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Interviewer: MARY EMMA HARRIS
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INCORPORATES 2ND ROUND OF REVISIONS IN RELEASED TRANSCRIPT.

[BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1]

MEH: [GIVES IDENTIFICATION] Will, how long have you been at Goddard?

WH: Since 1948.

MEH: How did you come to be here?

WH: Well, after my experience as a student at Antioch and Black Mountain and with progressive education from kindergarten on up, I was looking for a job at a progressive institution. I wrote around to all those I knew of. I had a very nice letter from Goddard's President saying that he wished I had written earlier but they had just hired somebody. Then I got a telephone call from him saying that the somebody they'd hired couldn't come, and was I still interested? So, I said I indeed was. Goddard's President, Royce Pitkin, said he was coming to New York where I lived. We met and talked for an hour or so, and "Well, I guess we'd like to have you come!" he said.

MEH: Do you think that your having been at Black Mountain influenced his decision?

WH: I don't know whether it influenced his decision. It certainly influenced <u>me</u> in applying here.

MEH: How had you heard about Black Mountain?

WH: I've been trying to remember when I first heard about it. My junior high school and high school were in Northampton, Massachusetts, and the person who taught drama at Smith had been a Black Mountain student. Whether he was the first person I heard about it from or not, I don't know. I think probably he was.

MEH: So, you applied to the college?

WH: Not there. The college I applied to was Antioch. I was a student there for three years.

MEH: That was directly from high school?

WH: Not quite. I actually took a post-graduate high school year, because I didn't know what I wanted to do at that time. This was the Depression era, and it looked like a way of saving up some money. I graduated from high school in the class of 1936, but I actually went there for another year and took some courses I hadn't had before, and actually did a little tutoring of some younger students. Northampton High School at that time was, as I've said in my memoir somewhere, the remnants of a fine New England academy, with some very good teachers.

So the post-graduate year was in no way time wasted. A couple of my mother's friends had been at Antioch and were very enthusiastic about it. Antioch at that time sent everybody in the senior class of the Northampton High School a catalogue. That and the enthusiasm of my mother's friends suggested that it would be a good place for me to apply to, so I did and was admitted, went there, and had a very good time for three years.

But somewhere along in the end of the third year, a friend and I thought maybe we'd gotten what Antioch had to offer and weren't there

alternatives? One of the alternatives that was talked about at Antioch from time to time was Black Mountain. So, we decided to go and look at Black Mountain and hitchhiked down.

I had seen Black Mountain briefly on a study tour my first year at Antioch, going to see the TVA, because Antioch's president, Arthur E. Morgan, had moved from Antioch to run the TVA, Tennessee Valley Administration. On that trip, we stopped overnight at Black Mountain College, and so I saw this place that I had heard of only through the son of the Smith College drama director.

So, I knew a little about it, but I was very enthusiastic about Antioch, and I just wasn't interested very much in Black Mountain.

But then in my third Antioch year, a fellow student, and I hitchhiked down just to look at it, because we were looking for alternatives.

At that point, I knew somebody who was there, the sister of the student who was editing the Antioch newspaper. I had met her and liked her. Her brother had said that she was going to Black Mountain College the next year, so I would have had some contact down there, somebody I had met and known and liked.

So, the visit was one that had some connection to Black Mountain, certainly a great deal more than I had felt on that first year Antioch truck trip, when we had just stopped overnight there.

I talked with faculty, particularly Jalowetz, the music person, and got the feeling that I really wanted to go there. I talked with my mother who had control of the funds. It was okay with her. She knew the faculty member at Smith whose son had been at Black Mountain and felt that was sort of a

guarantee: if a member of the Smith faculty's son can go there, then my son can go there! When I said that I wanted to transfer from Antioch to Black Mountain, she felt that was fine because she knew somebody who was there. So, in the fall of 1940 I went to Black Mountain with the notion of being there just one year and then going back and finishing up at Antioch. I actually tried to do that after my first year at Black Mountain. I went back to Antioch, went to a class or two, and then said, "The hell with it! I don't want to be here anymore. I want to go back to Black Mountain." I called up Fred Stone, who was my best friend there (and my best friend for all of his life), and he said, "We knew you'd be back!" I went to the Antioch Bursar's Office and said, "I made a mistake. I want my money back," and they gave it to me! I took the Southern Railroad train back to Asheville where Fred met me. I stayed at Black Mountain another two and a half years.

MEH: Oh, I didn't realize you were there that long.

WH: Yeah, I was there 1940 to I guess it must have been March or April of 1943.

MEH: Had you had any area of specialization at Antioch? An area that particularly interested you?

WH: Theater interested me very much, and I'd been in a lot of shows there. There was a man who taught French and radical politics, a very interesting guy. He was I think the most radical faculty member at Antioch. His field was French, French literature, French politics, French everything, but he also had a sideline: he was teaching radical politics on the one hand and the history of the cinema on the other hand. I was fascinated with cinema at that point. He was the one faculty member at Antioch I ever called by his first name. He was one of the

people who helped me think really seriously about film as a subject for study. It continues to interest me. So does theater. But it was at Black Mountain that theater really became important for me.

MEH: How was that?

WH: Theater had been a longtime interest, I think from first or second grade at the Horace Mann School in New York and with the Northampton Players. I got quite involved with theater at Antioch. I learned a lot of technical things about theater there, but when I got to Black Mountain I discovered a wholly different view of how theater could be taught. We had no theatrical equipment, but I discovered at Black Mountain what later got to be called "Method" acting.

MEH: Who was teaching theater at Black Mountain?

WH: Wunsch. He didn't call it Method, but it had all of the earmarks of it, in the sense of trying to find out who this character you're acting is and what he was doing before he came on stage and what kind of life has he had, and what he's bringing with him in the invisible baggage people always carry with them. That was very eye-opening to me, because at Antioch the emphasis had been on a kind of baby Broadway. Lots of sets, lots of careful costuming, great attention to make-up and so on. Also a way of teaching students to act that had to do with copying what the instructor was doing. At Black Mountain we never were given anything to copy. That was not the way Wunsch worked it. Wunsch didn't block his plays beforehand. He wanted you to become the character and then see how you moved when you were that character, and out of that came the sense of the movement on the stage, which was just tremendously eye-opening for me. Black Mountain was the only place I played leads. I did Molière's The

Physician In Spite of Himself, which was fun. I did the male lead in Shadow and Substance, an Irish play about a servant girl who believes she's seen Saint Bridget and ultimately commits suicide. The male lead in that is a Canon of the Catholic church, who is trying to dispel these visions that she has and tell her that they're really false pictures. This one was an important role to have done, a very serious one. It's also a role I learned in three weeks because the person who had been going to do it was coming to rehearsals drunk. Wunsch threw him out and asked me if I would take over.

There was a platform then for a stage and borrowed spotlights. No scenery to amount to anything. In short, this was totally the opposite of what theater at Antioch had been. This was in no way baby Broadway. This was bringing things to life.

MEH: So you really felt that Wunsch was a good director? That's a question.

WH: Yes! I know John Stix didn't. Stix thought he was terrible. I acted in plays with Stix, where Stix played the lead and played it well. Why he should say that Wunsch was a bad director, I don't know. John Stix was succeeding very well under Wunsch's direction.

MEH: Did he teach drama as a class or did he have like a drama class and then people who worked on productions – how did that work?

WH: I've been trying to remember whether this was a class or not. I think it is listed as a drama class or something like that. But certainly it was sometimes hard to tell the difference at Black Mountain anyway. We would have musical performances by students and there was no indication whether they were actually studying with Jalowetz or one of the other music people there, or

whether they were working outside of a curricular framework, just learning how to do it better by getting the help of Jalowetz or Lowinsky or whoever it happened to be. Black Mountain was a place where it didn't seem to matter a great deal whether this was "a course," in quotes, or whether it was an activity that you were carrying out. That was certainly true of drama.

MEH: Did you go with any of the productions to Chapel Hill for the Carolina Dramatic Festival?

WH: Yes. One.

MEH: Do you remember what play you did?

WH: Where the Cross is Made, which is a one-act play by Eugene O'Neill. We came back with prizes. It was interesting to me because we were going in John Stix's Buick's back seat trunk a set of wooden steps, a black cape, and a lantern of some kind. Besides the carrying cape, our costumes were more or less the clothes that we usually wore, which were bluejean kind of things. When we got to Chapel Hill, other colleges were unloading trunkful's of scenery and racks full of costumes and so on. We came back with – as far as I can remember – the prize for the best overall production, especially direction and acting and other prizes.

MEH: Was Eric Bentley there when you were there?

WH: Yes.

MEH: Did you take, do any drama work with him?

WH: No. He hated Wunsch. Or at least Wunsch's way of working. He was very snobbish about it. He talked a great deal about drama, particularly Sartre and Brecht.

But Bentley was a very, very interesting person though not sometimes the easiest person to get along with.

MEH: How would you describe Wunsch, just as a personality?

WH: Finicky, among other things. Obsessive – obsessive-compulsive probably. At meals he would get out his little notebook and make a diagram of who was sitting at what tables, in his tiny, tiny handwriting. He always had two or three pencils in his vest pocket, sharpened to needle points. I got along quite well with him. I learned a great deal about drama from him. I also came to appreciate the fact that he was somebody who liked to put things in forms of epigrams, such as "Motion comes from e-motion." "You move only when you are moved." It's a good principle in theater, but he needed to get it into these nice little packages. I appreciated very much his way of rehearsing, which was to do very small scenes like French scenes – what are called French scenes. If you know French drama at all, it's broken up into scenes that change every time one character leaves or a new character comes on stage. He would break a play up into these little bits which might be four minutes, or ten minutes, perhaps, at the outer edge, and then schedule us to come in and to work on them in his study or, if the weather was good, outdoors. He'd have us go over and over the same maybe ten minute scene and then come back the next day and do it again, and then move on to another of these small scenes. That contrasted very, very much with what I'd found at Antioch, where one rehearsed a full act or at least a scene that ends with a curtain going down. Wunsch was breaking the act or scene up into little bits of interaction between people. One of the other things that was very important in his direction was his sense that

any speech in a play contains probably many ideas, and you can't just learn it as one speech and speak it as one speech. It involves pauses and it involves internal revelations that are going on so that the whole subject matter changes, the way the voice changes, the pace changes. That was very very interesting for me, because again it's so very far away from the Baby Broadway stuff, where it's "faster and funnier."

MEH: Were you involved at all with the music activities?

WH: Well, just as somebody who went to all the concerts. I'm not in any way a musician myself. I had sung in glee clubs in high school and that kind of thing. I love music. It's something I really live on, which meant that the concerts were very important for me. But I'm not a performer in any way. I did take a course in history of music with John Evarts, I think.

MEH: John Evarts was teaching then, and Jalo. Had Lowinsky come when you were there?

WH: Yes.

MEH: And Cohen had just come, had he not?

WH: And he came, yes. Yes. Very interesting man.

MEH: In what respect?

WH; Oh, just that whole ballet Ballet Russe business, and how they had arranged an American tour and then used it as a way of escaping from Hitler. That always interested me, and after I had left Black Mountain and was living in New York, I used to run into the Cohens in the subway. Again and again I would run into Fritz or Elsa or both of them, in the Times Square Station. I'd be walking to the shuttle train or walking back from it and there they were! Then Betty and I went

to a concert at Town Hall, and lo and behold there they were sitting next to us! Nice people.

At BMC I took a course with Elsa. "Movement for Actors," in which I learned some very nice things. The older you are the further down is the center of your movement. A very young person is moving from the top of his head, and a college-age person is moving from the shoulders, and a middle-aged person is really moving from the middle of his body. Old people move almost from their knees. From an acting point of view, that can be tremendously important.

[END OF SIDE 1, AUDIOTAPE 1. BEGINNING OF SIDE 2]

WH: As I grow older myself, keeping some use in my body, I like to run up the stairs out here two at a time (LAUGHS). Just about the only exercise I get beyond pushing the lawnmower or the snow blower.

MEH: So what do you remember about Jalowetz?

WH: Talking with him is part of what made me decide I wanted to transfer from Antioch. He was a warm person. He was a very sincere person. I don't recall many jokes from him. I do know that a great deal of what I learned about the structure of music I learned from the lecture-recitals that he and some of his students did. I can recall one that has to do with the Alban Berg violin concerto. There was a young woman violinist there for just a year, I think, but she was playing it and he was playing the orchestra parts in a piano reduction. They played this very difficult piece all the way through. Then Jalowetz spoke about it for probably twenty minutes, maybe half an hour, going over to the piano and playing themes and showing how this little theme is another little theme upside down, something of that kind. Then they played the whole thing again, which is

just a wonderful way to get hold of a rather difficult piece of music. First to hear it, then to have it explained, taken apart for you, and then hear it all again. He was very good at that kind of thing, but he was also always ready to play with other people. One of the first experiences of Black Mountain that I had was when on the hitchhiking trip I talked about, we came in late in the evening into the Lee Hall living room, and Jalowetz and Maude Dabbs were playing the Debussy "Étude en blanc et noir." Just a remarkable kind of introduction to the way in which the college operated. People were sitting there on the floor, intensely listening and somebody with a score, you know, watching – reading it along as it was played. I had the sense that there was ritual involved, and that music was being taken extremely seriously. It was not something you went to for recreation.

MEH: Did you take literature courses?

WH: Yes. With Ken Kurtz, not much good. With Fred Mangold, very helpful.

MEH: Why do you say that about Ken Kurtz?

WH: I thought he was pushing himself awfully hard. He was the one who had been to England on a Rhodes Scholarship, and he had had “digs” in London somewhere. He couldn't call it an apartment or a room. It was "digs," you know, "my digs in London." So there was a sort of a self-inflation going on with Kurtz. I took a course in literature and writing with Fred Mangold. The literature course had to do with literature as it reflects social and political things. I'm glad I took it because I borrowed that format for my own teaching here.

MEH: What was Mangold like?

WH: Oh, he was a wonderful person. Very quiet. Very – in a nonthreatening way – exacting, I thought. He helped me with the structure of sentences, the structure of paragraphs. He pointed out to me that I made overuse of the semicolon, which at that point was certainly true, and taught me how the semicolon might be better used. I liked him and I liked his wife very much, and everybody loved her.

MEH: Did you take any science courses?

WH: I knew and liked the science faculty. I did study “Science and Society.”

MEH: What about psychology?

WH: With Dr. Straus (M.D. and Ph. D). If you can call it psychology. He called it "Psychology of the Human World." It was certainly not what you would call psychology in a usual college curriculum. He was inventing phenomenological existentialism, as it came to be called.

MEH: How was he as a teacher? What was he like?

WH: I enjoyed him. Duberman hated him when he went to talk to him. He said he was probably a good teacher, but a terrible person. I had two sorts of contact with him. One was that I, like many many other people there, took “Psychology of the Human World” I think for two years, or two semesters anyway. It was something that people kept on taking because it was a continuing exploration of how one perceives the world, how one perceives oneself in the world, how one deals with matters like death and growth – which I found absolutely fascinating. I have a notebook that thick. My wife, Betty, also took it so I have notes from her as well as notes of my own. I thought it was very important stuff that he was dealing with. The other contact I had with him was that I came down with some

unexplained disease. He was the doctor in the house – not licensed in the U.S. and so he cooperated with somebody in the village of Black Mountain. I saw him in a different way than I'd ever seen him before. It turned out to be some kind of flu or other, nothing serious.

MEH: Were you really aware of the plight of the refugees at that point?

WH: Aware enough to know that they were there because they were refugees.I guess the most direct way in which we were told about it had to do with something to do with Jalowetz's family. I can't remember whether one of his family members had died in Germany or been killed in Germany or what, but of the faculty there, he and Johanna seemed to be those most concerned with the plight of the people in Germany. The Alberses never, as far as I can recall, spoke of it. Straus never spoke of it. Lowinsky never talked about it as far as I can remember.

MEH: Did you ever take any art courses?

WH: I didn't. Betty did, and I have a picture somewhere of her looking down at a large drawing on the floor. That's the way Albers did it.

MEH: Do you have any particular recollections of, any memories of Albers, or impressions?

WH: Oh, I thought he was tremendously important.

MEH: In what respect?

WH: In putting questions of design and questions of how you see things at the center of art instruction. So, many people seem to begin teaching art by asking you to draw a house or copy a plant or something of that kind. But Albers said very clearly, that the first thing you have to do is learn to see. That has become

something very important to me. I ran into it recently in an exhibition of the Reggio Emilia teaching system. It's being used in a part of Italy at this point with very young children, the whole first year or two of working with these young kids is developing what they call "visual intelligence," which means not only what do you see but what do you think about what you see, and you see how different things work together, and you go and see what happens when you can look into a puddle and see a reflection, and so on. So, again, I've been re-alerted to that whole thing that Albers thought was so important: How you see and how you see the relation of things to each other. How you see this color overlapping that color. I was thinking recently about the Albers in October, when Albers and his students would go out and pick up colored leaves and make large panels of leaves placed this way and that way. Albers would make one himself too, maybe two of them. They'd all be posted up around the Dining Room and you could say – "Oh that must be Albers' up there," because of the absolute precision with which the forms related to each other and the colors reacted with each other. It was very very exciting stuff. He taught me a lot about photography, and a number of the pictures in that Duberman book are pictures that I took with his help.

MEH: How did you become involved in photography at the college? Had you done that before? Was it a previous interest?

WH: It was an interest for a long time, but I'd never really developed it – a nice term to use in that connection. (LAUGHS) I'd done practically none of it while I was at Antioch, but at Black Mountain, and partly because of that first picture bulletin, partly because of this and the excitement of the pictures in there, I

became something of a photographer. That bulletin was one of the things that made me really really want to go there. The photographs are so beautiful.

MEH; Right. This is a beautifully composed flyer – the whole thing.

WH: Yes it is. Most of the photography was by John Stix.

MEH: You saw this before you came to the college.

WH: Yes, it was sent to me.

MEH: I think this is a magnificent publication. It's really beautiful.

WH: Much better than the later one that we did. But the one for the summer programs was pretty wonderful, too. Just the cover pages, and that landscape.

MEH: But you were not the photographer for those cover pages.

WH: No.

MEH: I think it's credited somewhere.

WH: Well I did take some photographs for a later bulletin.

MEH: Did you have cameras?

WH: I didn't. But other people did.

MEH: Was it you who used Fritz Hansgirg's camera?

WH: Yes.

MEH: Tell me about that.

WH: Well, he brought so much to the college with him. Because he was an “enemy alien,” he was not allowed to use a camera, and so he lent his cameras to the college. I was I guess the main person who used both the Speed Graphic and the 4x5 camera, and one of the Leicas. I think those were the main things that he had. But he had a whole set of Leica things, all the lenses and so on, and that was kind of exciting because I had never had a good camera.

MEH: Was it true that he as an enemy alien could not use the equipment? Do you remember?

WH: That is what we were told, yes, and that is why he turned it over to the college. I was the person who was at that time doing a good deal of PR work for them, so I was somebody who took a number of pictures.

MEH: Where was the darkroom located?

WH: Well, I can't recall. At Lee Hall, it must have been down in the basement. At Lake Eden it seems to me it was over here somewhere. There was North Lodge and South Lodge and it was kind of in a line there. It burned up later, I've been told.

MEH: Was it well-equipped?

WH: Not excitingly. I mean there was a usable enlarger, and there were the usual trays and so on. You bought your own film, you bought your own developer.

MEH: Do you remember whether Fritz Hansgirg had a moving picture camera?

WH: I don't remember.

MEH: Do you remember anyone doing moving pictures at that time?

WH: Well, yes, the first year I was there at Lee Hall we were supposed to be making a film that would be used for fundraising purposes. The Dreier family, some rich family anyway, had lent us a Filmo camera, which was one of the basic 16 mill. amateur cameras at that time. I used that a little bit on some of the film and edited what I had done during Christmas vacation in the Smith College darkroom. It wasn't very good. I wasn't that good a film photographer. But I did a little of that. Other people did much more.

MEH: Do you have any idea what happened to the film?

WH: No. I just know that the aim of it was fundraising. Who had it ultimately – it may have been the Dreier family.

MEH: You said Albers was helpful to you with your photography. How was he helpful to you?

WH: I had inherited an old 9 x12 centimeter camera with a reasonable lens on it, and ground glass at the back. We were taking some pictures for one or another of these bulletins. Albers went along with me, and I learned from him how very useful the ground glass back is because you're seeing everything upside down. Seeing it upside down, you don't look for the "actuality" in it. You look for the design. You look for the way shapes relate to each other. That was very interesting for me. I'd never really thought of it in that way before.

MEH: Who besides you was making photographs then?

WH: John Stix. He was an excellent photographer, and as I say, as far as I can tell much of what's in BMC bulletins is his work. Now this bulletin has mainly Stix pictures in it. Do you have this bulletin?

MEH: I've seen it. It's beautiful.

WH: It's just remarkable. I can't believe that anybody who received this wouldn't want to come to the college immediately.

MEH: One thing I've wondered about this is to what extent he was involved with the typography and to what extent Albers was – you know, how it was designed, who did the design on it.

WH: Albers. I'm almost certain Albers did. He was certainly very much involved with the typography.

MEH: Did you work with him on any publications? You were working on publicity.

WH: This second picture bulletin, yes I did. Is this the first one here? This is the second one. Yeah, I did work with him a bit on that, and that, for instance, is my photograph. These are some old ones. That's mine. Chuck Forberg I think took that one. I may have done this one. Mimi weaving. There's my first wife, Betty.

MEH: You had known Betty's name before you came to Black Mountain.

WH: Oh, I'd known her before I came. She was the sister of a person whom I knew very well at Antioch. I met her my second year there I guess, and she told me she was going to be going to Black Mountain the next year.

MEH: Okay. She had what they thought then was asthma?

WH: That's right. It turned out to be pulmonary fibrosis, from which she died in 1968. That's a picture of her wearing an Anni Albers necklace made of bead chain and bobby pins.

MEH: There are some letters I've read in which apparently people at the school were concerned about her being there with these severe asthma attacks and felt that she should be elsewhere. Then there were students who were very upset and thought this is not fair, that she should be able to be wherever she wanted to be. Do you remember that controversy at all?

WH: No I didn't know anything about it. This is the first I've heard of it.

MEH: What was she like?

WH: A truly lovely person, an extremely intelligent person. I have recently pulled out the graduating examinations that she had to do and read her responses to it and, my god, she had learned a lot and was thinking so actively. It had something to do with history, English history, in the middle to late nineteenth century. Really, she had something that fortunately she passed on to my son

because I don't have any of it, which is the ability to do very very thorough research and record it and make sense out of it – make wholes out of it. Now my son is doing that in the history of science area. He has a big book coming out this fall.

MEH: What is your son's name?

WH: Christopher.

MEH: Who is publishing it?

WH: Cambridge University Press. It's a book on the origins of the public health movement in England, one of these things where you take a Ph.D. thesis and you pull out a piece here and you pull out a piece there. He's done a whole series of articles. This book comes fairly directly out of that thesis.

MEH: What do you remember about the construction of the Studies Building?

WH: That the wood it was built of was green wood, which raised some problems later on because as it dried it tended to twist in some ways. If you had nailed plywood onto it, or whatever sheathing you were putting on it, it might get warped. The carpenter who – the Black Mountain village carpenter, I can't recall his name – he said he wanted to use green wood because “it held the nails better.” Well, it may have held the nails better, but it did have that problem of warping a little as it dried. I was interested in the design of the thing because my father was an architect and an architectural critic and a writer about architecture. My brother and I had grown up with an appreciation of buildings as a fundamental art form, so the whole business of how this was being designed and how we were using this transite, which is a cement-asbestos board, on the

outside for sheathing and how that kind of sheathing, factory sheathing actually, in a pattern that –

MEH: Corrugated.

WH: It was corrugated. That meant the air would pass through these passages and keep dampness out of the walls.

MEH: That's interesting.

WH: I liked the use of factory windows. I thought that was a very good, real economy of a kind and they were pretty functional. You could open them out and get air in if you needed to.

[END OF SIDE 2, AUDIOTAPE 1; SIDE 1, AUDIOTAPE 2 BEGINS]

MEH: We were talking about the Studies Building.

WH: That's right. About the construction of it, and I was saying I took some small part in the study that Betty Brett and I shared. We were putting some kind of waterproofing on the plywood that was used for sheathing inside the building. But I didn't do very much beyond that. I was not one of the people who was involved in the actual hammering and nailing. I was giving my time to the college as a public relations writer, and as college printer.

MEH: So at Lee Hall you had the job press setup.

WH: That's right.

MEH: What sort of things were you printing?

WH: Small brochures, play programs, concert programs, etc., and the newsletter that came out from time to time. We had the text linotyped in Asheville and then brought the “lines of type” to the college’s printshop.

MEH: Oh. So, you actually printed these on your press.

WH: Yes.

MEH: This is Bulletin 7, "Education in a Time of Crisis," written by Erwin Straus.

WH: That's right. It's a very interesting one and probably as good a statement of Straus's point of view as you could find. I also printed a tremendous number of concert programs and so on.

MEH: Just one minute, let me – Okay, Will, you were saying you had worked in the printshop. This you said was an interesting piece.

WH: Yes. Josef Albers was away teaching at Harvard, and his wife Anni had been doing some jewelry work. She was going to have an exhibit. So, she came down to the printshop and asked if we could work together on an announcement of it. What I came up with was using type, little bits of type, to diagram – as it were – a necklace, since necklaces were the main thing that she was doing. I got out various kinds of type and she and I went over them and I arranged and rearranged them. After a while there was something that we both agreed was good, so we then poured plaster around the type to keep it from moving, and let it harden, and then locked that in the chase of the job press, and did two impressions – one in each of the two colors. I set the type basically, with what was the very standard type at Black Mountain, Ultra Bodoni. There was the usual Bauhaus business of not using any extra punctuation, or any punctuation if you could get away with it.

MEH: Do you remember the photograph of Betty Brett?

WH: Of course.

MEH: She has a necklace of beadchains and bobby pins. Do you remember any of Anni Albers's other "hardware jewelry"?

WH: I can remember one which had a thin metal disc with lots of holes in it, which I think was to be used over the drain of a sink to keep anything from going down that shouldn't go down. That was used as a pendant on a chain of some kind. That's one of hers I specifically remember. That and the the bobby-pins-and-bead chain necklace, of which I've made a number since then. It's very easy.

MEH: Looking at some of these programs – This one – "Concert, 8 o'clock, November 29th, Jalowetz, Evarts, Trudy Straus, Maude Dabbs" – tell me, did you design and print this?

WH: Earlier, I think the year before the visitors day concert, somebody else had used the music staff as a basis for the program. I just picked that up and made the music staff a motif for many of the concerts played at Black Mountain because it seemed appropriate. It's just a matter of using printer's "rules" and putting a lot of printer's "furniture" in between. Then using the usual Black Mountain typography, which was Bodoni. Bodoni, Bodoni Ultra, Ultra Bodoni.

MEH: Were you essentially allowed to do your own design and print it? Did you have to run it by Albers or anyone?

WH: No, no. I was allowed to do it. Fred worked with me – Fred Stone – on some of these things, because he was also very much interested in design. We had a lot of fun with that press. We did some Christmas cards in which "Merry Christmas" was just embossed very heavily into thick paper, without any color at all, which was kind of fun.

MEH: Did Albers give you any guidance or any suggestions in terms of typography? Obviously forms of Bodoni were much in favor.

WH: No, he didn't, he was away the year that I was doing the printing. I did work with Anni on the announcement of her exhibition, but otherwise it was very much up to me.

MEH: They were just Jalo or whoever would give you the information and you would go ahead.

WH: Yes,

MEH: This is the Visitor's Week Yella Pessl Concert, April 26th. Did you do this?

WH: Yes

MEH: Why don't we just hold it there so I'll know which one I'm talking about. Basically it's the same design. You repeated that design through the one of the madrigal group, of the orchestra, of soloists.

WH: Yes.

MEH: It's rather extraordinary in this small school to have concerts with printed programs.

WH: Well, it was a nice thing to do. It was a kind of a fun thing to do. The year after I had left, they were mimeographed, by and large.

MEH: Well, they didn't set the press up at Lake Eden until after the War.

WH: That's right.

MEH: I want to put these others on that you did. This is Saturday, October 19th, and these are all the same here, I think. These are duplicates, but I see here you changed the color of the printing.

WH: Not too difficult to do with a job press. Wash it up a bit.

MEH: And then these were –

WH: These were just for fun.

MEH: Thanksgiving term.

WH: Some of those have actually different colors of ink as you run down. Not too hard with a job-press.

MEH: What about paper? Did you buy your paper in town?

WH: A great deal of it was offcuts, you know, where a printer has bought 17" x 22" paper and is cutting a large part of it away because he or she needs only a certain form. We got those from the printshop in Asheville, so that there were lots of odd shapes of paper.

MEH: Right. Did you print forms for the college?

WH: Yes. Some. That's why I put that one in there.

MEH: This was really a functioning press.

WH: Oh, yes.

MEH: What about this “And beyond the duration,” did you work on this?

WH: No, Chuck Forberg was the person who did it.

MEH: This was later.

WH: Did the design on that, and –

MEH: This was printed in town.

WH: Yes.

MEH: What about this “Student building drive brings” –

WH: That was done on the job press.

MEH: Who worked with the press in terms of setting up the design and the typography in town?

WH: That design was done by me.

MEH: You mean it was set type.

WH: The type was set at a place in Asheville. We took the copy in with a mock-up of how we wanted it to be and they typeset it. I think I heard that they had been chosen because they were the one place around that had the Bodoni typeface on their machine.

MEH: These catalogues were done. These were things printed before your time.

WH: Yes.

MEH: Looking at these, "Converting the impossible into the actual," were you involved with this?

WH: No. I think Charles Forberg was the person who did the design on it. It was printed, not letterpress.

MEH: Then what about either of these? "Work Camp" or "Building Project." Did you work on either of these?

WH: No. They were done shortly after I'd left.

MEH: If you had worked on them, then I'd be interested in your comments. That's why I was asking.

WH: No. I think I did not work on – I certainly did not work on that one.

MEH: Now let me just check. These are later. This is later. This was before you came.

WH: That's area, yes.

MEH: Right. Earlier and later. I'm confused. You came in the fall of '40 and you were there '40-'41.

WH: Yeah.

MEH: '41-'42,

WH: And '42-'43 up until somewhere in March, I think. But I was not there during the summers in between.

MEH: So, you were not really there for the summer sessions in the arts.

WH: That's right. I was not. I wanted to come back after I got a draft examination, and was rated 4-F. I wrote Wunsch asking if I could come back. He said that I was thought of as a disturbing element.

MEH: Why do you think he said that?

WH: I've always wondered. I think it was a time when there was what had been called "the split," a term Duberman uses, when a number of faculty left, apparently upset by college policies. Some people called “the split” a division between the Fascists and the Communists, which was an easy way of saying a division between people who wanted a more rigid kind of a structure for the college and people who wanted a more open kind of structure; people who wanted to be more concerned with the politics of the nation and people who wanted to be more concerned with the development of the individual, which, of course, was an old progressive education dichotomy.

MEH: But you weren't there when all this was taking place?

WH: No. I wasn't. I didn't actually visit again until fifteen years ago when the campus had become a boys’ camp.

MEH: How did it make you feel when Wunsch wrote you that you were considered a disturbing element?

WH: Well, I felt it wasn't fair. That is wasn't true. But on the other hand, I had other things to do.

MEH: Did you ever have any interest in graduating?

WH: Ken Kurtz, my advisor at that time, had told me that he thought I was within seven weeks of being ready to take graduating examinations. Betty had

graduated. Having read her examinations and her responses, I think I was more like seventeen weeks or years of being ready if my graduating exams were going to be anything like what she went through so beautifully. She was a real scholar. I have never been a real scholar.

MEH: Did she leave at the same time that you left or did she leave later?

WH: No, she went on for at least another year. I have a hard time putting the years together. She took either a semester or a year at the New School for Social Research in New York and then went back to Black Mountain. That was probably my last year at Black Mountain. Betty was in New York studying with William Troy in literature and poetry, and with Leo Strauss in history and politics.

MEH: But she was very attached to the Eric Bentley group or am I wrong there?

WH: I think Betty was not. I never got the sense that she felt she belonged to any group. I know that Bentley was a very important member of the faculty for her, because of the areas in which she was working.

MEH: What was Fred Stone like?

WH: At the memorial service for him, <u>everybody</u> testified to what a tremendously <u>good</u> person he had been. People whom he had fired even said that he was so <u>kind</u> to them, he was so helpful to them in thinking out where they might be able to work when they could not work with him at his place. He had a very rich sense of humor.

He was an inveterate collector of <u>junk</u> of one kind or another, so that in the yard of his house in Cambridge there were sometimes as many as four Plymouth Suburban station wagons in various stages of distress. He was a very creative

person, an excellent photographer. For a while he was photographing their work for artists in New York City. I went with him to do photographs of new sets for the Ring operas at the Metropolitan Opera House at one point. He did some museum photography and some architectural photography, too. He worked very hard, as far as I could tell, and he got paid very little. He was somebody who simply could not be cruel or angry with people who owed him money. Very often bills went unpaid because he wasn't going to take anybody to court to try to collect.

Fred was in many ways my truly best friend, warm, always receptive, enjoying what I had to say as I enjoyed what he had to say. Janie, his first wife, was just a tremendously exciting person. She was extremely creative, very humorous, an excellent poet, and a very good actress. At Black Mountain we did The Cherry Orchard, Chekov's play, in which she played the female lead remarkably well. Fred and I were also both in it (LAUGHS).

MEH: What do you remember about meals at Black Mountain?

WH: Very large, full length with tail and head on, red snapper being put onto the table. I was not somebody who appreciated fish very much. That was a vegetable day for me. For the fact that they were trying to economize, it was pretty good food, at least in the time I was there. It might have deteriorated later. Jack Lipsey was a good cook, I think. His wife, Rubye, a very beautiful black woman, became a sort of confidante for the women students. Jack was a sort of disciplinarian: "I can't cook you any eggs ‘til you go back and shave off that beard!" They were very good people, much appreciated, much liked. I would guess that the budget was very restricted, but the food was in no way

inedible. It was quite good most of the time. We had a sandwich dinner on Sundays – when sandwich materials were put out and we made our own sandwiches. That was to give the people in the kitchen a day off.

MEH: What do you think was the importance to the college of the way in which meals were eaten, you know, as a community?

WH: Well, it certainly gave me the feeling that round tables are the way to go, because you can always find room for somebody else and I loved that. You'd have a group that was large enough to be in an interesting conversation. By and large the faculty tended to sit with faculty and students with students. That was not always possible because places would be filled up and you went where you could find a seat. We used to watch the Germans eat and decided what dreadful table manners they had. They, of course, may have been thinking the same about us.

MEH: Did the refugee faculty usually sit together and eat together?

WH: There was usually "a German table," which doesn't mean they were talking German to each other. I think they certainly weren't all German, but I think in the years I was there they did tend to eat together.

MEH: Are there particular visitors that you remember coming to the college?

WH: Yella Pessl, the harpsichordist, was one.

MEH: What do you remember about her?

WH: The harpsichord was an instrument I was very much interested in at that time, and she was easy to talk to about it – how it was used and so forth. May Sarton came and read some of her poems and talked a little bit about what she saw as the province of poetry. That very much excited Betty, who kept in touch with her

afterwards for some years, sending some of her own poems to her for criticism. Alfred Kazin came and talked about contemporary American literature and its relation to earlier literature. I wrote about that for I think one of the newsletters.

[END OF SIDE 1, AUDIOTAPE 2. BEGINNING OF SIDE 2]

WH: I was told by somebody – Ted Dreier, I think – that what I had written was not accurate, about Kazin. I can't remember why he thought that. He said it shouldn't be published because it was a misstatement of what Kazin had said. I later met Kazin in New York and showed him what I had written and he said it was perfectly accurate. I don't know what that was all about – whether Kazin had said something that Dreier disagreed with and that therefore requoting it was saying something that Dreier didn't want to hear.

MEH: You mentioned Henry Miller?

WH: Yes, he just dropped in one day. He was not a formal visitor at all.

MEH: Did you know who he was?

WH: Yes. I had known about the Tropic of Capricorn and the other Tropic. I don't think I'd ever read any of it at that time. I read them all later – Capricorn and Cancer are the two I remember. He just wandered in one day at Lee Hall, came up the steps of the big porch and sat down, introduced himself and began chatting. I had known enough about him to realize who he was. It was a very pleasant half hour or so talk, before a young woman who had lived in Paris for a while turned up and introduced herself. He went off with her. I didn't see him again.

MEH: What did you do for entertainment at Black Mountain? Did you ever leave the campus?

WH: Not often. Very few people had cars, and it was wartime. Gas was rationed and so on. If somebody was going into Asheville, he or she would put up a note for six people, or space for four people, or something like that. You'd sign up to go in and do shopping.

Betty and I went out once to a place we'd heard about, a little restaurant on Beau Catcher Mountain. We drove up there in Fred Stone's car. North Carolina at that time was what they called "Beer Wet – Whiskey Dry." They asked us, "What would you like to drink?" and we said, "Well, what do you have?" "Whatever you like." I said, "I thought hard liquor was prohibited in Buncombe County," and the waiter said, "We are so high up here." It was a wonderful statement, as if somehow we'd run into territory where the laws of Buncombe County no longer operated.

MEH: What do you remember about Roy's?

WH: I didn't go there very often. It was in its own little building somewhere in Black Mountain village. I was not a drinking person particularly. Reading Betty's journal, I notice that in her first year there, there was a good deal of talk about people going down to Roy's together. I can't recall that happening very often, but then I was not one of the people who would have gone because I didn't care much for beer at that time.

MEH: Looking back, what do you think was the importance of Black Mountain?

WH: People. I mean, the fact that it had attracted an Albers. It had attracted a Straus. Wunsch, who had something of a history in progressive education and

brought some things in there really from a classical view of what Progressive education was about.

I've been able to formulate my sense of its importance to me by contrast with Antioch, where I'd been for three years. Black Mountain was a place where I was not instructed but where I was helped to learn. That made a very big difference for me, and has become a sort of a working definition of how one may separate a really progressive place from a place that is less progressive or at least does not follow an educational philosophy that I would consider to be progressive – however progressive it may be from a political-social point of view.

Antioch was a very liberal, radical place. We didn't talk nearly as much about politics at Black Mountain as we had at Antioch. We were talking more about the arts. We were talking more about what we were reading and the poems people were writing. It's interesting that there was a lot of poetry being done there and no one was teaching it. Wunsch would look at what people had written and make comments on it. Mangold would be helpful. Ann Mangold would be helpful. Mary Barnes would be helpful from her point of view. But there was no course in how to write poetry. There was a course in quote "Creative Writing" unquote, but that was almost entirely short fiction.

Intangible but vital was Black Mountain's atmosphere which had a great deal of happiness in it and a lot of joy in it. It also had two other things that were very important to me. One is a kind of perfectionism. You do something just as well as you can do it, and you keep working on it until you have it the way you want it to be. That seemed to me really, really important. The other was that behind

everything was the notion of creativity. You've got a lot of things happening around – Albers's "a making and a doing" – and they are unified in some sense by the notion that you're trying to solve problems. They're not problems that are set out for you in textbooks. They're problems that have to do with what the world is about. It was very much Straus's approach, I think. We didn't know that we were in a problem-solving course, with Psychology of the Human World, but that's what it really seems to have been – the attempt to find an order or a meaning, a reason, not in any metaphysical sense but in how the human world works.

WH: Let's look at pictures.

MEH: Okay, this one of the Quiet House is yours. Was this Eva Zhitlowsky?

WH: Yes.

MEH: At the loom. Another photograph of Eva. Who is this?

WH: Dora Harrison. She became Edward Weston's last apprentice.

MEH: She married one of his sons.

WH: Married Brett, yes. That's her again.

MEH: This picture is the top of the Studies Building?

WH: Yes.

MEH: And who is this?

WH: That's Eva talking to somebody. I don't know who.

MEH: Yeah, now I see more closely. Okay. This is working on the Studies Building.

WH: "Charles Lindsley at left" it says on the back.

MEH: Right.

WH: That's Jane Slater Marquis.

MEH: Oh, I would not have recognized her. That's interesting. Bill Reed.

WH: Bill Reed.

MEH: What do you remember about Bill Reed? What was he like?

WH: Very quiet. The night before he was to be examined for the draft he was temporarily in a bunk below me in North Lodge. He was totally nauseated, throwing up and throwing up and throwing up. He was a weaver and a builder and a Quaker. The first person I think I identified as probably homosexual.

MEH: This is Bob Wunsch.

WH: Yes.

MEH: Were you at all aware of his homosexuality?

WH: Not – I suspected it, but it was not – He didn't make it important.

MEH: Looking at this poster on the wall, really zero in on it here, this black person screaming. Painting? Were you aware of his concern about blacks in the south and his work with integration?

WH: Yes. Once when he was visiting high schools at some point and he went to his first black high school, he said that one of the most difficult things he had ever faced was to shake hands with a black school principal. But he did it and it felt like any other hand. (LAUGHS)

MEH: His hand didn't fall off or anything.

This is Eva again. This photograph has been used so many times. It's never identified as being yours.

WH: Well, I'm not sure it is. I just happen to have a copy of it.

MEH: Actually there's another photograph I wanted to ask you about here. This one. The comment on the back: "The new building seen from one of the farm

pastures. This should state that modern architecture can blend into a mountain wildness without clashing." Was that your comment?

WH: I think it's my photograph. I think it was taken with one of the Leicas – or it could have been with a Kodak Bantam Special. This is my photograph.

MEH: This is your photograph of the Quiet House. I've gotten that there. Actually this was another photograph that was here, which is yours, too, I assume.

WH: Let me look at it. Yes.

MEH: Okay. Now what do you remember about Ted Dreier?

WH: I came to realize that he was in some ways the head of the college, and that had to do with the fact that he was the money raiser. That while Wunsch was nominally the rector, the person who seemed to be really making decisions about things was Ted. I've been somewhat in touch with his son, Ted Dreier Junior, who was a psychiatrist in the Cambridge area, because I had done a picture of Ted and Cynthia Carr carrying a long log. It turns up in one of the bulletins. It's in Duberman's book. Ted Dreier Junior wanted to use it, asked if it was copyrighted. I said, no. He could use it for anything he wanted to. But he seemed a very pleasant person.

MEH: He is a very nice person. It's just interesting. He has a very nice wife. You know that Ted Dreier Senior died recently?

WH: I didn't.

MEH: He'd had Parkinson's disease for a long time. Did you know that Leslie Katz died?

WH: Yes, I did know that.

MEH: They died very close.

WH: I need to write to Jane.

MEH: I do, too, also.

WH: Say something about my –

MEH: Will, have you retired?

WH: Yes.

MEH: Do people at Goddard retire?

WH: Well, they can.

MEH: But they don't have to. That's good.

WH: There's no set retirement age. I just proposed to the trustees that persons of a certain age and a certain length of time, service of years, should be able to retire on full salary, which seems appropriate. There aren't very many of us. The notion of having to reduce one's whole scale of living because one is retiring is only in part remedied by AARP and TIAA-CREF.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]