. He may have done others.

MFF: I don't know. *Faust Foutu* I don't remember so specifically. I remember the... Sort of the quality of the language in the, you know, Duncan's – I can't –

MEH: You don't remember if there were sets –?

MFF: I don't – I don't think so. I remember the *Medea* was done, you know, in that back room under the Studies Building in the basement? It used to be the

weaving room. I don't know. Now, it seems to me that must have had costumes. I remember it had a terrific – You know, almost a stunning effect. And I remember it in particular, because, you know, it was the kind of thing you just wanted to walk out in silence. And Olson broke that with some little –

MEH: Oh.

MFF: – and, you know, it was so obvious. It was jealousy. You see, another – One summer we also put – Pete and Betty had a Sound Light Movement Workshop [Light Sound Movement Workshop]. I don't remember what year that was. And then one summer we did a – I think it was the summer we had a – I don't know what the title was, but we had things with drama. Olson recited from Frobenius *Gassire's Lute*. Have you heard about that?

MEH: Um-hm.

MFF: Somebody has a record of some of that.

MEH: And **MFF:** Whooooooooooooooooo?

MEH: Fee Dawson said that a record exists.

MFF: And Jack Rice was one of the drummers.

MEH: Okay. Now, this was not the summer of '49, when he did –?

MFF: Now, it may have been the summer of '49. Yeah.

MEH: In the summer of '49 – But this was before the Light Sound Movement Workshop.

MFF: Okay. Then it was before. Yeah.

MEH: It was – He did several things. He did *Wagadu*. Four productions: *Wagadu*, *Cyclops*, *The Gyres* – *G-y-r-e-s*.

MFF: That's – Mark did *The Gyres*.

MEH: Mark did *The Gyres*?

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Okay. And not *The Fall of a Sparrow*.

MFF: Hmm. *The Fall of a Sparrow*?

MEH: I think *Wagadu* is Frobenius.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Okay. *The Cyclops*. I think he was very interested in Homeric legends then and this came from that.

MFF: Yeah

MEH: I don't know if it's a reading or exactly what.

MFF: Now Fee said Olson did that?

MEH: Well, he –

MFF: And he remembered these as four separate performances?

MEH: No. These are – This is one production –

MFF: Oh, wait.

MEH: – but four separate –

MFF: Four. Yeah. Okay.

MEH: – scenes or readings. And do you remember anything about –? You said that Mark did *The Gyres*."

MFF: Yeah. And that had – There was an oboe player there. So you could – Do you know which summer there was an oboe player?

MEH: Well, these were done during the summer of '49.

MFF: Ah!

MEH: But I don't have that list done yet.

MFF: His name, I think, would come to be.

MEH: Was he a faculty –?

MFF: Well, he was a summer faculty, and his wife was, I think, a violinist.

MEH: Hmm.

MFF: Oh, I remember that because I had a crush on him. And somebody had an orgone box there. And that was sort of where you – You know, it was like “the wings,” or something. And I remember going in there and sort of necking with him between that – It was really great.

MEH: Oh, that's wonderful. The orgone box was in the wings of the auditorium?

MFF: Yeah. Somebody's orgone box –

MEH: Oh, that's wonderful.

MFF: – was sitting around the dining room, and we just put it to that unholy use, I suppose.

MEH: So, then –

MFF: That was Mark. Mark had written the music, and so – And I recited that.

That's how – That's why I remember.

MEH: Oh. That's why. Right.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: What is *The Gyres*? Because I don't know.

MFF: Oh, it's a point of Yeats.

MEH: It's Yeats?

MFF: Yeah. Oh, I should be able to quote that.

MEH: I have this tremendous reading list.

MFF: *The Gyres. The Gyres.* Oh – The Gyres are sort of a spiral move – Or sort of an image of history, I guess, as Yeats saw it. “And things thought too long, can be no longer thought.” You have to give Mark a lot of credit, because he had a lot of nerve, really, and he didn’t always get a positive response. But he did a lot with theater. And, you know, he took on sort of formidable things, really.

MEH: Yeah. These – I’ve just heard lots of talk. You really have been more specific than most people can be about these. I’ve talked to Mary Averette-Seelye –

MFF: Oh, yeah.

MEH: – who was there that summer.

MFF: Was she there that summer?

MEH: Um-hm. But she remembered. She couldn’t remember the performance’s specifically, but she remembered it was just a lot of excitement about them, that – People remembered, you know, that there was a feeling that this was very experimental or innovative. Do you remember this as being –

MFF: Oh, yeah. And, well, this was partly – See, Olson was interested in theater. And he – now, he wasn’t involved with all – I mean, he didn’t – He did the *Wagadu*. And I’m sure Jack Rice and somebody else did the drumming.

MEH: He read the *Wagadu* himself?

MFF: Yeah. And – Oh, I’m sure it’s partly one reason a lot of us were keyed up, you know, because we thought of it as a – you know, maybe in terms of some

- ancient ritual or whatever. Not a ritual, but a – You know, like in Homeric –
 What do you call them? The chanted – Well, the poet – I don't know, maybe
 there's another name. You know, so it did have a dimension for people.
- MEH:** Well, this is what I wondered, if – In what respect was, you know, everybody
 was so excited, what about the performance?
- MFF:** Yeah. And it had, you know – I think it had dramatic lighting and costume in
 music and – I wonder. Let's see. Who was Nick? I wonder who else would
 remember about that specifically. I think Nick was there then
- MEH:** I don't know. Well, Mark would remember *The Gyres*, too, because –
- MFF:** Yeah. Mark, really. I think Mark is in Maine.
- MEH:** Yeah. I have his address. I haven't written him.
- MFF:** Yeah. Because he might have very – You know, you tend to remember things
 you were involved with.
- MEH:** Right. But then it was probably – It was after the Light Sound Movement
 Workshop that – Okay, first, let's go back. Do you remember an interest on
 Olson's part in Noh plays?
- MFF:** Not particularly. No, I don't. Yeah. I mean he – Olson was very interested
 Pound. And I think Pound was somewhat interested in Noh plays. Now, Olson
 did *Apollonius of Tyana*. I mean, that was a play.
- MEH:** Was it actually performed?
- MFF:** No.
- MEH:** Yeah.

MFF: It was dedicated to Nick, and I think he had helped him with it before. I don't want to say whether Olson was or was not. I don't remember that as something that he emphasized particularly

MEH: Right.

MFF: There was also a reading – I think it was somebody who visited briefly. And we went up to a place in the pasture of the farm that had a – Not really an amphitheater, but it's sort of a sense of a natural amphitheater. And somebody read one of the Greek plays. I don't remember.

MEH: Do you remember a poetry reading by Olson that summer? I'm really probing for details, but I never can tell, you know, then maybe a particular thing that you remember –

MFF: I can't say that I remember a particular one then.

MEH: What about –?

MFF: What about Frank Moore?

MEH: Okay. I was going to ask you about him. Was he there that summer?

MFF: He was the other summer.

MEH: There's some correspondence between he and Olson that's led me to believe Olson was interested in Noh plays then.

MFF: Well, look, Frank would know more about that. Frank. Do you have an address for him? Because I do.

MEH: I – Oh, you do? I don't think I do.

MFF: I saw him in Bloomingdale's the other day. Oh, Frank was very interested in the theater. And he lived in Olson's house for a while in Washington.

MEH: Right.

MFF: Now, Frank and he may have done some performances there. But he wouldn't have been there that summer

MEH: It might have been later. I know he was there at one point. Actually, I had a date, but I don't have it here. Okay. The next summer, do you remember plays that Goodman wrote being performed?

MFF: You know, I don't.

MEH: I – Stohr has shown me copies of two short plays he wrote. One, *The Quiet House*, which was performed in Cambridge sometime later. And the other is – I can't think of the name right now. It's a very short drama dedicated to M.C. and – *The Magic Flight* or something like that. And he doesn't – Stohr doesn't think they were actually performed.

MFF: Oh. But it's strange they weren't, really.

MEH: Right. I mean, the way people just sort of – got things together.

MFF: Yeah. And he was there in '50?

MEH: I think it's '50.

MFF: You know, I have so few memories of that summer. It was – Was that Stamos?

MEH: It was '50 – Let me be sure. Maybe it was '51 he was there. I think – I'm sure it was '50. That was the first summer. Yeah. That was the Stamos, Greenberg, Klein, Litz, Amino summer.

MFF: No. Klein.

MEH: Robert Klein, theater.

MFF: Oh, yeah, yeah.

MEH: Right.

MFF: Oh, yeah! So what did he put on.

MEH: He put on *The Shewing up of Blanco Posnet*.

MFF: Oh, yeah. That was pretty dim –

MEH: Yeah. And two other plays I don't have right here.

MFF: And, Mary – Was Mary? No, she wasn't there then.

MEH: Mary –?

MFF: Averette.

MEH: No. She was there the – She did a Molière *The Intellectual Ladies*.

MFF: Robert, yeah. Oh, well, maybe there was –

MEH: Do you remember anything about Robert Klein?

MFF: You know, I hate that come-on with these big statements. No, I'm not – I remember that is rather dim theater, Mary. Now, ask Mark. Mark would – Mark – For one thing, I didn't take Goodman's class. Mark did. In fact, Goodman was his examiner when he graduated. Mark graduated.

MEH: Right. What do you remember about Goodman's summer there?

MFF: Well, I just – I don't have very lavish memories. I remember when I first met him, I think, he asked me what I'd been reading. And I just had been reading a lot of Gertrude Stein. And he said to me, "Well, you know why you're reading her, don't you?" And I just thought I was reading her because I was interested in her writing. And I realized later, well, you know, he meant – I

don't know, because she was a lesbian or something. And I thought that was – I mean, you know, it's like a possible plan, and all, but it's sort of –

MEH: Not necessarily.

MFF: Yeah. He did – I don't know what I'm – I mean, I'm going to have to speak to this, but I don't want to emphasize that too much. But Goodman, himself, did emphasize the whole sexual thing so much. And, you know, he really wanted to be appointed to teach there for a year. And I really think he set it up, Mary, so that – Look, I don't know why people voted against him, but I just had the sense that they thought, "This would really be kind of an unpleasant man to live with all winter." Because he always set up adversary situations as if – I've thought of that a lot. It really – And I think he had the sense that he was sort of persecuted there, and I don't think it's a – I don't think it was really an accurate sense of his.

MEH: You think that his not being appointed to the faculty had as much to do with just his general relationship with people as with the homosexual issue?

MFF: I do. I think people –

MEH: The issue of peeing on the ball field?

MFF: Oh!

MEH: I mean, this is what has been presented, you know, as the action that upset the Quakers and –

MFF: Well, it may be. I can't speak for them. Oh, the Quakers. My, God. I've forgotten about them. Some of them were an unpleasant crew. There was an

– Look – Joan – I think Joan Stack was kind of hounded out by them. Do you know Joan?

MEH: I know who she is. I haven't talked to her.

MFF: She worked in the office. And, yeah. I've forgotten about that. Look, I don't really know. I mean, I didn't vote on that. I wasn't a member of the faculty.

MEH: Right. Do you remember when he came back to examine Mark Hedden?

MFF: Yeah. I remember it. But, again, it was – He made it some kind of a painful – He put people in sort of a false challenging position often. And I think Mark would say that, that he – You know, he thought that Goodman made a painful occasion of this sort of psychologically – when there was no need to do so. You see, Mark would probably be the most interesting person to speak with about this, you know, about Goodman. And he'd probably remember whether the – I don't think of those plays were done. Now, whether – I'd forgotten Robert Klein was there even. Maybe he sort of dominated the theater that summer. I don't know.

MEH: Right. Yeah. I think he definitely dominated it. Whether these Goodman plays were put on or not, who knows? Up to –

MFF: Or Joel – Joel would have remembrance of these things, I should think.

MEH: Right. And I didn't ask Joel particularly, because I didn't know about the plays at that time.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: You know.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I need to ask him.

MFF: Or Nick. Was Nick there?

MEH: The summer of '50?

MFF: Probably. He was – I think he was the one –

MEH: Yeah. He was there.

MFF: You know, he wanted – Yeah. He was interested in – I remember he said to Olson – You know, Olson, I guess, at one point sort of asked us – or, I think Nick said, you know, “Couldn’t we discuss Goodman’s work?” Or something?

MEH: How do you – How do you see the summer sessions as relating to the school?

MFF: Well – I mean, I think they were partly thought of to draw attention to the school, to bring in money, you know, by having sort of more glamorous people there, maybe, and then hopefully maybe in that way getting more students to stay through the winter. And then, also, I think – Well, I think it was also kind of a relief for the winter people, because it, you know, could be kind of a long winter down there in the mountains for a small group of people. And this was, you know, a chance to spread out a little bit more in the summer. And then, also – Well, for instance, Betty had – You know, like, she was the one who set it up that Merce would come. You know, and it was a chance, in a sense, of someone, you know, you admired in a certain field, you know, hopefully to have him there and to study with him and whatever. I mean, there – Really, there was – You know, that pottery summer was amazing, Mary, you know, when I look back.

MEH: When Voulkos?

MFF: Hamada, I mean, he's a – And Dr. Yanagi. I mean, they're big figures in Japan. Marguerite Wildenhain. And, oh, was that the summer when David Tudor was there and gave these – Oh, these wonderful concerts. [Hamada, Leach, Yanagi and Wildenhain were at the college for a Pottery Seminar in the fall of 1952.]

MEH: He was there for like three – You know, he and M.C. came back down. But I think '53 was the summer –

MFF: Was that the summer–?

MEH: That he really gave – That was the summer that Merce Cunningham came down with his dance is also. That was the same summer?

MFF: That was the same summer

MEH: What do you remember about David Tudor's concerts?

MFF: Oh, well, he just – I mean, here's this ratty little audience. And David, well, I don't think he wore, you know, a tuxedo, or something. But, I mean, impeccably dressed and whatever, and with complete dignity and, you know, complete dedication to his art. And he – Well, he played Schoenberg and, I don't remember all the specific – Joe might have a really specific memory of all the things he played. And, I mean, here's this absolutely fantastic piano player, just, you know, playing the choicest of, you know, really important modern piano pieces, you know, with just one of those – I don't know. And then Merce – I don't know. I don't have such – I think Merce made use of the school, which – That's okay, but – I don't think [OVERTALK] But that whole

dance group, they didn't contribute to the school, except by their performance which was great.

MEH: It seems that any – I think Merce was quite frank in coming down and needing a place that summer for his dance group to be there

MFF: Yeah. I think he really formed his dance company there.

MEH: Yeah. That was the first time, I think, their getting together.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I mean, he – They didn't just happen there. Most of them had come as planned.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: But it seems that, for example, when Bucky came down for the summer of '49 and brought an already formed group, that whenever that happened, that the group never really jelled as part of the college. It always presented a problem.

MFF: Yeah. Well, I remember that – Oh, I didn't – It's funny. I don't know. I've since been reading Fuller and I – I'm interested in his writings and I admire him. But I don't – his – that – The group of his followers had a quality that I didn't like all that much, some of 'em. And it was that sort of fanatic quality that some of them had. Well, they were big party boys. They'd work on their dome during the day, and there was a party every single night in this little building in front of the study building. I've got to think of the name of that.

MEH: This is the one that you helped tear down?

MFF: Yeah. I think it was. Besides it was really structurally not safe. I think Paul was the one that said we had to tear it down.

MEH: But they would give parties every night?

MFF: Yeah. That's my memory of the summer of '49. Every – And they'd – I don't know, get a lot of beer, and there was a record player, I guess, in there. A lot of things there – I mean, I – Fuller – I didn't pay that much attention to Fuller. I suppose. Did he give little talks and things? I don't know.

MEH: I think he did give some.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I think he maybe read one of his books.

MFF: I think Hazel brought him. Didn't she? Wasn't she the one?

MEH: Yeah. He'd been there the summer before.

MFF: Uh-huh.

MEH: And I think, actually, you know, with the explosion that year before, there was really no one to organize the summer session. And Albers, I think, suggested –

MFF: Albers did?

MEH: I mean, I know he suggested that Fuller should come back down. But there was a big difference, because the summer before there had been a whole different type of faculty and Fuller hadn't brought a group of his people with assigned projects to work on

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: You know, I think it was an entirely different sort of thing.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And then, apparently, Fuller and Natasha didn't get along that well.

MFF: Oh, really? I don't remember. I mean, I didn't claim to know about that. I now wish I'd known – I wish I'd studied with her and known her more.

MEH: What was her role at the college? What was he like? I see her as sort of a formidable woman.

MFF: Well, you know, I read this – Evidently, she had relatives who were sort of banned because of supposed Communist leanings. And she would have been, you know, professionally qualified to teach at some other school, and she couldn't because of that. She was sort of blacklisted

MEH: Oh.

MFF: And so, really – I think Black Mountain didn't provide a scope for her teaching at all. And I think what – I think her feeling was that she sort of stood for true intellectual discipline over against Olson's sloppy scholar – I think she felt that very strongly. One of her students was Dick Negro. And – Well, she sort of had her group, and they kept to themselves a lot. And they'd – Madame Gol – You know, her mother was there with her, Madame Goldowski. And I think the students would – Well, you know, they'd eat Sunday night supper there a lot, and they'd be there a lot for little social evenings. And I think, you know, Natasha was sort of molding their minds. And I think she wouldn't allow her students to take certain other courses maybe.

MEH: Hmm. That's strange.

MFF: And then, on the other hand, she loved to have a good time. She loved waltzing and –

MEH: Apparently, she had been a professional dancer at one point.

MFF: Yeah. Well, I think she –

MEH: Was a very tiny, petite –

MFF: Yeah. Well, she was quite heavy when she was there. But she was evidently raised in a really wealthy – I think they had their own private railway car that took them to the sea and then where did she teach later? Alfred?

MEH: Yeah. I think, apparently, she was in Mexico when she died.

MFF: Hmm. I imagine she had quite a hard time there, really. You know, she probably had – You know, very few, if any, you know, really peers who spoke her scientific, you know – in her class of scientific knowledge. Well, Madame was one of the real school characters. Her mother.

MEH: In what respect?

MFF: Oh, she was a very tiny woman. She was quite old then. And, well, for instance, Herb Roco was kind of her servant boy for a while. And she – And, also, she had a – Oh, it was some crazy little dog named Looki [PH], which meant “elixir.” I think, in Russian. And she sort of called Herb in the same way she’d call her dog, you know, “Roco, Roco, Roco.” And he’d carry her a little basket of eggs. The faculty could eat breakfast at home if they wanted to. And you’d get your little supply of things from the kitchen. And he’d carry her little basket of breakfast supplies up for her. And they had a certain style of their own.

- MEH:** What do you remember about the closing of the college?
- MFF:** Uhh! Okay, let's see. Well, let's see. When did Wes resign? At the end of that summer –
- MEH:** Yeah.
- MFF:** – or before? See, I think everyone knew it was the end. And I think it was sort of unacknowledged. I wasn't paying a lot of attention in a way. I think Joe had said at the end of that spring that he wanted to move to New York –
- MEH:** Apparently, Joe –
- MFF:** – and he and John Chamberlain, I think, came up to New York to look for something. And Wes – I – Maybe Wes had resigned earlier. I don't remember that. And Olson still – He was still accepting applications –
- MEH:** Apparently.
- MFF:** – from students, which, as if – And there was a list of – some grandiose list of courses to be offered. And, in fact, a few poor souls arrived. And then there was some – I don't know. Things really began to get bad in a way. Some friend, – maybe of Tony Landreau's or maybe of Creeley's or I don't remember – came. And, I don't know. I think he was on drugs. I think that was sort of the only whiff of that scene. And, I don't know, he may have had a gun. There were really like it – certain ugly feelings –
- MEH:** I have a sense in the last year, especially the summer of '55 and the last summer, of sort of a macabre scene, you know, with people really freaked out and very destructive, self-destructive as well as destructive in other ways.

MFF: Yeah. Well, there was that infamous occasion when Tom Field drove his car –
Do you know about that? And I –

MEH: I mean, all I know is he drove the car into a chimney or whatever.

MFF: Well – I mean, Creeley – See – Was that his car? Did he own a car?

MEH: Yeah. Whose car I'm not sure.

MFF: Yeah. I think it was Tom's car. You see, there was always a car shortage
there. And if you wanted to go anyplace, and especially if you like to drink
beer or something, you'd have to play up to the car owners and get a ride
down to the – Peeks or someplace. So, I guess Creeley and Dan Rice would,
you know, they'd get Tom to drive 'em off to have a few beers. But then they
would goad him. And, oh, I – I still – And Dan said something to me about this
when I saw him a few years ago. And he said that Duberman gave a false
account of that event. And Dan was sort of defending himself in a sense.

MEH: I don't remember what Duberman said.

MFF: No, I don't either.

MEH: Do you? Yeah. But what did Dan say?

MFF: Well, he said that, you know, that Tom did it. I mean, he did do it, but there
was goading in the background.

MEH: Yeah. This is – I've got that – I've talked to everyone –

MFF: It was ugly, Mary. It was.

MEH: I've talked to Creeley and to Dan Rice. And who else was in the car?

MFF: I think that's all. Was there someone else?

MEH: I think there was a third person.

MFF: I don't know. [OVERTALK] And Dan has a right to be mad because Dan's back was injured.

MEH: Right. Right. Apparently it's been –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: But, apparently – I know that Creeley was very upset. In fact, he threatened to sue Duberman over what Duberman said. And I need to reread it and see, because the impression I had gotten was that Tom Field was really goaded into doing this, you know, that he just – They just pushed him to the brink and –

MFF: Well, he may not have been goaded at that particular moment. I mean, he just –

MEH: And, of course, what they, for example – When I – The impression I got, and I need to put all these accounts together –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: – you know, there was goading. I think he was – Tom wasn't the swiftest of drivers, and they were really running him down –

MFF: Well, it wasn't just that. [OVERTALK] They taunted him because he wasn't the most masculine of man. I think that aspect was – I don't know.

MEH: There was somebody else. Was it Jorge Fick who was in the car?

MFF: Well, I'm not sure, Mary.

MEH: Yeah. I don't remember. Apparently that summer whoever was in the car – Did Mike Rumaker attempts suicide that summer and maybe one other person?

MFF: Hmm.

MEH: It just appeared to me to be a low point – The low point of the college.

MFF: Now, let me see. That was the summer.

MEH: He was there the summer of '55.

MFF: Yeah. See, looking back at it now, Mary, I think some of my attitudes would be different than they were –

MEH: Like what do you mean?

MFF: – at the time, in general. Well, I mean, I did have years of being intensely loyal to the school. Now, I think I would consider the school irresponsible in a lot of situations where I didn't really see it then. I don't know. Of course, I guess it's – You know, at this moment in time, it's not fashionable for schools to – What do they call it? "*In loco parentis*," or whatever that phrase is. Still, especially when we all ate – After the dining Hall closed, that had been such a focal point in the community life, and also that – Those three meals, you know, provided a structure for the day. And a lot of these kids were just thrown on their own resources to a degree that, you know, that's hard for anyone to bear in a way. But –

MEH: Maybe at that point it was just – The faculty had sort of withdrawn to themselves.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I mean, Joe was not really teaching classes, but tutoring on individual bases

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And from what I hear, Olson at that point, was largely just shut away working on *Maximus* and accepting student's manuscripts in his mailbox. I mean, he did do his *Special View of History* then. But, generally, he was – Had his own problems going

MFF: You mean the whole last winter?

MEH: Yeah. For the spring after he came back.

MFF: The spring.

MEH: Apparently, the fall and that winter, he was in New York. And, I mean, he wasn't even there a big part of the time. And Huss was trying to keep the drama thing going. Apparently, Duncan and Huss, you know – that spring was sort of the one thing that was going on outside.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And Wolpe was getting ready to leave and didn't really have any music students.

MFF: Now I –

MEH: And then the students were sort of – You know, could – They had to make it on their own.

MFF: Yeah. I think that's true. And, actually, well, some of the students almost didn't have student – I mean, were really more members of the community in a sense, maybe. I think it was a – You know, I think certainly that applies to Joe and me, too. It was like that, not getting out of your home, you know, when the time has come. And, you know, people were sort of malingering there instead of taking that necessary next step really. Well, I know that – I think

when Olson – Yeah, when he came back then, and he set up this Special View of History course, he was kind of crushed because not that many people showed up. And I remember his saying something about, “For Olson, only –” You know, it was a blow to his ego. And then I remembered – I think it was at the end of that summer. And we were leaving. And Wes had resigned. And –

MEH: I think Landreau was leaving. For whatever that was worth at that point.

MFF: Yeah. And Olson came in once and said – I don’t know, he had this last-minute proposal to make to Joe, and he said, “Well, Joe, you and I are the only two still holding our students now, and so we could come up with some whole fresh new –” You know, and whether he really thought that was possible –

MEH: Why do you think Olson was hanging on? Why do you think he didn’t just leave? Let me – Just let me change the tape. Hold your replies.

[END OF TAPE ONE. BEGINNING OF TAPE TWO.]

MFF: Well, Mary, I think it was partly –

MEH: Okay.

MFF: I think, in a sense, it was like leaving home again. Also, Connie – Well, I mean – And, as I’m sure you know on your own, but Connie did tell me that Olson identified particularly strongly with the place. And maybe just – Yeah, maybe he didn’t have a sense of what’s the next move – And, you know, was very slow to get himself together. I – I – And whether he really thought the school could continue or whether he really even wanted it to. You know, maybe the financial aspect also did it for him, because he had a new – you know, young

wife, or whatever she was, and a baby, who were, you know, kind of dependent on him at that point. And, well, at Black Mountain, you know, he did have a place – a house to live in.

MEH: At least a roof over your head.

MFF: Yeah. I – You know, I can't really – I think he just – I mean, I felt at one point "this is my home," and I could have just lived there the rest of my life that. I mean, at least so I thought then. I think Olson must have enjoyed that last year when he lived there alone. He could be – You know, he probably got his head clear partly, and also I think he enjoyed going through all the things. And I had the sense he did a decent job of that, and I don't know –

MEH: Oh, I think he did a very decent job.

MFF: Yeah. Really. An excellent job.

MEH: I think almost that it may have been – [**BANG, BANG**] What in heaven's name?

[TAPE INTERRUPTION]

MEH: You know, I have sort of the sense that – I mean, obviously, it would seem –Okay, from the documents I have, Wolpe had left in the spring. He was out of the picture.

MFF: Uh-huh.

MEH: Joe had asked for a leave-of-absence.

MFF: Oh, is that what he did?

MEH: Planning to leave. I think the idea of asking for the leave-of-absence was if he left –

MFF: (Laughs) That creep.

MEH: – If he left, the Board would only consist of Olson and Huss.

MFF: Oh. Really.?

MEH: And the idea was to keep a listing on the Board.

MFF: So, he wasn't chickening out?

MEH: Know, I don't – I didn't get the idea he was chickening out.

MFF: Okay.

MEH: He was definitely leaving –

MFF: Okay.

MEH: – but he wasn't resigning. Landreau had resigned for whatever reason. And then Huss had not resigned at that point, but I think he had decided that summer that he wanted to move on with Duncan, you know – as he told me –

MFF: Oh, really?

MEH: – there wasn't going to be anyone left there for him to give performances.

MFF: Oh, I didn't – Then he did do plays with Duncan in San Francisco, didn't he?

MEH: Yeah. They never – Nothing was ever performed, but they worked on it for several months.

MFF: Uh-huh.

MEH: But, anyway – But it seems Olson would have had to have known that things were coming to an end. I mean, essentially, he was all that was left, you know, at that point.

MFF: Well, maybe he thought he could be the core of the second –

MEH: Yeah. Possibly, though, I sort of had the feeling that this business of “it’s very difficult to actually accept an end, you know –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: To say that “this is the end.” And that then when he did, I think that Olson realized, that his own understanding of history was such that he realized that it was important that the college be closed legitimately. You know, there had been so much discussion of irresponsibility at the college, and accusations about his own running – and from what I could tell, he was very conscientious in his – You know,

MFF: Oh, yeah. I think –

MEH: – selling the property and –

MFF: I think he was scrupulous financially, and all that. I really do.

MEH: And, of course, he was under legal –

MFF: Yeah. But, no, I think he would have been anyway.

MEH: – jurisdiction.

MFF: And I think he had a very scrupulous sense of that. I really do, Mary.

MEH: Right. No, I totally – You know, I apparently things –

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Which is wonderful. I mean I would hate at this time to have to plow through some illegal –

MFF: No, no. I don’t think there’s any illegal question about –

MEH: But from what I’ve seen, everything was done fairly and justly and –

MFF: Yeah. I don’t think Olson’s temptations were along financial lines.

MEH: Oh, I don't either. The thing that surprised me though is that, when I was in Asheville, I went through the County Courthouse records because there had been so much discussion of this suit, and I really couldn't place it. Apparently, it was in 1955 –here I might be off – in 1955 in the summer that they formally filed the suit. It was not settled until 1956 which was a year after the college closed.

MFF: I didn't realize that.

MEH: I didn't either. I thought it had been settled before the college closed. And the legal verdict was – The judge's judgment was that the faculty – That the contingent salaries were a real debt and that it should be paid. But it was after the fact. At that point, the college had closed, and it was just really a formality it would seem.

MFF: Now, is that what all the trouble was about?

MEH: The suit? Yeah. I mean –

MFF: And someone had claimed that they were not?

MEH: Apparently. Yeah. I think the college had claimed –

MFF: Claim.

MEH: – what the college had claimed, you see, which was not answered in the suit, because of the manner in which it was filed – the college had claimed that it was a real debt even though it had never been intended to accumulate the way that it did, that it was a real debt but I did not have to be paid unless the college were to sell its property.

MFF: I see.

MEH: This was never really answered, because at the point the suit actually came before a judge, the college had already declared itself, you know, closing.

MFF: Was the fact that half the property had been sold part of the argument for the
–

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: – those who brought the suit?

MEH: Yeah. I think their feeling was that the college was just –

MFF: Well, I think there was a point.

MEH: – a handful of people would just stay there and live off the property until all the money was gone, which could have happened.

MFF: I can see that.

MEH: Yeah. But I was surprised at the timing. I thought it had all occurred – You know, had been settled earlier.

MFF: Well, I really don't think anyone – I don't think that is true, that people were just living off the – I mean, I don't think that was anyone's motive, really.

MEH: Yeah. I agree. I agree. People were living off the land but it wasn't the – It wasn't a –

MFF: Yeah. It wasn't the – Yeah.

MEH: Yeah. I agree, totally.

MFF: I mean, it may have been a very sloppy thinking in sort of a slow-acting action, but I don't think it was deliberate plotting or anything.

MEH: Yeah. I agree there. Do you remember anything about the event of that last summer when this guy came down, and apparently he was living with one

woman and then his wife came down and raised a ruckus. His wife came from California, apparently, or wherever.

MFF: Mark somebody?

MEH: I think his name was Bob. Bob Hawley.

MFF: Oh, maybe that was the frightening – The guy that I thought was so frightening.

MEH: This is the person you thought was an –?

MFF: Was he a friend of Landreau's?

MEH: Umt-hm. I think he –

MFF: Was he living in Last Chance?

MEH: I don't know. I'll show you the list from that last summer.

MFF: You know, I think I just – I think I retreated more and more into my – You know, I was nursing Tom, and I think I didn't pay that much attention, to tell you the truth, to a lot of stuff. Oh, this is the guy. Louis Marbury, who had [UNINTEL WORD]

MEH: Oh, I've heard.

MFF: Oh, he was –

MEH: Yeah.

MFF: He was – I think he had a real problem with his mother, I guess, and he was sent to a military school as a kid. And – He was a sad boy. And Douglas Gavin. I think he's a descendent of some – Isn't there some old – There's an English poet way, way back.

MEH: I think so.

- MFF:** And I think that's one. I think Mike had a crush on him. I think that's one reason he cut his wrists. Harvey Frauenglass, I don't remember him.
- MEH:** I think he was just there. I think he was one of the ones who came in the summer planning to stay for the fall. I think he was just there for a –
- MFF:** You should talk to somebody else. This is a horrible picture of some final meeting at Olson's house.
- MEH:** I think Frauenglass's wife may have taken the picture. I want to find him for the sake of getting a good copy of the picture.
- MFF:** I don't remember these people. Margaret Jackson, now wait a minute. I kind of have a mental image of her. Howard Keefer? It says one week?
- MEH:** I think he was one of the ones who came for the fall, too.
- MFF:** The Mixons might be good. They might –
- MEH:** I've corresponded, but they're in – I think they're still in England.
- MFF:** Oh. Anne Simone. Yeah. She was put down because she had money, and she had some fancy cars up in – Grey Stone. Okay. So that guy must've been – Now I lost him. Robert Hawley.
- MEH:** You don't remember that incident though?
- MFF:** No. But clearly, Mary. I remember something. I think – Yeah, Joe went to New York to look for an apartment for us. And he told me to lock the doors, which was an unheard of act at Black Mountain, because if it was this guy – Somebody was around. And I had some memory that, I don't know, he was on drugs, or he had a gun, or maybe – Yeah, and maybe his – His wife wasn't there. It didn't have anything to do with Tony, did it?

MEH: I don't think so. What was Tony's state that last summer?

MFF: Oh, I think he was in a bad –

MEH: He wasn't on the up? He was on the down at that time?

MFF: I don't know. Wasn't Anita –? Was his wife there with him?

MEH: So far as I know, she stayed. But I'm not sure.

MFF: Well, again, I think Tony was sneered at by some people because he wasn't a real artist. He was only a weaver.

MEH: Hmm.

MFF: And I think he had a very bad time there.

MEH: Do you remember a play *The Confidence Man*?

MFF: Oh, who did that?

MEH: Huss directed it. And it had something to – The role that Tony played in that had something to do –

MFF: Oh, God.

MEH: Search your memory.

MFF: Yeah. It's sort of – Fee didn't have anything to do with that, did he?

MEH: I don't think so. It's right – It would be toward – If Landreau was there, it had to be towards, you know, the last couple of years at the college.

MFF: You know, you're shaking a lot of happy memories, Mary. I'm beginning to see the grim side of the place more. I don't remember. I – But I'd forgotten that. I think that was a rather – You know, I know Wes did that deliberately. He –

MEH: This is a – When you're type-casting. This is –

MFF: No. No. He shook people up. I mean, I think he – You know, he was interested in that. So who was *The Confidence Man*?

MEH: I think Landreau was.

MFF: Yeah. Well –

MEH: From what I've heard Tony did a good job in that in sort of won more respect than he'd had had at the college.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: You know, after that point.

MFF: Well. He had rough days after he left. I know that. And I think – Right. I think now he's kind of gotten hold of himself.

[TAPE INTERRUPTION]

MEH: The Golden Boy, you know, the hope of the publishing world?

MFF: Look, that was before Olson met Creeley. He and Creeley corresponded for at least a year before they met in the flesh. And, well – You aren't going to put all these things in a book, are you?

MEH: Anything I use, you can release.

MFF: That's right. No, because some of these are just little intuitions I had that could be inaccurate. But I think Olson could, in a way, never admit to himself that he'd had sort of an exaggerated idea of Creeley. And – Well, maybe Creeley, you know, functioned for him sort of partly as a son and partly as a – You know, a spiritual son or whatever [UNINTEL WORD] And, you know, he had to insist on these dimensions for him, which probably wasn't any boon for Creeley either. I mean, who needs that?

MEH: Well, it seems Olson did this with everything. In a sense, it's the same business with – of the Black Mountain, you know, he not only created a role, but he either – He made people he really liked into super human beings, in his own concept of them.

MFF: Well, I don't think it necessarily "super," Mary. You know, he would assign people roles. For instance, what's-his-name in Connecticut sends me these Olson archives.

MEH: Oh, right. Butterick.

MFF: Yeah. And there was something in there – Somebody someplace was interested in something, and Olson said, "Well, you must get a hold of Dan Rice and Paul Williams, and they'll do thus-and-so for you." Well, now, he didn't – I mean, he was just saying that they – You know, that they had some – whatever the skill was. I mean, well, see, Connie told me before he died, she said, "Olson's projections don't work anymore."

MEH: And this is projecting roles on people?

MFF: Yeah. I mean, things that he perhaps couldn't or wouldn't take up and work on himself, you know, he would – There was something else I was going to say. What were we talking about? Oh, Creeley. I don't know. I don't understand Creeley. I don't know him that well. I remember he – We lived in Minimum House there, and he appeared one night. And I may have met him to say, "How do you do?" Or something. But right away he was sort of telling us all the intimate details of his breakup with his marriage at the time. And, you know, Joe is a very private person. And I talk, but I'm not that open in a

certain way. And we just kind of – You know, maybe we were just stuffy idiots, or something. But – And Creeley – I remember Creeley asked me to come visit one of his classes once. So I did. And Cynthia was a member of the class. And I just – She and Creeley were having an affair or something at that point. And I don't know, something they were – He'd assigned the class to read. And it was something – Lawrence or something about love. And he wanted Cynthia – First, he had Cynthia – You know, he wanted some kind of a personal statement of her – And she said, "Well, I'm not gonna say anything." And then he asked me, and I – I mean, he wanted to sort of – And maybe that's just the writer in him. Maybe it's – You know, maybe everybody should show everything. I don't know. You know, maybe that's a natural mode for him, and it's not being manipulative. I don't know. You know, that may very well be. Well, does he speak fondly of the school was it just sort of –?

MEH: He speaks sort of gloriously of the school.

MFF: As if it were the heroic age, or –?

MEH: A very heroic thing. You know, "We were – The rest of society was off on the wrong track, but we were there, and we were right, and we were good, and we suffered, you know. We suffered poverty, hell, and damnation for Black Mountain," sort of thing. So I think –

MFF: Those sort of things have to be said with a lot of humor.

MEH: Right.

MFF: You know?

MEH: It's not a matter really of humor, but I don't think Creeley is someone who really suffered that much for Black Mountain. I mean, you know, he needed a place to go. He was torn up himself, you know, and that was a place that didn't really make any demands on him.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Of course, he did edit the *Black Mountain Review* which was –

MFF: Well –

MEH: – not a remunerative job. I mean, the college did pay the expenses –

MFF: But I did the dirty work.

MEH: Oh, you did?

MFF: I did all the mailing and all that stuff for them.

MEH: You mean, you like mailed out the issues and –?

MFF: Yeah. And a lot of the – I did a lot of dirty work there, actually.

MEH: Somebody had to have been doing it.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: What was your concept of the *Black Mountain Review*? I mean, like, what was it supposed to be doing?

MFF: Well, I think it was, you know, I think it had a certain viewpoint, and I also think it – You know, it printed work of a lot of people who wouldn't have been printed just in the ordinary, you know, publishing – I thought – To me, *Origin* was more exciting, really. Well, I'm sure it was one of the top – *Black Mountain Review* was –

MEH: Do you –?

- MFF:** Well, look, the school poured money into that, didn't they?
- MEH:** That's what I said. Creeley wasn't actually paid for editing it, but it did pay the expenses of his magazine, you know, in a sense.
- MFF:** Well, sure – Which served him and –
- MEH:** Right. Do you remember a visit by Caresse Crosby?
- MFF:** Yeah. Oh, yeah. I remember it very well [OVERTALK] because I remember that Olson decided that I was the one with the manners to meet Caresse Crosby at the train, which I did. [Aside: and I'm picking your thing off your knife. Referring to meal being eaten.]
- MEH:** Oh. That's for designing orange pills. This is an –
- MFF:** Oh, is that what it is?
- MEH:** I got this knife in England.
- MFF:** Oh, that's cute.
- MEH:** Years ago. And it's for – You know, if you want to do a fancy —
- MFF:** Yeah. I thought it was piece of rind.
- MEH:** So you design the cheese.
- MFF:** Yeah. I remember when she visited. That was very nice. She had a – Well, if you know, she and her husband had a press in Paris where they –
- MEH:** The Black Sun.
- MFF:** Yeah. And she had a collection from that, and also other things that collected. And she brought that down. And she gave a nice little talk about, oh, when Hart Crane came to stay with them. You know, it was a nice exhibit. Yeah. I remember that very well. I also remember because I went to pick her up at

the early morning train in Black Mountain. And Olson managed to get himself up and I was to ask her to come have breakfast with Olsons. But she decided to stay in her hotel in rest, or something, instead, in Black Mountain. And, I mean, that really amused me in a way because –

MEH: So she didn't stay at the college? She stayed –

MFF: She stayed in a hotel there. Yeah. I remember Olson's asking me if the room was alright, and I said, "Well, you know, it wasn't bad." It was – She was very nice and –

MEH: Were there many people visiting the college at that point or had the outsider's about –?

MFF: Well, what year was that?

MEH: I don't – When she came, it would have been about '54 or something like that. I'm not sure. But I'm really speaking of the later years. To what extent, you know –

MFF: You mean, pe – invi —? Or just people who dropped by?

MEH: I mean, I know that, you know, earlier there had been sort of a constant stream of people coming in and out –

MFF: I don't remember that many.

MEH: Like visiting lecturers or – Do you remember any particular? Anyone?

MFF: Well, when was the Institute of the New Sciences of Man done?

MEH: I think it was '53, Spring.

MFF: Spring?

MEH: Braidwood and Maria von Franz

MFF: No. I don't remember them. I don't remember that many, Mary.

MEH: Why don't we look at some more photographs?

[TAPE INTERRUPTION]

MEH: Concerning the farm.

MFF: Well, let's see, when I came – Who was the farmer? I forget. He sort of sided with Natasha and –

MEH: Trayer.

MFF: Was it Trayer? Yeah. Ray Trayer. I didn't really know him that well. I don't know when he left. Then Doyle Jones came. And he was a man, you know, from around there, he and his wife. And he didn't really – You know, they weren't really part of the college community in the same sense. But, well, the farm had a nice quality. Just after the dining room had closed, we could go around and get – Pick up milk and eggs. And you'd go over every afternoon. And there was an awfully nice man, whose name I've forgotten, who worked as a hired hand. And, well, you know, Mary, I was thinking – one thing that's kind of curious, I think in a sense, you know, people were aware of the beauty of the place and all, but I think there wasn't a terrific emphasis really on the natural surroundings or, you know, or great use made of all that, you know. Whereas, probably today there would be, you know, a whole different feeling about that. I mean, I think maybe, you know, in some ways nature was kind of sneered at. I mean, I think there was a thread of that attitude, perhaps. Dr. Dehn was a very enthusiastic walker. People talk to you about that? And he kept a journal of when the wildflowers bloomed, and – Well, of course,

Jonathan, particularly since he grew up around there, was, you know, he was very interested in the natural history, and he was pretty knowledgeable I'd say. And, well, Mrs. Jalowetz had one voice student, Alice? She was the daughter of the big family in the Valley.

MEH: Alice Jackson?

MFF: Alice Jackson.

MEH: Yeah, she was the daughter of whom?

MFF: Well, she lived – I don't know. The big sort of local family in the Swannanoa Valley.

MEH: Oh. Hmm.

MFF: And, actually, what – At some point, the school sold gravel rights, which was kind of sad, to the river there. That was a really pretty area. Then at one point we bought eggs I think. I used to go get those from a woman in a real mountain cabin across the valley. I used to walk on all those roads. It was a very isolated – You know, it was a very isolated community for the most part. I mean, there were certain people in Asheville who were interested in the school and who came to concerts and maybe a few in Black Mountain. At the same time, I don't think there was an awful lot of hostility. I mean, there were – I know in certain instances there were bad situations with the outside community. But, I don't know, my impression is that, for the most part, we were just kind of unacknowledged. Well, I think people would have – You know, now, people would have more gardening. We had a potato – a little potato field once and somebody put it in a strawberry field. And Tom Field

made a garden once with snow peas, and he and I used to gather apples from the old trees a lot. But there wasn't the same kind of sense of the countryside.

MEH: I didn't know. I think that had existed earlier more at the college.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And they did raise a lot of their vegetables.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And farm. And I didn't – I thought that it had continued more into the '50s.

MFF: Well, they did. I'm just thinking sort of in terms of today as the –

MEH: Right.

MFF: You know, students would make a lot more of all that, really.

MEH: I do get the feeling, though, and you can tell – I might be – Tell me if I'm right or wrong, that in the '50s as the college population became smaller that the farm became as much of a burden as anything else –

MFF: Umm.

MEH: – simply because it was – There were so few people that to really do anything with it was consuming.

MFF: Yeah. I'm not sure, but I think that could be. Well, then there was a hideous farm crisis when Doyle just sort of quit. And all these beef cattle there. Do you know that story?

MEH: I'm not sure.

MFF: Well, and they were just, you know, sort of dying in their own shit in the barns. And this must've been – Now, maybe it was '54. And that Christmas Wes and

Charles and Joe and maybe Tony had to go clean out the barns for Christmas Eve day, and I guess that was a pretty grim–

MEH: Christmas.

MFF: And then everyone sort of went in and barricaded himself in his own household. And I remember Joe and I had a – we had some Christmas dinner. And we had a bottle of wine or something. We were feeling pretty good. And it was a beautiful clear frosty night with the stars sparkling. So we decided we'd go serenade everybody with Christmas carols. So, first, we went to Huss's, who lived across the road. And, I don't know, they'd gone to bed or – We didn't get much response. And then we went to – We sang outside of Olson's. And nothing much. And then we sang outside of Wolpe's. And Wolpe was – He wasn't too well at that point. But he came out and he just – I remember this so tenderly. And he just said it was the most beautiful music he'd ever heard – the two of us singing. And they asked us in for some hot wine or something. And that was nice. And then there was a whole big thing about selling the cattle. And we sort of had to go guard the cattle because there was a fear that this guy would, you know, steal them before the – I don't remember. Some very complicated thing.

MEH: While they were still at the farm?

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Did you go to the sale?

MFF: I didn't go to the sale. I don't remember that. That was a crazy story and somebody may remember. I suppose it's a matter of record.

MEH: Yeah. Well, I just – People have talked about Olson selling them and getting such a good price, and then the farmer reselling them for much less a few days later or whatever. The person who bought them.

MFF: I don't remember. Really? Then there was a man in the valley – I can't remember his name either.

MEH: Is that the guy who –?

MFF: He used to come to the butchering.

MEH: To the butchering at the college? Why did he come? I mean –

MFF: Well, you know, the animals that had been raised on the farm. Evidently, you know, he was the one who had the butchering skills...

MEH: Oh, I see. He did –

MFF: – and we'd pay him a certain amount. Oh, I remember one great day when the health inspector's threatened to close the school. And I guess we had to buy new walk-in refrigerators where the meat was stored. And it was a huge expense. And then we had this great – Then they were going to be invited to lunch someday and to inspect all the improvements in the kitchen. And so we had this grand clean-up. And I remember working with Nick and cleaning the little storeroom. And, I mean, things like that were a lot of fun. Really they were. And then they had lunch with us. And then they showed this gruesome movie of kitchens with rats – You know, right after lunch. While the whole thing was just terrible.

MEH: But you must've gotten your approval.

MFF: Yeah. But you know, the whole – And then there was the other time when the State threatened to – Let's see. We wouldn't get the G.I. bill or something? Because we wouldn't be – What do you call it when you're a qualified school?

MEH: Accredited.

MFF: Accredited.

MEH: Yeah. You were never accredited from what I can tell.

MFF: Well, whatever we were.

MEH: But you didn't meet whatever requirements they were laying down.

MFF: Well, for in – They sent these people over. And, yeah, there were a very small number of students. So there was kind of a schedule that, you know, you – Somebody to go in the library and make it look active, and then you'd whisk. And a grand cleanup. And – Oh, I suppose it was all idiotic, now that I think of it. But it was kind of a loyalty to – You know, to something you cared about was sort of being threatened by the outside world. You know, that kind of a – I mean, looking back on it now, I see maybe it wasn't – I think that was part of the sort of, you know – I think Creeley did have a proper sense, though he may have exaggerated, you know, that sense that you're just a small something being threatened by the big world which – well, you know has its glamour.

[TAPE INTERRUPTION]

MEH: Let's begin. That was off. Start again.

MFF: Okay. Jack and Barbara Rice had a car. And we decided to go during the spring vacation or whatever – That must of been '49. And there was Jack and

Barbara and Victor Kalos and Jerry Levi and Bernadine [de] Julio. And me. And we thought we'd sleep out on the beach. We didn't even have sleeping – We had blankets or something. So we arrived, you know, at dark. And it was beautiful. The waves were breaking in the sand and the palm trees were waving. And we went out on the beach. And we were just consumed by mosquitoes. So we got back in the car, and we had to keep the windows closed. And we just stifled in there all night. And then we – The next day, we explored around, and we found an abandoned lighthouse. And we discovered that by climbing up to the balcony, we'd be above the mosquito line. So we went up for the sunset. So we decided to stay. And we bought a ham to live on which immediately spoiled. And Barbara got mad at everybody and wouldn't speak to anybody. And she had very light skin, and she got this horrible sunburn. So Jack had to build her some kind of hut up on the beach where she'd sulk all day. And we – Let's see – Somebody brought – Oh, what was the book? Joyce's *Ulysses* or some damn thing was the one book we had. And the rest of us would sort of sit on the beach all day and we got these hideous – I have a picture of myself someplace, so sunburned that my skin was just crusted. It was near – What's that town with the Gullah Negroes? Beaufort. Near Beaufort, South Carolina. And Victor had to take the bus. He had to go visit his parents or something. And so somebody drove him into the bus. And Bernadine and I decided to stay in and look at the town. Also, we wired my parents for some money, which they sent us. And we had a good meal. And I think we stayed in the town one night. And we had a great time.

We walked – It's sort of a classic, you know, Southern coastal town with the big houses and the – And we walked through the Negro section, which – You know, I mean, was kind of weird at that point, because they couldn't figure out what these two weird sunburned white [UNINTEL WORD: ODD?] girls were doing. And that was – I forget. I don't think we stuck it out a week. I don't know. It was really gruesome.

[TAPE INTERRUPTION]

MFF: And she and Arlene Franklin grew up on a – I think a Kansas farm. And when Phyllis graduated, her parents came to pick her up at the end of the summer or the spring, whatever it was. Her father so disliked the school that he wouldn't even look around and wouldn't allow her mother who wanted to see where her daughters had been spending this time. And I don't know how they ever – When they'd go work at the farm, they put sunbonnets on. And how they ever found their way to Black Mountain I don't really know. Now, I don't – I've lost all touch with him. I don't know what happened to 'em. I don't know if Phyllis kept up painting –

MEH: I think she has.

MFF: Oh, yeah.

MEH: I haven't talked to her. I've heard she has.

[TAPE INTERRUPTION]

MFF: That's Hazel. I guess this is after Dr. Dehn had died, and Toni Dehn was still living at the school. Or either she came out to pay a call. And Olson had returned with Betty and their son. But I think not too many people knew about

that, really. So, evidently, Toni knocked on Olson's door and went in to greet him after his return. And something said – And here's Betty, which I guess was news to Toni. And then sort of – And Charles Peter. And I guess – I suppose she carried it off some way, but –

MEH: A surprise. A changeover. Okay. [UNINTEL WORD] said something horrible.

MFF: No. When Charles went away for a while, probably about the time this picture was taken. No. I guess he was in Washington. Oh, I remember we came out of the Dining Hall after lunch one day and there was a big electrical storm. And there was a bolt of lightning. And I made some stupid remark to Connie, something about, "That's God's promise!" or something about a rain. I don't know. And Connie sort of froze said, "Don't say that, because Olson is God to me, you know, and that means he's going to come back." I just sort of – I mean, that was one of the most horrible –

MEH: And that was after he –

MFF: And I didn't really – You know, I later became really friends with Connie. At that point I was sort of midway. But, you know, that's – That's a sort of desperate – Connie met Olson when she was, you know, very young. And then she said later that she – She was so formed by him that she had a hard time discovering, you know, what was herself and what just had been formed by Charles. And I – You know, I think she was in the process of, you know, coming more and more into her own when she died. You know she died on the same day Olson died, which I think is incredible.

MEH: Do you think it's coincidental?

MFF: Well, I don't know. There was something mysterious about her death, Mary. I mean, a lot of people have remarked on it. I mean, it's not too clear, really, what she died from.

MEH: Yeah. I've heard some speculation from suicide or just psychological –

MFF: I think it was some – I think there must've been a psychological – I think she was – She was very tired, and she'd had had maybe flu or something. But – And I have a doctor friend who had met Connie at our place. And I happen to see her shortly after Connie's death. And, yes, she is – I told her that Connie died, and she said, "Suicide," which I didn't think of at all. And I said, "No." I said, "Why did you say that?" And she says, "Well, Connie seemed like a very depressed type to me." I don't think that's true. I think she was just very, you know, inward. But then Shelly, my doctor friend, also said – She said, "You know, people – It's very hard – People don't die that easily."

MEH: Umt-hm. And that on schedule, you know.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: I guess I had felt that there has been so much mystery about the reason she went in. I wondered if perhaps she had been – There had been some attempted suicide and that was why –

MFF: Know. I don't think so. Evident – I think Connie did have a delicate – She had a delicately balanced constitution. And she'd been – I think George's mother had been ill in Washington, and she had been caring for her before Christmas, and then Kate came home for Christmas. And she had some kind of virus or flu or whatever it was. And, I think she had some kind of abdominal pain that

they just wanted to test, and she went in the hospital for tests. And George said, "All her systems failed." Well –

MEH: It may have been something she just willed. I don't –

MFF: I really think –Yeah. But, you know, this did have some – I guess Kate's not very –

[TAPE INTERRUPTION]

MFF: That's Kate. Oh, that was a lot of fun. Let's see. I guess he wasn't there. No. He wasn't there then.

MEH: This was the ball game.

MFF: And then we go swim afternoons in the Swannanoa River.

MEH: Ah-so.

MFF: Tom Field and Michael and Joe and I'd go at this little pool. And Tommy Jackson learned how to pick the locks or – He couldn't – He was a food freak. He only eats ice cream and – Or he used to, and hamburgers or something.

MEH: It doesn't sound very healthy.

MFF: I guess he'd hook food out of the refrigerator. So they started locking it. And then he learned how to pick the locks. And, finally, I don't want to get into it. So, he did buy the good hamburger and sell it on Sunday because the school wouldn't have – No, I don't think the school was making meals. Anyway – I don't know. There was – Those games were a lot of fun. Here's another. That's a sweet picture of Kate. This is after Black Mountain.

MEH: These are when she was grown.

MFF: Oh, here's Jerry probably painting. There's nothing much here.

MEH: Oh, I'll take that. Jerry seems to be sort of – Loose ends. I don't know if asked the word, but I think he's really a person who misses his children.

MFF: Oh, Jesus. You know, that's one of the ironies in life. He's one of the nicest fathers I know. And I don't know why Anne –

MEH: What happened?

MFF: Well, he's with a new woman, you know, now.

MEH: Yeah. He said –

MFF: I think he can't – He doesn't still quite trust himself to let his feelings –

MEH: Yeah. That must've been a pretty big blow.

MFF: Yeah. I think he's –

MEH: Let me see.

MFF: Let's see. That's Joe in front of –

MEH: I have hardly any pictures of Joe.

MFF: – Black dwarf.

MEH: Like that?

MFF: I don't really have many of him. Oh, here! Yeah. Here's this tearing down –
Oh, here's Connie. Oh, here's Cornelia.(LAUGHS) [UNINTEL WORD]

MEH: She still looks very – Just like that, except she has a wig.

MFF: Oh, she did?

MEH: Un-hm.

MFF: You have the *Viewbook*, don't you?

MEH: Yeah. I have a copy of the –

MFF: Yeah. That's not much of a whole.

MEH: That's not very good of Connie.

MFF: No.

MEH: I've got better ones of Connie.

MFF: I don't know when that was taken. That's it.

MEH: That's it? Well, okay. I think I'm not going to take these of Kate.

MFF: No.

MEH: Because that's really later.

MFF: Those are later.

MEH: They're cute. You know, it's cute to see what she looked like.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: Also this building because it doesn't really –

MFF: Have you ever wrecked a building? It's so much fun.

MEH: No, I can't imagine. It must be really –

MFF: Once you get over the idea of – I wish I could think of the name of that – Well.

MEH: I'm gonna take this one of the interior of Minimum House because I don't have any interiors. And also I think this one of the potshop, because I don't have that view.

MFF: Is that still –?

MEH: But I won't take that one, because it's too blurred.

MFF: Does this –?

MEH: Also Cornelia.

MFF: Is the pot shop stills existing?

MEH: No.

MFF: It's not!

MEH: No. They apparently destructed it.

MFF: Oh. That's too bad.

MEH: Right. Apparently – Well, they tried – What they tried to do was to get someone to buy that piece of property with the potshop from the area, and it just never worked out.

MFF: It seems at this point it might have.

MEH: Well, yeah, this is –

MFF: With all the crafts.

MEH: – '56 or whatever, 57. Even then there weren't – Well, there were – The potters in the area had their own places, you know.

MFF: Yeah.

MEH: And their own groundhog kilns, you know, or whatever.

MFF: I haven't seen Dave. I ran into Karen in the Metropolitan Music him about a year ago. She looked great. She was very [UNINTEL WORD]

MEH: When I talked to her she looked – Yeah. I think she's definitely been very successful in her potting

MFF: Yeah. I think she lives with someone she really – Her whole – And I think she – M.C. said she always somehow didn't want to teach. I don't know why. And now she – And so she had to just kill herself making enough pots to sell.

[END OF INTERVIEW. END OF TRANSCRIPT]