

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH VIRGINIA BOARDMAN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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WOODTOWN, NEW JERSEY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Tara Kraenzlin: This begins an interview on March 25, 1999, with Virginia Boardman at her home in Woodtown, New Jersey, with Tara Kraenzlin and ...

Laura Vallence: Laura Vallence. We would like to begin by asking you a few questions about your parents. Where was your father from?

VB: He was from Philadelphia.

LV: Where was your mother from?

VB: From New York State. They met at the DuPont plant. Well, I guess, Mother was teaching school in Penns Grove, and Pop was working in DuPont during the war.

LV: Did they meet during the First World War?

VB: Yes, they met in the church. It was very nice, it was a Methodist [church]. ... They used to call it the Tabernacle. ... Penns Grove was sort of a war town. I mean, everybody came from all over the place to work for DuPont and it was a Wild West kind of a place.

LV: Your mother then left New York State.

VB: She left New York State to come down here and teach school. It was one of her first jobs, I guess.

LV: Okay, and she was teaching grade school.

VB: Yes, a bunch of little Italian kids that came in, and ... many, many people came. ... It was like a Wild, Wild West town. Everybody came, and there were muddy places. I mean, it wasn't a built-up town at all.

LV: When your parents married, did they move?

VB: No. They stayed there, but DuPont had built a whole bunch of small houses there for the people that had come during the war and they lived in one of the small houses.

LV: Was it a company town?

VB: Yes, it was a company town.

LV: Then, your older brother was born.

VB: He was born right there in the town. They said the walls were so thin; ... it was made of green lumber. ... They were houses that were just thrown together.

LV: What do you know of your father's work at DuPont?

VB: Well, during that time, they were loading gun cotton for the war. He had a bunch of black people working with him, and they loaded these big ships with gun cotton right out of [the] DuPont plant.

LV: It was literally a war-related industry.

VB: Very much so, everybody who'd come here to work there during the war.

LV: He continued even after the war.

VB: Yes. He was in the office. He was sort of an expediter, buyer, that kind of thing, until he retired. You see, that was 1917, ... up until 1952, [when] he retired.

LV: Were you also born in this town?

VB: I was born in Penns Grove, yes. There's a funny story about it. There was a ... fairly big house on the river, and my mother said the strangest people came to the door, and they think it was a house of ill-repute before they moved in.

LV: They actually moved out of the company town.

VB: Yes, they moved into Penns Grove, where there were bigger houses. ...

LV: Were you the original occupants of this house?

VB: No.

LV: How long did you live in Penns Grove?

VB: Let's see. My little brother, my younger brother, I should say, he's not little, was born in Carney's Point. Penns Grove was the old town that had been there forever, and Carney's Point was the DuPont town, actually, so, they moved down to Carney's Point, and he was born there. We were all born at home.

LV: What are some of your memories of the town growing up or the games you played?

VB: Well, I was the only girl on our block, but I had a friend, ... a female friend, a little girl, and I have a picture of us sitting in a wagon reading these funny papers that we had, a neighbor who was from England ... sent all these funny things from England, and we were sitting there reading it. We played dolls, but I mostly played with the boys.

LV: What kind of games did you play?

VB: We'd have a fort, you know, up in the vacant place, and they'd dig holes and put tin over the top, or I'd be riding on a bike, on the handles of the bike, you know. As I said, I was the only female around there.

LV: You grew up being a little bit of a tomboy.

VB: Yes, very much so. I had a brother older and a brother younger.

LV: You would end up being sandwiched in-between.

VB: Right, right, right.

LV: Who were some of your favorite teachers in grade school?

VB: Let's see, my favorite teachers? Well, we had an English teacher and she'd read *Evangeline*, and she'd cry, because, you know, it's a sad story. ... I remember her, but, when we got to eighth grade, we had about four teachers, you know. We changed classes. We were very adult by that time. ... By the time I was going to school, when I was five, we had moved out to a farm and my mother taught school in Carney's Point, and so, they put me in first grade a year early, because I couldn't go to kindergarten, because that was only a half-day class, and so, I was always a year ahead of myself, all the way through school. I was out of college when I was sixteen. No, wait a minute.

LV: You went to college when you were sixteen.

VB: No. Let me see, I was out of college in 1941 and, yes, I guess, I was twenty when I got out of college.

LV: Which is definitely ahead of schedule.

VB: Yes. Most people, now, are just about getting to college when they're twenty.

LV: Did you ever feel as though you were being rushed through school?

VB: No, I was always a good student. I liked to study. It's sort of crazy, but I like to study.

LV: Being in class with people who are a year or two older, did you notice any difference?

VB: No, but I think, probably, I was socially backwards. I mean, I spent a lot of time studying, and, by the time we lived on the farm, when I was in high school, ... after we lived on that first farm, we came back and lived in DuPont Village. ...

LV: What happened to the first farm?

VB: Well, my dad just sold it.

LV: What year did he sell it?

VB: Let's see, about the time my sister was born, in 1929.

LV: He sold it before the Stock Market Crash in 1929.

VB: Yes. I don't know, but, when I was five, that would have been 1925, we still had the farm. My sister was born in '29, so, it was somewhere right in there, 1928, '29, when he sold the farm and we moved into town, but, then, in 1933, we moved back on another farm, which is now the Salem County Sportsmen's Club, and so, we lived on that second farm and I spent a lot of time just out with the dogs, wandering around the fields and that kind of stuff, you know, on my time off.

LV: In a way, much of your childhood was spent growing up on farms.

VB: Yes.

LV: Did you learn anything about farming itself?

VB: Well, we all helped.

LV: What kind of a farm was it?

VB: It was just like; my dad continued at DuPont, but, in those days, the Depression was on. DuPont let everybody go, and then, hired them back at about a quarter of their salaries, you know. It was just a truck garden [farm], I guess. His family had had a farm up in Philadelphia, my dad's family. My grandfather, I guess, had had a farm, ... so that both my mother and father had been brought up in the country and it was just a vegetable garden. We had a cow and chickens and ducks and turkeys.

LV: Mostly for your own use.

VB: For our own use, but, if there was extra, why, our friends in the village would call up and say, "Have you got any chickens or eggs or something?" My Pop would deliver all that stuff on Saturdays.

LV: Your family helped other people out during the Depression.

VB: Right. This was deep in the depths of the Depression that we lived out there.

LV: What did you see in terms of either your family or the other families in town, as far as how the Depression affected their standard of living?

VB: Well, as I said, they were all DuPont people that we knew, and DuPont just cut the salaries and everybody made do, because, when I went to NJC in 1937, I can remember making stuff out of old coats, and, I mean, you just didn't have any money to [buy anything]. ... I was on scholarships and I waited on tables at NJC, but everybody was in the same situation. You didn't feel as if you were any different from anybody else.

LV: Especially in a company town, things were affecting people equally.

VB: Right, right.

LV: In a way, you were more fortunate than some, because you had this farm.

VB: Right. That's why we moved out there in '33, so [that] we could eat. ... I was just talking to a friend of mine that lived down the hall here, and we thought we were poor, but we probably ate better than anybody who has ever eaten, because we had all fresh vegetables and berries and we'd put a three-quart thing of milk on the table and finish it up in one meal and the cream was so thick, it would just roll out, you know. I mean, we really ate better than I've ever eaten and my mother, ... by that time, she had stopped teaching and she loved it, her chickens.

LV: Had she decided to stop teaching or was there no more work in the Depression?

VB: No, she stopped and she had worked while we were in Carney's Point, but she may have still substituted some during those years. I can't remember, but I don't think she did too much, because, if my dad had the car down at DuPont, why, the car wouldn't have been there to take her to work.

LV: He did manage to keep the car through the Depression.

VB: Oh, yes. Well, you had to.

LV: What make was it?

VB: They had an old Essex, I remember, and then, my cousins in Massachusetts had a lot of money, so, they would give us their old cars and we had their Chryslers, you know, during those times. Then, when my brother went off to war, he left his Plymouth; my dad had that. We had enough. I mean, you never were starving and you never were without anything, but I remember we always went to the dentist and we had good shoes, but the rest of our clothes came from our relatives. Yes, that's the way people were living in those days.

LV: Did you see any WPA projects or anything like that?

VB: No. My mother's father, my grandfather, worked in a CCC camp. We have pictures of him sharpening the saws and the axes and all those kinds of things. That was up in New York State. So, he worked at that. ... As I said, DuPont was busy during those times, even though they didn't pay much. Why, I worked there when I was in college; I worked two summers at DuPont. We made thirty-five cents an hour, but, I mean, that paid for my clothes and my books, and that kind of stuff, on the way back to college.

LV: You were happy to have it at that time.

VB: Yes, and it was good experience. I worked in the DuPont Library.

LV: What did you do?

VB: I shelved books and got stuff out and took books all around. I was in Jackson Laboratory Library.

LV: Was it a company library?

VB: Yes. It was a chemical library, Jackson Laboratory Library, and there were all these big German books and stuff. We had a lady, who was a librarian, who spoke about twenty languages, from someplace in Europe and they just said to me, "Now, when she calls, just write down what it sounds like," because you never knew what language was coming out, but a very intelligent lady and it helped me in my studies. I was a chemistry major in college. You know, if you wanted to get anywhere, you took chemistry, because you lived in a chemical town.

LV: This is what you saw yourself doing in the future.

VB: Yes. I worked for DuPont for three years after I left; I worked at the New Brunswick Works. I don't think it's even there anymore, out on Jersey Avenue, there in New Brunswick.

LV: When you were in high school, did you have any favorite subjects there, or did you know from the beginning that you would be going into chemistry?

VB: Yes. We had a very good chemistry teacher and I guess I just decided ... I liked science and I liked that kind of thing, so, if you want to get anywhere, why, you take chemistry.

LV: Did you think that you would get to go to college?

VB: Well, let's say nobody had any money, but my friends were going to college and I went to college, you know. None of the rest of my family did, I mean, neither my brothers nor my sister. My brother took some technical work down in Washington in Bell Telephone, but neither my younger brother, nor my sister attended college. As I said, I was a student. I liked to study. It was hard on the rest of the family, because, you know, "How come you're not like your sister," when they came to school.

LV: When you went to NJC, how did you finance it? You had a State Scholarship, correct?

VB: Had a State Scholarship and my dad, evidently, took some money out of an insurance policy and I didn't even know it until later.

LV: Looking back, do you think it was important to your parents that you attend college?

VB: I think it was important to them, because Mother had ... graduated from Montclair Normal School, and she was one of the first. That was 1915. She graduated from there, and that was pretty early for anybody. She came down from New York State and lived with an aunt in North Jersey, in Morristown, and went to Morristown High, graduated in 1913, and then, went on to Normal School. She rode the trolley all the way across to Montclair.

LV: That was quite a distance. When you were looking to go to college, did you know that it would be Rutgers?

VB: Well, yes. I guess that's just where you went, but ... I guess very few people went from South Jersey at that time. Even now, there's hardly anybody going up there from South Jersey.

LV: Did you consider going out of state?

VB: No, you didn't even think about it and Rutgers has always been a good school.

LV: Had you been to the NJC, to the campus, before you went there?

VB: No, no. Well, we had to go up to take tests in those days. We took the college entrance test ... up there, because we didn't do it in high school. It was a much different world. I mean, you didn't have a lot of competition. You said you wanted to go to college, you went to college.

LV: The application process was much simpler.

VB: Yes. You just filled this thing out and went up there and went to college.

LV: We have seen copies of applications and it is much shorter than what we went through.

VB: Yes. I guess I always wanted to go, and all my friends were going, so, I went.

LV: Coming from South Jersey, you lived in the dorms.

VB: Oh, yes.

LV: Which campus did you live on?

VB: Gibbons P, P House.

LV: Oh, you remember, to this day.

VB: They always tormented me about living in the P House.

LV: It became a joke.

VB: Yes, right. ... You see, I lived on Gibbons. Then, I had a roommate over on Jameson. ... I lived by myself for the first two years, I think, then, I went over to live with her.

LV: While you were at college, you were a member of the Curie Science Club.

VB: Curie Science Club, yes. We had to march around and advertise the club.

LV: Did you do that primarily because of your studies or was it more for the social aspects?

VB: It was part of our chemistry thing. They were mostly chem majors, I think, in that club.

LV: Was this a required part of your studies or not?

VB: No. If you had done pretty well, why, you got into Curie Science Club

LV: You had to be invited.

VB: Like an honorary kind of thing. You got tapped, you know. I mean, they came around during meals.

LV: It was an honorary society. Were there any programs or things that you would do?

VB: I'm just trying to think what we did there. I can't remember anything we did in that club. I remember, I was the treasurer, but what we did, I don't know. I can't even remember anything about what we did. I was a Shack guide, too. Do they still have the Shack, up in the Watchungs? Maybe not, maybe with the Phys Ed major roommate, I was introduced to the Shack.

LV: You were a Shack guide.

VB: Up in the Watchung Mountains. Yes, we loved that place.

LV: What would that entail, being a Shack guide?

VB: Well, you would go up there with groups. ...

LV: Freshman groups or different grades?

VB: Yes, any class or any group that wanted to go there. They had to have a guide that went with them, because, you know, it was out in the country.

LV: Show them around.

VB: Yes, right.

LV: That is very interesting.

VB: It was a really neat place. It was way high in the Watchungs, there above Somerville, and we'd go up there, you know, early in the spring, with the whole group, and clean up and ... fix it up for groups, and then, you'd go up, depending upon what group wanted to go. They always had to have a guide, because, well, you know, old houses, you have to have somebody to show you how to do this and that.

LV: Did you have to be trained to do that?

VB: Well, it was sort of an informal kind of a thing. I'm not even sure they had electricity, but I guess they did, but it was way up on the mountain.

LV: How often would you go up there?

VB: Well, two or three times a year, I guess, because there were about ten or fifteen of us that were Shack guides.

LV: You had to rotate.

VB: Yes, depending upon who was free or what you could do.

LV: When you came to NJC, do you remember any of the rituals that you had to go through?

VB: Oh, that stupid business.

LV: You are not a big supporter.

VB: We had to wear green hats, an apron, and all that stuff, and your name across the front. You couldn't walk on Sacred Path, of course, and people would go by and yell out your name, you know. Anybody that was going by, "Hello, Virginia," you know, that kind of stuff.

LV: If you ran into the sophomores.

VB: Oh, but they're a pain in the neck. ... One night, I had sprained my ankle, I guess, going from Gibbons Campus or something, I don't know where I sprained it, but, anyway, then, they had this thing that all the freshmen had to run around the circle and all this stupid stuff, and, here I was, with a sprained ankle. I could kill them.

LV: They made you do it.

VB: Yes. I mean, it was really so silly. Do they still do that?

LV: No. A lot of that broke down immediately after the war.

VB: I hope so.

LV: Were you happy when that business was over?

VB: Yes. ... No, I didn't put up with that kind of stuff. I was working hard.

LV: You did not delight in tormenting the freshmen when you were a sophomore.

VB: ... I can't even remember being a sophomore, but, no, I thought that was unnecessary.

LV: Did you have a roommate your first year?

VB: No, I didn't have a roommate. That was the first time in my life that I had a big room and a closet and all the stuff. These farmhouses, you know, they hardly had anything.

LV: This was a luxury for you.

VB: Very great. Could I tell you one funny thing that happened? When I was in that house, my great-aunt lived in Morristown, the one my mother had lived with, and my great-grandfather was there, and so, Mother had written them and said it was all right for me to go over there on a weekend. So, I went over on a weekend ... with somebody who lived in Morristown and, when I got back, the woman who was head of the campus, you know, the big muckety-muck, she called me in, and she just ripped me up and down, because I had never gone in to ask her permission to go to Morristown, and, now, you know, nobody cares about where you go, when. I mean, she really ranted and raved about that and I thought, well, that was the craziest thing, because my mother had written a note saying it was all right for me to go, and, here it is, my great-aunt and my great-grandfather I was with. How can you get in trouble there? I mean, they were very particular to their girls in those days.

LV: What was the curfew like?

VB: Well, I guess you had to be in at a certain time on Saturdays and Sundays and any other day of the week. Well, I can't remember about the other days. All I can remember is that episode.

LV: You were only sixteen when you went to college. How did you find the adjustment to college, being so young?

VB: Yes, right. Well, actually, my birthday is in August, so, I would have been seventeen by the time I got to school, I guess. Well, I'd always been a very independent kind of a person. I mean, I never depended on a lot of other people, so that I enjoyed it. I mean, it was freedom, as far as I was concerned.

LV: You enjoyed the independence from home.

VB: Yes. I mean, actually, you only saw your family, like, at Thanksgiving or Christmas. They would come up for Parent's Day with my best friend ... from home. Her father was head of the DuPont plant there, so, they had money and they would bring my parents up, you know, because they wouldn't drive that far during the Depression. My goodness, it was about one hundred miles, I guess.

LV: That is a long distance.

VB: Yes. No, I was [a] very independent kind of a person; I mean, studying was no problem for me, because I'd always studied.

LV: Being in chemistry, did you ever have an opportunity to take classes on the College Avenue Campus?

VB: No. Everything was right at NJC in those days. I think some people who were taking journalism and that kind of stuff were over on the other campus, but those of us who were taking things that you can take there did not see much of Rutgers, except some concerts.

LV: You never saw the other side of town.

VB: Very little of it.

LV: How was New Brunswick at this time? There were three big movie theaters.

VB: Yes. Right, it was a good town. We'd walk downtown to the "dirty German ladies," I don't know if they're still there, the kids called them DGL. ... People would, who had money, I didn't have that kind of money, eat out. ... One of my dad's cousins was head of the dining room, Mrs. Jobbins. Well, she was at Cooper. Her husband was my dad's cousin, and so, I waited on tables. ... My classmates would all torment me about being related to the head of the dining room.

LV: To the boss. What was that like? Was it a way of raising money for going to school?

VB: Waiting on tables?

LV: Yes.

VB: Yes. I think we got two hundred a year or something, two hundred a semester or something, that paid. Between that and my scholarship, why, it paid pretty well. I mean, it took care of most of my expenses.

LV: There would be formal sit-down dinners and you would be part of the wait staff.

VB: Right. We would eat first, and then, the other people'd come in; we'd wait on them. It was a very ... nice situation. ... I got to be treasurer of the student government, and I was treasurer of the Curie Science [Club]. I was treasurer of everything, but you got elected to this stuff, because people knew you. The waitresses were sort of leaders in the school, because everybody knew who they were. You're standing up there, everybody knew who you were.

LV: Dinner time would also be used to make community announcements and things like that.

VB: Yes. Each class had its own dining room, like freshman, sophomore, juniors, and I got to be, I don't know what you call it, the head waitress. You know, I did a lot of part-time basis [work]; I didn't do it on a full-time basis, but everybody said, "Well, Cousin Emma is going to give you a job." I think you got a little extra money, and you wore a white uniform. You look pretty classy.

LV: It felt special.

VB: Yes, right.

LV: You lived in a number of dorms after your move off Gibbons Campus.

VB: Well, I moved from Gibbons, there, ... to Jameson, because my roommate, the gal that I decided to roommate with, was there on Jameson Campus. The last two years, I think, I was on Jameson.

LV: Did you prefer that?

VB: Well, it's nice, it's close, and it was fun having a roommate. I mean, I had never had a sister that was that close.

LV: Right, in age. Being so involved in campus and all these activities, what was your impression of dealing with the administration?

VB: Well, you know, there wasn't any feeling of a we-they kind of thing. I mean, you worked right with them. I remember, being class treasurer. I had to be back and forth in College Hall quite a bit, taking care of business and stuff, and I can't remember any feeling between the groups at all.

LV: Do you have any specific memories of Dean Corwin?

VB: Just as a leader, I mean, not personally at all. We didn't get to know our people personally, I don't think. Dr. Sweet was the head of Chemistry and Dr. Girard, these people I worked for. ... I guess I gave up waiting on tables the last couple of years, because I worked in their laboratories. It was like a WPA thing. I don't know what they called it. I can't remember what they called it for students, but it was through the government and you got paid through them, rather than the school. [National Youth Administration]

LV: That was a good job for you to get in your field.

VB: Yes. I tended to break things. You know, you had all these complicated instruments and stuff, but he was very good natured.

LV: Each summer, when you would go home, would you work in DuPont again?

VB: Well, the two summers between [my] freshman and sophomore [years], ... and, no, maybe it was sophomore and junior and junior and senior that I worked for DuPont, but we always did a lot around the farm, too. I enjoyed working on the farm.

LV: How would you describe the relationship between the women at NJC and the men over at Rutgers? What was the dynamic like then?

VB: Well, there were a lot of the gals that spent a lot of time, you know, going back and forth. I never was real close to the guys that were there. I remember, I went to a fraternity party one night; I have no idea how I got over there. I mean, I can't remember the situation at all, except he was a wonderful dancer and I had never danced and I was just dancing my life; I mean, it was really neat. You know, he was so good at leading and all that kind of stuff, and he was the son of one of the teachers or profs in NJC. She worked in ... home ec, that's it, and, anyway, when he took me out, you know, wow, you know, how I got out of there. I thought, you know, he would have taken your clothes off, if possible. I thought, "This is too much," and then, he kept calling me. So, everybody says, "Virginia, you have a telephone call." So, I never saw him again, but he was a wonderful dancer. I had never dated. ...

LV: It was a shock to you.

VB: It was a shock. So, I never dated. I mean, everybody else does, when you go to a school where you have boys and stuff. It wasn't my thing, but I took a class in ballroom dancing. I thought, "Well, I should learn to dance," and one of the guys from the Ag School, which was ... right next door, he asked me to go somewhere and I said I was too busy. Well, I was too shy, at that point, and so, it never came into anything. Yes, I never dated in college. Some people thought I was wacky, but that's the way I was. I don't know if there's anybody like that left at Douglass or not.

LV: Oh, sure, somewhere. [laughter] When you were at school, in your first few years, what did you hear about the events that were brewing in Europe? What kind of news? How much did you talk about it?

VB: Well, I know what happened now. I wonder how we could have been so ignorant about it all. There was a group called the Students for Democratic Action, or something or other, that was very active, and we would have a lot of arguments, you know, while we're getting dressed, or waiting on tables, and that kind of stuff. These were upperclassmen. They weren't in my class and there was a lot of feeling, you know, [that] these people were almost like Communists, I guess, and I just ... wasn't prepared to deal with that kind of people at all.

LV: Were very active people seen as leftists?

VB: Yes, I guess, the Students for Democratic Action.

LV: Could it be the Students for Democratic Defense?

VB: I don't know; as something, it was almost like Communism. ... They want you to object to everything that was going on at NJC, and all that kind of stuff. I mean, they were just stirring up trouble all the time. I mean, I was very naïve about [it]. ...

LV: Pro-activism was looked down upon.

VB: Yes, I was very naïve at that point. I didn't fool around with it and what was going on in Europe didn't get in a newspaper ... when you're at school. You're studying your courses. ...

LV: You are cut off from it.

VB: Right, right, right. When I graduated, I went to live in the Alumni House there at Wood Lawn. When I worked for DuPont, I was there when my brother had been drafted, I guess, out of Washington, my older brother, and he was killed while I was living there.

LV: Was he on a training mission?

VB: They were testing one of the first B-29s that was built and there were only four that had been built at that time, I think, and he was to be married in two weeks. ... It was terrible, but they were testing it with one engine out on the same side, on one side, and another engine on the same side went out, at the same time. So, they had two engines out and two going and they were only about one hundred feet off the ground and that thing crashed and burned. So, that was in 1943. I had been living at that Alumni Cottage then. I was dating a guy from DuPont, ... he'd gotten his PhD in Germany.

LV: An American or a German?

VB: Well, his mother, I think, must have been German. His father must have been Polish, but he had been over there during the war and, when Germany went into Poland, he had a motorcycle, he went out through Italy and, I guess, got on the ship in Italy, and came home.

LV: Interesting.

VB: He had already gotten his PhD, I think, at that time, because he has a PhD from Marburg and he was a nice guy. I dated [him for] about six years. His mother wanted him to marry a nice Catholic girl, so, I finally gave up on him, but I learned a lot from him.

LV: Are you Catholic?

VB: No, Presbyterian.

LV: Taking a few steps back, do you remember where you were and how you felt when the announcement of Pearl Harbor came?

VB: Yes, I can remember that very definitely. I was in the living room. It was a Sunday afternoon, and, I guess, we were sitting in the living room, reading the Sunday paper, and it came over the radio and my brother was already in the service.

LV: Your older brother.

VB: Yes, my older brother was already in service by that time. He'd been drafted. He was over in Bermuda, in the Coast Artillery, and every time they would ask for volunteers for flying, he would want to fly. He wanted to fly so badly and, finally, they took him. Of course, he got killed.

LV: What were your thoughts after this announcement was made? Did you realize how much this meant?

VB: Well, I knew that for him it would be very important, but, for me, it was a very frightening thing, to all of a sudden be attacked.

LV: This was your first year working at DuPont when this was going on.

VB: Yes. I was out of college in '41 and this was in 1941, yes, that Pearl Harbor was attacked.

LV: Did you notice any changes on campus once the Americans entered the war?

VB: We weren't tied in. Well, I remember, we took a course in auto mechanics when I was a senior. ... I think the country was getting ready for war, even in those years before Pearl Harbor, and so, they thought we ought to know how to take care of a car, and all that kind of stuff.

LV: In preparation for the absence of the men.

VB: So, I took this course in auto mechanics. The guy who ran the garage there taught the course.

LV: This course was done through NJC.

VB: Yes, it was at NJC. I mean, it was ... at night you went, and, I don't know, six weeks or something or other. The cars were much simpler in those days. You don't do that anymore.

LV: It was a five or six lesson course.

VB: I think so, yes.

LV: Do you have any more questions about NJC?

TK: What was the Pink Tea? I kept seeing mentions of that in the *Caellien*. Did you wear pink and go to tea? Did you drink pink tea?

VB: I can't remember hearing about pink tea.

TK: It was mentioned in the *Caellien* a couple of times.

VB: We were right next door to Wood Lawn and I was over there at coffee that day.

TK: The day your brother was killed.

VB: Yes, my family called me about six o'clock.

TK: Did you go home immediately?

VB: I went home the next day. On that day, I mean, these days now, they don't list everybody that gets killed in an airplane accident, but, in those days, they were so rare that they had it on the radio that night. I didn't hear it, but there was a whole bunch of guys down at DuPont I knew real well, because I'd worked with them [for] a couple of years there and we all graduated about the same time. That night, I shook, I didn't cry, I just shook, you know, just like you had pneumonia, I mean, shake and chill all night long. I never had that kind of a reaction before and my mother called me on the phone and told me what had happened. ... You know that awful telegram that they used to deliver, and so, I went to bed that night and got up the next morning and packed my bag and stuff and went down with my suitcase, down to DuPont, and told them I wanted to go home, because I thought I should be home with my family and the guys down there didn't know that I knew, you know

LV: They had heard it.

VB: They had heard it on the radio and I hadn't heard, thank heaven, but this German chemist that I knew, his home was in Wilmington, so, he rode down; I didn't have a car. He didn't have a car. Nobody had cars in those days ... and he rode in the train with me, and then, you had to go across on the ferry, because there was no bridge there. So, I got home all right, but I'll never forget walking into our house there on the farm, my dad coming down the steps. He just looked like he'd been hit by a truck, you know. I mean, you don't even think about it, when my brother wasn't in the war or anything. He was killed in Kansas.

LV: Right, if anything, you had a sense of him being secure there.

VB: Well, you didn't think about accidents, I guess, and he loved to fly. ... We always said, "At least he was doing what he wanted to do," and he loved to fly. In those days, when he was growing up, like a high school kid, they used to come in, they called them barnstormers, you know, and they would come in with these planes and he would go riding around in these little single-engine planes, and, I mean, he just loved to fly. So, he was doing what he wanted to do.

TK: Your younger brother also fought in World War II. Did he enlist or was he drafted?

VB: He enlisted because he wanted to get in the Marines. He enlisted to go into the infantry.

TK: Was this after your older brother died?

VB: No, no. Paul was over in the South Pacific at the time my older brother was killed, and he was probably just about eighteen. He was born in 1922, and that was in 1943, he was nineteen. ... Our minister there at Carney's Point told us not to send a telegram, but everybody should write letters and so, he didn't know about it until we all wrote letters to him.

TK: It took a few weeks for him to find out.

VB: When he wrote back, he said, “I was so tired.” You know, that’s what death does to you, it just wears you down. He came home all right. I think he was in dive bombers and he said, “You never knew if your pilot was alive until they came out of the dive.” He doesn’t talk about it. I mean, once in a while, he’ll say something. A couple of schools have asked him to come over and talk and that made him feel good.

TK: He was willing to talk.

VB: Just in the last few years. He’s gone to high schools or grade schools or someplace and talked about it.

TK: A lot of people have only recently embraced the idea of sharing their experiences.

VB: He never talked about it. He lives in Wilmington, Delaware, now and ... he just never talked about it. In fact, ... once, he said, “You know, I think the family had wished it had been me instead of Raymond,” oh, dear, because he was the first born, of course.

TK: He felt sort of awkward having come home.

VB: Right, right. [When] he came home, we were still on the farm and never locked the doors. We were way off the road and he had been in California and I don’t know, ... I mean, he was, I guess, at San Diego, at the Marine base, but I got up in the morning and his shoes were outside his door.

TK: That was how you knew he was home.

VB: I yelled, and everybody yelled at me, just pounced on him, you know.

TK: He had not bothered to wake you up.

VB: No, no, he had just come home and gone to bed.

TK: He was probably exhausted.

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE-----

TK: Yes, maybe it was too much for him to talk about it, even initially. What exactly did you do at DuPont during the war years?

VB: We were making artificial Vitamin D for chickens, because the Vitamin D, that kept the chicken industry going, was being sent from Norway, and the boats were being torpedoed, so that they weren’t getting the Vitamin D that they needed for the chickens.

TK: Cod liver oil.

VB: Cod liver oil, that's right. Anyway, so, the compound was 7-dehydro-cholesterol, which they irradiated, and that made Vitamin D, and I and another gal, who was also a chemistry graduate from NJC, were testing the plant batches to make sure they were strong enough, you know, that they were what they were supposed to be and I had the rat rooms and she had the chicken rooms. So, I had this guy that took care of the rats and he would hold them and I think he was an alcoholic.

TK: His hands would shake.

VB: Yes, his hands would shake. So, I did that for a couple of years; I was there from '41 until the spring of '44, and I was in charge of the rat rooms.

TK: What sort of participation did you see in the town and around the campus as far as bond drives, scrap drives, and things like that?

VB: I can't remember a thing about that. I can't remember a thing about that.

TK: Or victory gardens. Did you keep one?

VB: We had a victory garden, yes, thank you.

TK: All the people in the Alumni House together.

VB: Right, right in the back of the house there. There was a guy, ... he was in charge of Wood Lawn, an English gardener. He was from England, and he taught me how to garden in clay soil, because I've been used to sand down here, and we had a really big garden. I was sort of in charge of it, because I was the only one who knew how to take care of a garden.

TK: The resident farmer.

VB: Right, right. We had a big garden, ... you know, lettuce, tomatoes and all kinds of stuff. I remember one of the women, who was a home ec major, she went out and just about pulled up my parsley, because she thought it was carrots.

TK: Oh, no, and she was a home ec major.

VB: Yes, but I think she was a clothing major, but, no, we had a big victory garden there. That did us good. We used to hire somebody to come in and cook dinners in the Alumni House, and then, we'd all chip in and pay her, but, then, we'd bring in all those vegetables and stuff for her to cook.

TK: Do you remember listening to the radio a lot for different updates and things at the time?

VB: All I could remember was, I had a ... shortwave radio someplace. I heard a shortwave radio, because the Germans would keep broadcasting, "You build and we sink 'em. You build and we sink 'em." ...

TK: I did not know that.

VB: They were sinking them. ... All along the Jersey Coast was a mess, I guess, because you couldn't swim or anything else, because it was just full of oil and old boots, and everything else.

TK: A lot of people have talked about that.

VB: Yes, they were [there]. I can remember that, and I can remember that, when I used to go to New York, when I was working at DuPont with this German chemist, we'd go [to] plays and stuff. New York was all blacked out, but we would still go to New York to go to plays and that kind of stuff during the war.

TK: What kind of shows did you see?

VB: *Porgy and Bess*, and what's the one that, I don't think it was by Edvard Grieg, the guy's from Norway or, no, this is a musical; he writes all that music. Well, anyway, that was very good. No, this guy took me to a lot of good plays and stuff up there, mostly musicals. ...

TK: This was all with your boyfriend.

VB: Yes. He was six years older, so, he seemed very old to me.

TK: He was into the refined culture.

VB: Yes. I mean, we did a lot, went to a lot of nice places, and, as I said, he taught me a lot, because I had never dated, but he was very good company. He used to come to Cleveland and see me. His mother won.

TK: It is clear that your brother's death deeply affected you and even made you reconsider your career choice.

VB: Right, I mean, you just fell apart and they say that, I mean, I've read about people going through a death experience, that they try to do what the other person had done, you know, and I tried to get in the Army, but I had a virus and my pulse was too fast. I couldn't pass the physical exam.

TK: Immediately after his death.

VB: Right, soon afterwards, because he was killed in October '43 and I was in nursing school by April '44. I went to the place where you volunteer there in New Brunswick, the Army recruiting station, and I had a physical, and I took tests and did all that stuff. I passed all my tests, but my pulse was fast and they said I wouldn't live very long, but I think I'd had the flu or something; my pulse was fast.

TK: Maybe you were just nervous.

VB: Probably. So, I didn't get in there, but, then, on the radio, they had this announcement that, if you had your degree already, you could get your Masters if you went to, either it was Western Reserve, then, in Cleveland, or to Yale, and I was accepted at Yale. I guess I don't know which one I was accepted [to] first, but, anyway, ... Yale said, "Well, remember, you'll be on probation for six months," you know, blah, blah, blah, and I thought, "That's not for me."

TK: Too many rules.

VB: Yes. So, then, I had an aunt in Cleveland. So, when I had sent my thing in for Western Reserve, why, they wrote back, "Oh, be glad to have you," you know, blah, blah. So, I went there and I was glad. Cleveland is a good town. In those days, it was a very good town. Then, it went way downhill, in-between the time I went to nursing school and the time I went back there, but, then, now, it's doing all right again, I think.

TK: You just gave your notice at DuPont and decided on moving out to the Midwest.

VB: At DuPont, the head of the lab was sort of unhappy, because he thought I ought to go and get my PhD in chemistry. Well, I had enough chemistry by that time, and, well, I just felt like I wanted to get closer to the war effort, you know, and guys, the med students, were all marching up and down Euclid Avenue, you know. They were all in uniform. Our nurses were all in Australia. The graduate nurses were all in Australia, manning those hospitals down there, because our fellows were being sent down there when they got hurt in the South Pacific.

TK: Were a lot of the hospitals being run entirely by student nurses?

VB: Yes. I didn't realize what a problem it was until I went back, probably about ten or fifteen years ago. I went back to an alumni day and one of the ladies, who was one of our professors when I was in school, said that they really were real upset, putting students on these floors, because it was a big university hospital, but there were no graduate nurses in that hospital after three o'clock in the afternoon, except in the OR, and supervisors on the floors, I mean, supervisors in the whole hospital. They would come and visit with you once in a while, to see how you were doing, but [it was] ... only a twenty-eight month course when we are college graduates. So, I hadn't been in there more than a year when I was head of the floor in the evening, but, you see, in those days, they didn't do a lot of complex surgeries. I mean, you can't believe what hospitals [did]; ... we had about five people on the danger list that were dying, and that kind of stuff, and they were beginning to do brain surgery and maybe something in heart, I'm not sure, but I don't think so. We gave the first penicillin that was ever given in the world when I was a student. That was when penicillin started. Penicillin and sulfa started at that time. Nobody had antibiotics up to that time.

LV: We have spoken to a lot of people who worked at Rutgers in developing different strains.

VB: Right. One of my classmates worked in streptomycin, Chris Riley. She died.

LV: We have spoken to a number of people who worked in that.

VB: So that we really started the antibiotics, and, now, of course, there are too many of them and everybody is dying from them.

LV: Do you think antibiotics have gotten out of hand?

VB: Absolutely. It's a shame.

LV: A good thing gone wrong.

VB: Because it saved an awful lot of people's lives. ...

LV: Back then.

VB: And, of course, they used it a lot in the war, saved all these people that got hurt.

LV: What was the staffing of doctors like? If you were so understaffed with actual RNs, what was the actual doctor staffing situation?

VB: I guess a lot of the doctors were gone, but they still had doctors, who were heads of the department, and they had a lot of residents and interns. I mean, a big university hospital, you had lots of residents and interns and we had a medical school there, so, there were plenty of medical students around. We didn't do any of this stuff that they're doing now. We didn't put IVs in, or anything like that, because with all these other guys around ... and there weren't many girls, at that point, at medical schools. They did all the fancy stuff, but they didn't know any more than we did about it; I mean, those poor patients. ... In the evenings, we had lawyers and all kinds of businessmen come in who were volunteers, and they would help get the patients ready for surgery the next day.

LV: They also saw this as their part of the war effort.

VB: Right. I mean, you wouldn't believe what a hospital was like in those days. You just didn't have the things that [you should have]. Nurses who were in charge were in some place else.

LV: This was your first time experiencing a hospital. Did it seem normal to you?

VB: Oh, it was pretty awful. I wasn't the best hospital nurse. When we took our state board exam, in the whole state, I ranked second. I mean, so, theoretically, I was top dog. One of my classmates was first and, I mean, we knew what we were doing and why we were doing it, but, as I said, I'm not a great person with my hands. I mean, farming is all right, but hospital work, that's why I got into community health. I like community health.

LV: Would you consider it using the information that you have in a more applied manner?

VB: Right, right. That's what I spent my life doing, ... but no hospital nursing. ... You know, you have to have everything done, blah, blah, blah. It's just not my bag.

LV: Did you begin to doubt your decision at all as you ran into all these little problems?

VB: I think some of the profs did.

LV: They doubted it for you.

VB: I never got the greatest grades in ... the practical part. I was lucky to get through, because, you know, you have to be really organized, which I'm not, and be able to get everything done on time, you know, because the next shift is coming on. If not, you spend half the night there, which I used to [do], writing my report and stuff, but one of my best friends, who was a crackerjack nurse, she's a Polish gal, she's had a stroke and she's in terrible shape, up in New Hampshire. ... I used to tutor my classmates, when we were in what we called the pre-clinical time, you know, when we were having all our anatomy and chemistry, and all that stuff, during the summer, because we went in April. So, during the summer, we were doing all that kind of stuff and we'd sit up in the third floor of that nursing dorm, in bra and pants, ... studying all this stuff, and I was tutoring them, because they couldn't have gotten through.

LV: Right, because you already had the background in chemistry.

VB: Yes. ... I had a minor in physics and bacteriology, ... so, I could do it. ... We had a big nursing dorm; we were up on the third floor. ... I got most classmates through. A few of them flunked out, because, see, ... some were history majors and English majors, and everything else, and all thrown together here to get through six months of pre-clinical. I don't think they do it quite that way anymore, but I had never had anatomy and that kind of business, so, that was new to me, but the rest of it was old hat. Yes, I flew through the theoretical. I never had any problem with it at all. ...

LV: Was it becoming obvious to you as you were finishing your course work that you did not really want to go on as a ...

VB: Hospital nurse. It was very obvious.

LV: When did you finish nursing school?

VB: In 1946, August 1946, because we had twenty-eight months.

LV: The war had long since ended.

VB: Yes, thank heavens.

LV: Do you remember where you were when the announcement was made of the victory in Europe and Japan?

VB: Well, I don't remember Europe, because, I guess, I was more interested in Japan, because my brother was there in the South Pacific, but I was in a nursery, pantsing babies. Well, we had about forty babies, and you were changing all their little pants. So, I was there and the med students were running up and down Euclid Avenue. Of course, they were happy and my classmates, the three of them, married med students out of that class, but, no, they really enjoyed it. We really enjoyed knowing the war was over, because the war was a terrible thing. I mean, you can't believe the whole country was involved. I mean, it wasn't like Vietnam or any of these other wars we had since. We had a few people that were really in bad shape, but the whole country was involved, because if you weren't in the war, you were either doing nursing, like we were, or working in a factory, ... Rosie the Riveter, that kind of thing, you know. I mean, everybody was involved.

LV: Had you been writing letters to your younger brother this whole time?

VB: Yes. My younger brother and I have all my older brother's letters in here. My mother had all that and, when she died, why, I have it. The other day, I guess, it was only a month or two ago that my younger brother was here and we went through all that and I gave him all the letters that he had written home, and so, he's gotten to the point now where, you know, he can talk about it.

LV: Look at these things.

VB: Yes. So, I gave him all his letters and Mother had saved all those. When my older brother was killed, as I said, it was a different world. We got letters from people that he had talked to in drugstores, you know, maybe given him his name and address and that kind of stuff. ... My older brother was the kind who always found a church where[ever] he went, and he was to have gone to a church supper the night that he was killed. So, all those people wrote to my mother and, see, he was going to be married in that church and his marriage license is in here.

LV: He was to be married in Kansas.

VB: He never ...

LV: He was supposed to be married in Kansas to a girl he met in Philadelphia through an Army Air Corps buddy.

VB: Yes. The cousin of one of his bombing buddies, from school, I guess, you know, from his Air Force school, because he had met her; she'd been out there, I guess, to visit with him, and they had decided to get married, and, as I said, I have the marriage license. I never saw it until the other day. So, I'm going to ask her if she wants it. She married later and she has two grandsons and they have their families now.

TK: You kept in touch with his intended wife.

VB: She kept in touch with my mother all those years. It's been over fifty years and her husband was very understanding, a real mild kind of a guy and real nice, and they came down to

see me all the time, down at the Cape May Courthouse. Yes, very close; I mean, ... she had his diamond put into a necklace, you know, a chain with the diamond and she always kept in touch with us. I'll never forget one terrible thing [that] happened right after he was killed. ... They send somebody home, a lieutenant came, with his body when he came home and, when he came in, he had an envelope and he gave it to Ginny. ... When she opened it up, two rings came out, covered with ashes. I mean, I never heard anybody cry like she did, that whole week.

TK: You did not look after that.

VB: Oh, I've always thought ... that was one of the worst things I've ever seen in my life, because, I mean, for her to go through that after; I mean, of course, it was a closed casket and we had no idea what was in the casket, ... because the whole thing burned, but I thought that was one of most horrible things I ever saw, but the guy probably didn't even know what was in that envelope.

TK: He was delivering what was handed to him.

VB: Yes, because they sent a lieutenant home, and I think he stayed for the funeral, because we had to wait a week, you know. I mean, that was a terrible week. I'm sorry I got you all mixed up on this.

TK: It is all relevant and it all comes back together eventually. You finished up school at Western Reserve.

VB: Yes, I decided ...

TK: To get your Masters in nursing.

VB: Right, and so, I came back to Philadelphia and worked for the Philadelphia Visiting Nurse Society. ...

TK: Did you prefer that to hospital work?

VB: Oh, definitely, definitely. ... I worked there for about a year or so, and, in those days, even though you had a graduate degree in nursing, you had to go back and get an extra semester of public health nursing in order to be called a public health nurse. So, I went back to Case Western, or it was Western then.

TK: For a short program.

VB: For six months, and I did that, and then, I decided, my family was still pretty well broken up. I mean, my dad and mother, you know, it took them a long time to get back on their feet after that shock. So, I came back home again and worked as the tuberculosis nurse in this county, Salem County.

TK: Were there a lot of patients with tuberculosis?

VB: In those days, they didn't have any medicines for tuberculosis. You just went to bed someplace and they had a place called Glen Gardner that was up in North Jersey and our patients ... went there, or there was a place here in South Jersey, someplace, I forget where it was, but, as soon as anybody had tuberculosis, active tuberculosis, they went to a place like that, and just stayed there until they either died or got well, and so, I was there about a year when a whole bunch of Presbyterians, from Bridgeton, decided that I would start a nursing service down there. The Red Cross ... wanted to have a community nursing service. They recruited me from Salem and I went over to Bridgeton, which is, what? twenty-five miles away and started that. ... I mean, I ran that for little over a year, I guess, and then, my dad was retiring from DuPont, so, they were going to go to Florida. He always wanted to go to Florida, and that was good, because it sort of gave him a new life, and so, they went. They just went during the winter time, went to Florida, and that's when I decided, when I went out of church and I said to the minister I felt like going someplace, you know, besides New Jersey. He said, "Why don't you go with the Board of National Missions in the church?" So, I put the application away and didn't do anything with it, and then, I went on a seminar down in the Southeast, in the mountains, you know, Tennessee and Kentucky and all those places, and I felt, "Well, the mission people were doing a pretty good job down there," and I thought I'd sign up. That's when I ended up in Arizona. It was the only community health nursing station the church had that I could have worked in. That's how I got out in Arizona, with Navajo Indians.

TK: Growing up, did you have an interest in Native Americans?

VB: Yes, that was interesting. A friend brought that up and I never even connected the two. Our second farm was an Indian campground in the old, old, old days, and, after a rain, we could go out and pick up arrowheads all over the place. The present owners sold that field with all the arrowheads. It's under the Turnpike. When my parents decided to go to Florida, my dad talked to some of my older brother's friends and said that if each put in ten dollars, they could have a mortgage and they could have that place for a gun club. ... There's a half mile lane, and then, there's about thirty acres of ground, and it's surrounded by marshes that DuPont gets their water from. So, all my older brother's friends, the one that was killed, bought that place and, now, it's the Salem County Sportsmen's Club, they built a great, big clubhouse, but it's sort of nice, it stayed in the family, but where were we? Oh, I was out in Arizona. I guess I always liked to be out fooling around outside and Arizona is a great place to fool around outside.

TK: What did you think when you found out that they were sending you there?

VB: I thought it was great. I guess I always have liked strange places and something different.

TK: You had not traveled out to that part of the country by then.

VB: Never been to Arizona in my life, didn't have any idea what it was like.

TK: Had you seen pictures?

VB: I suppose, I mean, you know, as you're growing up, you might see some, but I can't remember ever seeing any pictures of it. It's a fascinating place. I would have stayed there, but I had terrible ear trouble because of allergies. You have dust and dryness, and I had just this drainage from my ears and they couldn't get it healed. ... Finally, the eardrum, I don't know if it ever closed or not, but I left there after, ... I was there twelve years and ended up with surgery down at North Carolina. I had what they called a cholesteatoma. It's not cancer, but it's a bag that grows in there and it destroys all the bones. My malleus and incus were gone and, if you know anything about ear anatomy, ... all that was left was one little bone, the stapes. They moved that little eardrum that was left over that. So, I have about half my hearing.

TK: You have hearing loss on that side.

VB: About half my hearing was gone on that side. ...

TK: That was based on the climate change.

VB: Yes. The Navajos used to come in with big coffee cans full of blood, you know, where their nose bleeds, because your tissues are so dry, anybody who lives out there, your tissues are so dry, and then, with the dust and the pollen. This was at 6,500 feet altitude where I was. It's more like Denver. It was northern Arizona.

TK: What was the name of the city or the town?

VB: Well, all that was there was a trading post and me and a one-room log school that they built after I was out there and the rest were Navajos, scattered, you know, within ten miles of the place that I took care of.

TK: It was part of a larger reservation.

VB: Big as the New England states. It was a big place. It's all the whole northeastern part of Arizona.

TK: How did they take to a white woman from New Jersey?

VB: Well, I took care of them, you know, and our hospital, the mission hospital, was thirty miles southeast of me, where I used to take patients, and, in those days, you can't believe how crude this country was, but the Bureau of Indian Affairs had a small clinic with limited hours about thirty miles from us.

TK: What was your opinion of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and your dealings with them and with the federal government?

VB: Well, I don't think they had much of an idea in Washington of what the problems were. The Navajo medicine man still had a lot of power out there. No, but, see, the Navajos began to get enough money from coal, so, they ran their own police department and there was not a school out there when I went out there. They used to put the kids on busses in August and send them all

to Utah, or Colorado, or California, or someplace or other, and that's where they would go to school, and they would be there until May and they would come back home again.

TK: What was the idea behind that?

VB: Well, these schools were being emptied, because those places were more civilized and the kids were going to regular schools. They were put in these empty schools that had been emptied of other Indian tribes and, while I was there, Eisenhower became President, and they started building trailer schools. They'd bring about six great big trailers [together] and they would have schools and they would give them lunch. Then, they built a log school across from me, while I was there, across from my mission station, and they had a school there where a cook would feed the kids lunch. They have a kitchen, but it was all outside bathrooms, only because they didn't have that kind of water, but that was the kind of school they went to, and then, if they went to Chinle, which was twenty-five miles away, why, they would have to stay there in boarding school during the wintertime, after they got out of third grade, but the average years of education, when I went out there, was one, on the whole reservation, very few people spoke English.

TK: They could not read or write then.

VB: No, I had an interpreter.

TK: How quickly did you learn Navajo?

VB: You don't ever really learn it if you're a paleface, but, you know, they used it in the code during World War II, you know, the Code Talkers. I knew some of these guys and I taught them to read and write their own language. You used pictures and stuff and you teach them to read that way, and then, a few had been to boarding schools, so that they knew some English. I mean, it was always pretty crude, but, anyway, they knew some English, and then, this one guy and his wife, neither one had been schooled, but he was very bright and he learned up to about fourth grade reading, because he could take from the Navajo to the English, because he had been reading Navajo, with our letters, and they got a lot on radio and stuff, and then, I had a phonograph that played a lot of kids' records. They would play these children songs and they would learn those songs, and then, the kids ... would go from boarding school and bring records with them and they would play them.

TK: Do I understand correctly, they were sent out to other reservations where the population was declining?

VB: Right. Well, it wasn't as much declining, but I think it had built up enough that [they] would have regular schools that they could go [to] on a school bus.

TK: The parents would stay behind.

VB: Yes, the parents stayed in the reservation and the kids went to school.

TK: How did that affect them and their whole family?

VB: Well, see, the Navajos always told their old stories of their origin during the wintertime, when the snakes were in the ground, because, if the snakes were up, they would listen and go down to the underworld, where the Navajos had gone on and tell them what was going on. So, all their stories were told during the cold part of the year, when the snakes were gone, and they wouldn't be listening to them, and so, the kids were away at school during that time, so, they wouldn't have learned all their old stories.

TK: They were cut off from their family origins.

VB: Yes, it cut them off from their culture. It's interesting. We had rattlesnakes around. The Navajos would always just pick them up and throw them out of the house, you know, if they got in the house, but I was chopping their heads off, until I knew this culture thing. Then, I stopped chopping the rattlesnakes. I had the only water. I had a great big marine [tank], from the war; we had these big canvas marine tanks that I put under the eaves and I would collect water and put it on my plants. Snakes love water. ...

TK: You would find a lot of them.

VB: They always came there. I had a cat I kept in the cellar, because they kept the mice out of the cellar. Then, they wouldn't draw snakes, but it was a wonderful place, though, beautiful, beautiful, you know, the rocks and flowers and cactus. I would have stayed there if my health had allowed me.

TK: You had to leave because of this problem with your ear.

VB: Well, actually, what really sent me home, the United States Public Health Service came.

TK: And took over.

VB: Yes, they took over and our church does not try to duplicate what anybody else is doing.

TK: The whole point is to get aid to them.

VB: So, I suggested that we close our mission, ... but, you know, the religious part, because they were learning to read, and we were doing Bible study and literacy. That was not really my job, but we were doing it. They closed it out. ... The Methodist Churches were in New Mexico and the Presbyterians were in Arizona, the Baptists were with the Hopi, which is right in the middle of us. ...

TK: They actually decided this officially. I did not know how this works.

VB: Yes. I didn't know either, but, when the Public Health Service came out, our hospital went thirty miles away to Hope, which ran it for a while, Project Hope, and then, the tribe, I guess, has it now. So, they closed out most of the work there and all the little missions and everything

went. I don't know ... anything about the Presbyterian Church, but one of the bodies is a synod and they're supposed to take care of the people in the state. Well, people down in Tucson and Phoenix couldn't care less about Navajos, and so, they really have given it all up, and so, evidently, the Methodists have moved in and I'm really pleased.

TK: They have taken over there.

VB: Yes. Anyway, Roger Tsosif is working with them. I just sent them some money.

TK: Native American Endowment Fund.

VB: Right.

TK: Scholarship for Christian Education and Ministry.

VB: I sent them money and I've sent it through our church here and I'll keep on supporting them, because that's very important. That's the kind of work we were doing. I saw this all disappear and Roger has been having services right there in Tselani, where I lived.

TK: Did you miss it when you came back?

VB: It's harder to come back than it is to go out and the Peace Corps has ... exactly the same problem. I couldn't believe it. ...

TK: Do not get me started.

VB: After living in Navajo country for twelve years with no time, you got up with the sun and went to bed with the sun and you did what needed to be done.

TK: You lost a lot of the bits of the Twentieth Century, in a way.

VB: Yes. I didn't see television until I got back to Cleveland in 1964.

TK: You had never seen television before that.

VB: No, except on vacation.

TK: Had you heard about it?

VB: Yes, because my family, when they went to Florida and came back to New Jersey in the summer, they bought an old place right near Avalon, South Jersey, near the beach. ... So, when I came home for a month's vacation, I would go to Avalon, but I don't think we had TV down there. My dad used to sit with a pan on top of the radio, so [that] he could hear the baseball game.

TK: You would come home once a year.

VB: Once a year, yes, riding the old Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. That was a nice train.

TK: How long would the train take?

VB: Let's see, I think, it's maybe two days. ...

TK: You would go into Santa Fe, New Mexico.

VB: I would leave from Gallup, New Mexico, and come all the way across to Chicago, then, we'd take the Pennsey into Philadelphia.

TK: Just out of curiosity, have you ever read anything by Tony Hillerman?

VB: Yes.

TK: He is one of my favorite authors.

VB: I tell you, if you want to know what's going on in Navajo country, read Tony Hillerman.

TK: Do you think he is on the mark?

VB: He must have some excellent resources, because he really does tell you like it is and I'm going to write to him sometime, because I read them ... and I've read about a dozen of them by now, but, no, he's right on the mark. He has some good resources. ... When people ask me to give little talks, once in a while, ... I said, "I'm not sure what's going on now, because my last time out there was 1985. I went out to visit," and, as I said, "Read Tony Hillerman. He can tell you what's going on."

TK: What would you think each time you came home? Would it send you back in shock to have an alarm clock?

VB: Well, it's just a completely different kind of a life. I would go back. I had a truck out there, I had two trucks. I had a mission truck and my truck, and I would get stuck in the mud or something on the way back to Tselani. I would have a decent dress on and end up in the mud.

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO-----

VB: I would have a fairly decent dress on, you know, a dress from New Jersey, and I'd be coming back and get stuck in the mud and I got back to Tselani and even my underwear was red with clay, trying to dig out. Finally, an oil truck would come by with a big chain on it and pull me out of the mud. There were no paved roads. ... You took whatever you got.

TK: Did the lack of paved roads and facilities make it harder for the people to get adequate health care there?

VB: A lot of them died, I suppose, before there had been a nurse there, but, then, the place was vacant for a long time, and then, I came and was there for ten years. They would come up in a wagon or on horseback to tell me that they needed help and I would put them ... in the truck and we'd go down to the *hogan* [a one-room Navajo abode]. ... Lots of times, I wasn't quite sure where the *hogan* was. We saved an awful lot of people's lives. I'll tell you some wild stories, if you want to sit here all day, but we lost one little boy who had been run over by a wagon that had a big barrel of water on it, so [that] it was heavy, and he died on the way to the hospital. We lost him and we lost one baby with measles. Measles was bad in those days, because there weren't any immunizations for measles in those days. ... When we first went out there, they always told me, "If there's measles in the home and if the baby was sick, get it to the hospital," because they had to give it antibiotics, [which] were in the office most of the time. So, this baby came in and the other kids had measles. The mother didn't know, because, most of the time, the mother didn't even pass it on to the child, but we took the baby to the hospital right away, but, still, many died. Measles was a killer out there. ... There were whole families where there would be only two or three out of twelve kids alive. I mean, these are adults. They have lost all their brothers and sisters growing up. ... After I got there and was able to save most of them, there were so many kids. They would have five kids under five years old, you know, practically, and then, ... I don't know if they had birth control pills at that point or not. It was just the beginning of it. I was there in '64, but there was one young doctor ... who was taking out uteruses right and left, just so they couldn't [have any more children]. The women, they'd have twelve or fifteen kids. ... One mother had a sister and they were both the wives of one man, and so, there were about twenty-five kids in that *hogan*.

LV: Were there any discussions or was there any formal education about birth control?

VB: We talked about it, but, when you have an interpreter, you're never quite sure how much gets through, because even men didn't want it. I mean, that was their idea of [virility]. ...

LV: Was it against their beliefs?

VB: Well, you're manly if you could produce a baby every year, you know. ...

LV: How did the women feel?

VB: Well, I think they wanted it, but they were afraid to go against their husbands. ... They didn't really do much birth controlling when I was out there, but we talked about it towards those last years that I was there, because they would say, "Well, what am I going to do, you know, with all these kids?"

LV: You had a bit of a population boom once you actually started saving kids from childhood diseases.

VB: I think there were about ten thousand when the government started taking care of Navajos and, now, there are 200,000.

LV: Just on that reservation?

VB: Yes. That's Navajos.

LV: They were down to ten thousand at that time.

VB: Not when I went there, but, back in the old days, like 1850 or something. I think there were only about ten thousand Navajos there, because once you have had diphtheria or measles or something, the illness went through the family, everybody died. ... There was a doctor who was working in migrant healthcare and he'd been with me out there and he said he thought I could get the population statistics for that area, just to see the difference after I got there, but I never have bothered. No, we kept them alive. ... I worked with standing orders; the doctors would say what I could do without them being there, because the doctor came once a week. ... If they came in with draining ears and pneumonia, I would give them penicillin and tell them [that] if they're not better by the next morning, A, they had to come back for the penicillin anyway, but they should go to a hospital, and so, I don't think we lost more than two or three kids all the time I was there, but I [will] tell you this one awful story. One lady, she must have been in her fifties and she was still having babies. I mean, she's like [in her] forties or somewhere or other, but she looked like she was a hundred, you know, I mean, real bad looking, but they called me down to the *hogan*. They had a rope tied around her, trying to get the placenta out, and the placenta was in little pieces all over the floor of the *hogan* and it was like a medicine man there. There wasn't a nurse or anybody there and this placenta [was] all over and I thought, "Eww." So, we got her into the truck and I always carried a mattress with a cover on it, and so, we got her on that and covered her up with lots of blankets and I got one of the guys from the *hogan* to drive, because I was by myself at that time. ... I'm under the covers, you know, massaging the uterus. If you know anything about babies, why, if you massage the uterus after the baby is born, then, it clamps down and the placenta comes popping out. I didn't know if there's anything left there after all that went on ... and we stopped at the trailer school. That was on the way to the hospital. They had a phone and I had them call the hospital and tell the doctor to meet me as fast as he could, coming out from the hospital. So, I'm under the covers, you know, massaging this uterus to keep her from bleeding to death and he met me and, by that time, I guess the uterus had separated, because he just went (sound), like that, and this thing went (sound), you know, out of the truck. We got her down there and she lived and she wouldn't have her tubes cut. They were tying tubes at that time. Yes, they were tying tubes at that time, but she wouldn't have her tubes tied. So, I don't know whatever happened the next time she had a baby, but, I mean, that was one awful mess.

LV: Did you often find that their traditional beliefs would pose a problem to your medical practice?

VB: Yes. They had medicine men. I mean, the medicine men were very strong. In fact, I had an interpreter whose father was one of the biggest medicine men on the western side of the reservation and, I mean, she lived with me. She was a real good gal, but they would call the medicine man and he would be there, like, three days, if the kid had pneumonia or something like that. When they were just about to die, they'd call us and we'd go out, give them a slug of penicillin and take them to the hospital. They all lived. We didn't lose any, but they would all be standing outside the *hogan*, you know, the medicine man and all the family and everything,

and this kid, you could hear him breathing from the truck. I mean, it was pneumonia. I was busy most of time, but ... most of them called me because they're afraid. Navajos are terribly afraid of death. They would hang dead people up in a tree or leave them outside. For one old lady, they called me ... and wanted to know when I thought she was going to die, because they were going to put her outside the *hogan*. If they die in the *hogan*, they have to either destroy it or else scrape it all down, so that they get rid of all the *chindees*, the evil spirits, and I imagine they still are strong that way, because people who had lived in Kansas, Navajos who had gone off the reservations, they would come back there for their sings.

LV: Would they?

VB: Yes, because, you see, that's sacred land, the sacred mountains. There were four sacred mountains around the reservation and they can only have their sings within that land.

LV: I did not realize that. I thought that you could do it elsewhere.

VB: No, no. You couldn't do it in Kansas or Iowa. ...

LV: I knew that the mountains were sacred to them, but I thought it was just a blanket statement.

VB: Right. Their religion is very strong. I mean, they would come to my church in our mission and we'd have services, but they would still have sings and all that kind [of thing]. I had one couple that really became Christians and he went to a training school. I haven't been able to keep up [with them]. Navajos aren't letter writers, because ... written words are not part of their past, so that I've lost track [of them]. This gal who gave me the pillows, they would write and I write, you know, usually at Christmas, to find out what's going on, but writing is something strange to them. I went on a vacation ... one summer and the gal who had taken over for me, she's a Navajo gal, she didn't send the telephone bill to New York, where it's supposed to get paid. Well, the tribe is in charge of the telephone. They came out and they took my telephone out, because she hadn't paid [them]. By the time I got back and got there, it was too late, and so, there was an Indian from another tribe came out and I said, "Gee, whiz," I said, "this is a terrible place." I was the health care person for the whole area. They always called me, you know, and I didn't have a phone. So, I said, "I'm going to write to Barry Goldwater," because he was a senator then. So, I write to Barry. He wrote back, "You will get your phone back very, very soon." By the time I got his airmail back, they had brought me two brand-new telephones. It was crazy, because I didn't have a phone and the school couldn't call me and, by that time, we had a number of schools around there and they would call me to come down and see somebody. Strange bunch; no, their religion is very, very strong. When they become Christians, really Christians, why, they want to be the preacher.

LV: Oh, really. They do not want to sit in the back of the church.

VB: They had big camp meetings in our place.

TK: How would you approach religious training?

VB: The government said that this little log school across from us was the only one [where] ... we took care of kids, but they would decide whether they want to see the Catholic priest when he came or whether they wanted to come over to our mission. So, about a dozen of them would come over to our place and we had classes for them. Now, how much they gained from it, I don't know, but they liked to come over [to] the mission.

LV: You would try to make it fun for them.

VB: Yes. They were just first, second, third graders. ... The kids are good learners, aren't they? They're bright kids. Navajos are bright people. There's nothing stupid about a Navajo. They sent the stupid ones to school and kept the bright ones home to herd sheep, ... but they sent Roger herding sheep until he was thirteen. (Roger graduated from college and taught English for twenty years. Then, he graduated from seminary and is a Methodist minister.)

TK: You mentioned earlier that you felt that the practice of sending them away to boarding school robbed them of this winter tradition of storytelling. What other changes did you see in the twelve years that you were there? Were there any other instances of dwindling traditions?

VB: I think it's separated families, because you'd have these kids that would come home and speak some English, sort of smart kids, you know, I mean, and they would give their families trouble, because they would act like they knew a lot of stuff that they really didn't know. ...

TK: They would show off to their parents.

VB: And their families sort of felt backwards. That was why I was teaching them to read their own language, because the kids couldn't read that, and then, that way, the parents had some knowledge that the kids didn't have.

TK: That was a good idea.

VB: Yes, so, I taught them to read the Navajo. We had the Bible in Navajo and we had their songs book in Navajo. Then, there was the Navajo paper that used to come out. No, I tried to teach the parents as much as I could, so that they would be wise enough to know when their kids were giving them a hard time or what they were doing.

TK: How did the parents feel about sending their kids to boarding school?

VB: Well, see, nobody went to school until World War II. World War II was really a turning point, because a lot of the Navajo boys went off, did this code talking. They lived all over the world and, even when I was out there, they were going to Korea and Vietnam and all those places. So, they began to realize that they needed to know more. So, they were willing to have schools. Before that, they didn't want schools, but, when they realized that there was another whole world out there, [they realized] that they'd better learn something and be able to deal with it. So, I think, that ... World War II was really a turning point, as far as Navajos going to school. Of course, it took awhile until they got really going, but, now, ... they're running them, in school busses, twenty-five miles away to Chinle from Tselani. ... That's where I lived.

TK: What did you notice when you went back in 1985?

VB: Drugs, drugs. The Navajos had put electricity all over the reservation, you know, the Rural Electrification business. I don't know, maybe the Government did. I don't know if they did it or the Navajos did it, but they had these great, big TV dishes and they were getting all the TV from our area, learning all kinds of things that they wouldn't have known otherwise, and street drugs had come in and they, the kids then, were bashing in tourists' car windows and stealing from them. This was just not done. They told me when I went out there in '85, "Don't pick up anybody along the road." When I had my truck, I would fill it up going to Gallup, [New Mexico]. I would have it just full of people and they told me not to pick up anybody, because they'd rob you or knock you over the head or do anything, and most of my friends had lost their silver and their rugs and been robbed in their homes. ...

TK: What do you attribute that to?

VB: Us. I mean, I think they learned a lot of stuff.

TK: Because of television?

VB: Yes. I don't know where they learned the drugs, unless it was in Gallup or Winslow, [Arizona], or one of those towns, but they were getting too much of paleface culture.

TK: In talking with any of the older people, did you notice if they were reminiscent of the past?

VB: I never talked to a Navajo about the street drugs. I talked to my paleface friends that still lived out there, at that time, and they told me about it, but Navajos, I don't know, I don't know, probably the adults, the grownups, probably knew what was going on. Peyote was out there when I was there and they were getting that from Mexico, I guess, and there was a lot of discussion about having what they called "Peyote Churches," because they said that was like the Holy Spirit or something or other, but, if they got Peyote and alcohol together, they were chewing brothers ears off and doing all kinds of stuff. I mean, it was a bad scene to have Peyote and alcohol together, because ... there wasn't much work available out there, ... because they didn't have all the schools and hospitals. Now, they have the schools and hospitals and a lot of Navajos are employed in these places, but they would go off the reservation to work on the South Pacific Railroad, ... and then, they would come back and Tuesday would be unemployment day. They would all get checks. Of course, the bootleggers are right there, but somebody said they diluted it down, so [that] they didn't get so dizzy. If it was cold weather, it was very bad, because they would lie down. During the middle of the day, it would be warm, and then, they would lie down and it would get cold at night and they'd freeze to death.

TK: This was what you noticed when you went back to visit.

VB: No, this is when I was out there, this alcohol business.

TK: Did you notice if it had gotten worse when you went back?

VB: I don't know. See, I wasn't there long enough to really know whether alcohol was still big, but, see, the tribe had said they couldn't have it. It wasn't the Federal Government, it was the tribe that said, "No alcohol," and I never was afraid. I had no fear whatsoever on the reservation. I was more afraid if I was going [on] Route 66, going to Flagstaff, but they would get drunk and come into my place and hide in the closets, you know, from their friends. They were more funny than they were dangerous, because they didn't really get that much alcohol, but ... just enough to be wacky, but they'd go to their own *hogans* and their families, you know, would object and they would just tear the whole place up, but alcohol wasn't the problem to me. I never had any fear. They always knew me. I tried to be dignified and I tried not to fool around. I mean, I didn't fool around with any of them, but I tried to be dignified and [they would say], "I'm sorry, Miss Boardman, I'm sorry." They were so drunk, they knew me, that was the only time they'd speak English to me.

TK: When they were drunk?

VB: Yes. [That is how] I knew that they could speak English, I mean, not a lot, but a little bit of English. No, as I say, alcohol wasn't a problem to me. It was a problem in automobile accidents and truck accidents. They would kill a whole bunch of people in [the] back of a truck. One time, they called me from school. ... We hauled two, three of them over to the hospital and one guy was just cut. He'd gone through the windshield. You could just pick him up and look underneath, you know, and, "Hello," you know, but he got all right, but the fellow who was driving, who looked like he had no problem at all, all of a sudden, his blood pressure dropped to about zero and they had been carrying a great, big rock in the back of the station wagon and it had hit the back of his seat and it ruptured his heart. As long as the pericardium was intact and it was putting enough pressure on the heart, ... it would work, but, I guess, maybe it burst or something or other, but he died at the hospital before they could do anything about it, because they didn't know.

LV: That he was doing so bad?

VB: It's something, but we had some bad accidents on the roads because of alcohol and they would call me and we'd do what we could.

LV: You left in 1952, but you stayed until 1964. Why did you stay for so long?

VB: Well, in 1959, you see, I went [out] in '52, in 1959, I went to a seminary in Chicago for the school year, that winter, two terms, then, came back again and, by the time I got back, why, it was in 1960 by then and, when I came back, that's when the Public Health Service was getting very strong out there. I worked with them. In fact, I went to work for the Public Health Service in 1962.

LV: It was like helping them during the transition stage.

VB: Yes, well, then, I lived down at the main mission. We closed our mission at Tselani and I went down to the main mission and my office for the Public Health Service was at our big

mission at Ganado and that's where I lived and had a Navajo corpsman. He had been a corpsman in Korea. He was my interpreter and driver, and so, I worked with the Public Health Service, but that was a bad scene. I mean, you were either ... writing reports, which I did on weekends, at nights, because you had to either go to meetings, or I was the pharmacist in the clinic two days a week. I had very little time to see my people in the field and I had a huge area, like sixteen hundred square miles, to cover with the Public Health Service and the Navajo driver. ... I guess I got an ulcer, because I was really sick and I finally left there, but the Public Health Service is still geared to Washington, not geared to Navajos. I mean, ... when I was at Tselani, I did what people needed to have done.

LV: This was more geared towards writing reports.

VB: Writing reports, and you're doing all that kind of stuff and they did a lot of good, because they had a lot of money, but my kids, all over the West, ... they had the same ear problem that I have. When I had this done at North Carolina, they called it my "Navajo ear," because they always sent the ear residents out to that country to learn how to do this surgery and we put kids on planes, you know. A couple times a week, we were putting a kid on a plane for heart or ears or something or other. One little kid was just as blue as grass when we put him on a plane. When he came home, he was dancing around like a real kid. So, the Public Health Service did do a lot of good, but you didn't know your patients. You didn't have time to talk to your patients. To me, to be healthy, you have to know what's going on with [the] family.

LV: You did not have the same rapport with the Navajo there.

VB: No, because I wasn't working in the area where I had been working. I was working in another whole area and, I think, I had five trading posts areas, which is a big area.

LV: You were pretty sure that your time was limited there.

VB: Yes, yes. Well, I had this ulcer, I think, because I used to have to lie down in the back of the big carryall that we drove, because I was so sick, and working with the Public Health Service will give you an ulcer. [laughter] I mean, they just didn't care, because they didn't know the people. I was so used to knowing my Navajo people and knowing who the parents were and what was going on in the *hogan*, you know, that kind of stuff.

TK: Is that a much more traditional way of behaving anyway?

VB: Yes, you have to. I had this driver of mine, James Roan Horse. When anybody came into the clinic, he and that person would have to decide whether they were related, you know, who their ancestors were, what clan they belonged to and you had to do that. Our doctor, he was just out of medical school, I guess, "Come on, James, just tell me what's the matter with him." You know, he didn't want to fool around that way. They're like Chinese people. You have to know who you're related to, how you're related and all that kind of stuff before you can deal with the people. ...

LV: The new guys coming in did not see the importance of that.

VB: No, no, no. He was the one, I think, who was taking the uterus out ... over in Fort Defiance, at the hospital, but the Navajos called him "Little Bear," *Shash Yazzie*, a little bear, this doctor, because he was, well, he was a pain in the neck.

LV: He was small and grumpy.

VB: Yes. He always wanted me to do this, pharmacist [work]. I wanted to talk to my patients, you know. I couldn't even say, "Hello," to them. So, you don't do that. Community health, you have to know what you're doing.

LV: If the Government had not come in, do you think you might have stayed there indefinitely?

VB: Well, because of that ear, I probably couldn't have stayed there, because of the allergies, but I would like to have stayed there. I would like to have, because [it is] gorgeous country. When I drove back there, I went back in '76 and in '85, I was just driving, you know, near Monument Valley and all those places, gorgeous country. I like the people. I could have lived that kind of life. It was like camping all the time.

LV: Fairly soon after you came back, you ended up becoming a professor at Western Reserve.

VB: I went back to Western Reserve because, ... in order to get into graduate school, you had to meet a certain number of requirements. Well, my nursing [studies] was ten or fifteen years before that and I would have had to make up a lot of time if I had gone somewhere else, but, because I had done well at Reserve, why, they took me into the graduate program and, after I had done my two years of community health nursing master's, then, I taught there for three years, and then, I decided, "If I want to stay in the university, you have to get your PhD," and so, I went on down to North Carolina. In those days, there was no PhD in nursing, which there is now, so, I took it in social epidemiology and my dissertation was on families.

LV: Specifically on?

VB: Family competence. I was interested in why some families always end up in the emergency room and some never do. So, I was looking at school absences and illness and family competence and putting it all together and it came out all right. I mean, I showed some differences in families. The biggest variable, you might be interested to know, was participation, whether the family participates outside the home, like in schools and churches. ... Because I had a half-black, half-white sample and half the blacks were high absences and half the blacks were low absences and half the whites were high absences and half were low absences and the ones who took care of their kids were out in the churches and in the schools, the parents were, ... it just makes sense, too, because, if you're out at the Ladies' Aid meeting and your kid's got a sore throat, you're talking to your neighbor about it. "Well, what would you do?" you know, and so, they learned how to take care of whatever is going on in the family.

LV: Maybe they are a little more vigilant to begin with, because they are involved and interested.

VB: Right, and, lots of times, it was sick parents that were as bad. I mean, they were keeping the kids home.

LV: Really?

VB: I did my study in Palm Beach County, Florida, and we had terrible things happen to some of the parents, I mean, you know, accidents and stuff that kept the kids home from school. ... If you want to read about it, I have an article on it, if you want a copy. I don't know where it is. I've got two or three copies of my dissertation. ... Dissertations are very boring things to read, all this math. ... One of my faculty friends there at Reserve went down to the University of Virginia after that and she did some more work with my stuff and that participation variable came out very strong with what she was doing, but, you know, no doctor ever asked a parent whether they go to school things or church things or get out [of the house] or anything like that. It's not one of the questions that come up in health care. I don't suppose anybody has ever read my dissertation, but it was printed in the bulletin of McGill University in Canada. Finally, I got somebody to publish it, but, anyway, so, I said, "It's the biggest variable and it's the most important thing, but nobody pays attention to it."

TK: I can see now why you liked community-based nursing so much, because you were looking at the whole picture and you were understanding all the variables.

VB: Right, right. ... I mean, a hospital nurse hardly knows anything about the patients she's taking care of. She doesn't have time.

TK: Right.

VB: When I taught, I had hospital nurses who were coming [back] to get their degrees and they had to take community health. Well, you know, that wasn't their main interest, but, when I finally got them to sit down and listen to the patients, a lot of them were working, still working nights or weekends or something or other, or going to school, and they would come in so excited, because one of them sat with a dialysis patient, kidney dialysis, and she said, "He told me things he hadn't told anybody else," you know. I mean, they were so excited, because ... they had never sat down and talked to a patient to find out what was really going on [in] their head and that's my problem. That's why I don't get any work done. You know, when I was in the hospital, I wanted to know what was going on with people and you don't have time.

LV: How long did you end up being a professor?

VB: Oh, well, I was an assistant those three years before I went to Carolina. Then, I came back in '72 and retired in '83. So, that would be eleven years that I had PhD students and master's students. That was interesting, because any time you're working with students, a lot of them were divorcees and had been crying and all this, you know, and we would go through all this stuff, because they had to support their families. So, they had to come to graduate school in order to get a decent salary. Of course, now, nurses are making a lot of money.

LV: They are in demand and in short supply.

VB: Right, right, but some of them wouldn't want to work with an alcoholic, an alcoholism thing for their thesis, [because] of an alcoholic husband that they divorced. They were all married to (psychiatrists?) or somebody or other, you know, giving them a hard time. No, these people who are in their master's and their PhD programs are very interesting and they had interesting research. So, I learned a lot from their research, because we had to go through all the process, you know, setting it up and doing it, writing it. I found out that they don't teach people how to write anymore. Oh, my word, I had more books on how to write than I did on nursing, because, especially the kids who were getting their master's degrees, you know, they just didn't know how to write and that's one thing I've done an awful lot of, writing. ... I could help them with that, but it's an all new world. I think the problem is that a lot of the science students are just doing multiple choice exams, ... anything that can be marked with a computer. ... The people I had in epidemiology ... in Cleveland, they hated me, because I made them write a little paragraph in their exams instead of, you know, multiple choice. My niece was in nursing at Duke at that time. She said, "Aunt Gin, they're not going to like you." I told them, "If you have got a master's degree, they'll expect you to write grants. No matter where you are, you have got to write," and I said, "This is it." I spent most of my time reading their stuff, because they just had to learn how to write. Evidently, schools aren't teaching people how to write anymore. I certainly learned at NJC, because even our chemistry reports that we did from the lab, if you made a mistake in English or wrote something wrong, you got told about it. I don't know if they're doing it now.

TK: They are probably not as strict these days.

VB: Well, they were in those days. Of course, it was an old, old time in the '40s.

TK: What was it like being back at Western Reserve?

VB: That's another problem, because, you know, they have rules and regulations. The head of my department was funny. She was coming up the steps one day and I was going down. I said, "Hi, boss." She just laced me up and down, that, you know, I wasn't respectful, blah, blab, blah. She was old school and I guess I was playing Navajo, you know, in my head. I was still on the reservation, because the guys, they would play; ... they'd built a basketball court while I was there, with cement and everything. We had a real nice basketball court and they would play, you know, "Hi, boss," you know, really treat me [casually], when I'd come in and out, and, I guess, I was just used to that kind of talk. The head of our department wasn't happy with that.

LV: Did incidents like that epitomize your experience with the administration there?

VB: Some of them. I mean, this lady [has] died since then. I guess it was too much for her, but, anyway, no, I mean, they were used to rules and regulations. I mean, that's the way you ran things. Nursing, some schools were terrible for rules and regulations. I mean, that's why we're having so much trouble in nursing; ... not so much now. Now, you've got more college grads. They're more relaxed and more able to handle that kind of thing, but these old-timers that just zip, zip, zip through a hospital and did what they were told, they did what they were told and

nursing was in terrible shape. Case Western was a different place. I mean, when I went to school, of course, we were running the hospital then, ... but, no, I think all of civilization has changed. I mean, students anywhere are [facing the same thing]. They give you a hard time. Well, I ran the nurse practitioner program when I first came back from Carolina at Reserve and that was before this lady who didn't want me to call her "Boss" left and I took her job. ...

LV: Things have changed.

VB: Yes. I mean, I think our beginning nursing [program] was a lot more relaxed, because we had people who knew we were under a lot of pressure, because we were doing a lot [of] stuff that we really shouldn't have been doing, but some of the people that were still in the graduate program, when I went back to the school the second time, were probably old-timers. Even though they've been to school, ... they model off [of] Columbia Teacher's College and that kind of stuff and I think they were still pretty rigid. ... I was running that nurse practitioner program when I first went back to North Carolina and I don't know if you know what it is, where the nurses learn how to diagnose and examine people, and I had good people teaching, but ... they always wanted to get the smartest kids, ... the nurses ... who could do that kind of work before they even went in, and then, they taught them the physical stuff in school and I told them, I said, "You know, you get bright kids or bright women, they're going to give you a lot of trouble."

LV: They are going to ask questions.

VB: Yes, and they did, but they were good students, but you have to be able to put up with good students and I think more and more of the students now are relaxed and they don't take anything from anybody, right? [laughter] But I do think it's a different world, because I was right at the break, I guess, where they had been very rigid, and then, we had no rules and regulations about coming in or going out or anything else, there at Case Western, and that was back in 1944. I mean, no other nursing school was like that, as far as I know.

LV: That was probably ahead of its time in 1944.

VB: We were way ahead.

LV: What other changes have you seen within nursing itself as a profession? Is there anything that you think is good or bad about how nurses are trained?

VB: I think, well, most of the diploma schools are gone now, I think, but this is an illustration of what the differences were. I had a student who was in the baccalaureate program. She was getting her BSN and she had come from Johns Hopkins University, which has a very good reputation, but, when she went out to see this lady who had just given birth, she said, "Well, what do you want me to do?" and I said, "Well, you go in and you find out what the situation is in the home and find out how the mother is doing and how the parents are doing and what's going on, and then, you decide what you need to do. You don't just have a list of stuff you do." The mother had psychiatric problems and she was no longer under care, so that she needed care. She needed to get back to the clinic. The father was a very difficult diabetic, I suppose from the beginning of childhood.

VB: Because he's already had eye surgery and I think the last blood glucose he had was like at three hundred instead of a hundred, where it was supposed to be, and she was really upset, you know, with all these other problems in the home. I said, "Well, how is the baby?" She said, "I haven't looked at the baby," which was all right. I mean, she had a lot of bad problems and it took her the whole semester to get that family under the care where they needed to go. Then, she took care of the baby on the way, but that was just the difference in the philosophy of Reserve and Johns Hopkins and she hadn't been out of school very long. She wanted to know what I wanted her to do. I mean, that's why you have to get nurses who were in the field, in community health. Unfortunately, now, with all this managed care and home care, they've got a lot of nurses out there who had never been in the home before and, yet, I worked with the American Nurses' Foundation. I gave them five thousand dollars to write a book on ... the family and nursing and what you have to do with the family in order to help them get well. ... I found out that the nurses who were coming out to see my mother down in Cape May Courthouse didn't know anything about community health nursing and that's how I got going on that book. The Nurses' Association published it and I don't know how many people have used it, but I know that the agency that was taking care of my mother got a copy of it and one neighbor who was also working for it had read it. I decided, [since] we always vacationed at the Shore, I'd buy a house at the Shore. So, I bought this house at Cape May Courthouse. I didn't want to be right on the beach and worry about that, but, then, I had my mother come to live with me and she was with me for ten years, from '83 to '93, and she died at ninety-nine-and-a-half, but I had this Catholic agency that had home care and they came out. All the nurses were good and some of them were like this, "What do you want me to do?" So, I wrote to the American Nurses' Foundation, had a book written that these agencies can have, but my mother was a wonderful patient. The only thing that worried my mother [was], she didn't want to be a bother to us. I mean, I never saw anybody that was easier to take care of. She had a good sense of humor. Two weeks before she died, she woke me up in the middle of the night and I went out to see what was going on. She was making a lot of racket and I figured she had to go on the pot and I had a hydraulic lift that I was using to lift her up and move her and I got her there with the pot and she sat there for about fifteen minutes. I said, "Come on, Mother, why don't you pee, so [that] I can go back to bed?" She said, "You might use more elegant language." She was a schoolteacher. That was only two weeks before she died.

LV: She kept her smarts right up until then.

VB: She didn't know me or my sister, but she knew the men. I think they don't change as much or something. I don't know what it is, but men don't change as much. She thought she was in a nursing home, I guess. We had her in my kitchen, because it was the only place I could use that hydraulic lift and run it around off the carpet, but I took care of her half the time. My sister took care of her half the time, until these last few months. No, I went to Costa Rica three times and down to Mexico and over to Britain a couple of times.

TK: You have been traveling around.

VB: Yes. Well, I would keep Mother half the time in the beginning and my sister kept her half the time, and then, I'd go traveling on my time off.

TK: That sounds like fun.

LV: Where was the best place you went?

VB: I love Costa Rica. That was a neat place. I mean, ... those people, they're not rich, they're not poor, they're all busy and there is no army, no guns, no nothing. People don't understand that. They think, you know, that everything was like Nicaragua and all that, but it's not. No, I enjoyed Costa Rica.

LV: Did you like the rain forests there?

VB: Yes. We were over there looking at all those birds and stuff, but, now, I stay home and do my church stuff. I figure, "If I get to know them, they'll take care of me when I get old." When I get old; I'll be seventy-nine this year.

TK: Your work with the Navajo has actually been mentioned in a number of books as well.

VB: Yes, yes. I've got some of them. I'll probably lend you one of them, but I'd never get it back. You probably have [them] at school. *The Navajos Have Five Fingers* [by T.D. Allen], I think it's written in that article. They were both ministers and they came out and took over my place one month while I was gone and got to know the people and they had done a lot of studying in the New York Public Library and that's the best book on Navajo that I have ever seen. It was by the University of Oklahoma Indian Series, but it's out of print right now.

TK: You can probably find it in the library, though.

VB: I think so. I found it in the Cape May Courthouse Library. I said, "Whenever I feel down in the dumps, I read that," because it just makes you laugh. It was a good book and it's a funny book, but most people don't understand Navajos and they just see them as just standing there doing nothing or lying on the ground drunk or something.

TK: Many real prejudices.

VB: Well, that's why when the church walked out, you know, left there, [it was unwise] to expect the people in Phoenix and Tucson to do anything.

TK: Even then, you knew that things would be bad because of this.

VB: I didn't know. I didn't know how much the church would pull out, because, you know, it had about five missions, five churches there, that were being run by lay evangelists.

I had this master's student, she was Polish and she was going on a (folkart seminar?) [for] the Kosciuszko Foundation and I said, "Gee, I'd like to go." She said, "Well, there's room in the

trip. Why don't you go?" So, I hurried up and got my passport and, I think, for seven hundred dollars, we flew over and had a whole month there. ... We stayed in universities and, of course, the johns didn't always work. ... [laughter]

TK: Minor plumbing difficulties.

VB: It was interesting and my dissertation advisor was a Polish PhD, Steve Zyzanski, and he knew a Polish PhD over there that was doing some similar research with what he was doing at Case Western Reserve. So, he contacted him and he came to see me at the university where we were staying and, the first time he came, we sat in, like, a little room about like this and the Commissar and all the Communists were sitting at the next table and they were listening to everything we were saying, of course.

TK: Probably recording it, too.

VB: Yes. So, the next time he came, why, we sat out in the park and talked, but he brought me roses and, you know, flowers are everywhere over there and [there was] no food on the shelves, but lots of flowers.

TK: We were talking about that on the drive over.

VB: I learned a lot just by watching out of the bus window. They had very nice busses. They wanted to take us to the factories and everything. We said we didn't want to go see the factories.

LV: There is a certain pride in that.

VB: They did all kinds of arts and crafts and stuff, and then, we went to the cathedrals and all those kind of things, but it was fascinating to be over there and I realized that it was Communist at that point. They're still having a difficult time. I'm getting all these magazines from all these different universities and one whole thing was on Poland and all the problems that they're having trying to move from the Communist things over [to capitalism]. ...

LV: Trouble in the economy.

VB: Yes, it's very difficult.

TK: We could say a thing or three about that.

VB: Yes, very difficult. ... One, [in] Russia, they were used to always having something to eat, but, now, they don't have anything to eat.

TK: Coming back to New Jersey, you remained very active with the Presbyterian Church.

VB: Yes, not so much when I had my mother, because I couldn't get out, but, as soon [as] I got here, why, we have a really great, young minister and, you know, he's active in all kinds of stuff

and we're getting a youth minister just now, I mean, and I'm involved. Every time they ask for a volunteer, I volunteer.

TK: What kind of programs are you specifically involved in?

VB: Well, the daily vacation Bible school ... and teaching Sunday School and, now, copying tapes; I have a whole box of tapes there, because he tapes the church service and the guy who was doing it died. So, I asked him if he wanted me to do it. So, I'm doing that and, as I say, I'm on the social net now. It's under that magazine there, on the whole box of tapes. Count them; I think they're over thirty already.

TK: What did you think of the chapel and services at NJC?

VB: They were beautiful. They don't do that any more, right?

TK: They have chapel, but it is not compulsory.

VB: ... It was compulsory then, in our days, ... but the choir was wonderful. Do they still have a good choir that sings?

TK: I think the choir is associated with the University, not directly with the chapel.

VB: Oh, gee. They had a wonderful chapel choir there. I mean, their music was absolutely out of this world and that was [the] first time I had ever lived anyplace, you know, where I'd heard that kind of music. Yehudi Menuhin came to Rutgers while I was there.

LV: You heard him play.

VB: Yes, I heard him play.

LV: Was he a part of the chapel service as well?

VB: No. That was a special concert series that they had.

LV: The chapel services at this time were actually interdenominational.

VB: Yes. I was trying to think [of] what kind of actual service they had. I can't remember what kind of services, whether the ministers came ...

LV: I think they rotated.

VB: I can't even remember that. All I can remember is the choir. That's wonderful.

LV: Do you remember any specific speakers that they had?

VB: Nope. I don't remember a thing about what went on at the chapel. Isn't that funny?

LV: It was a normal part of your week.

VB: Yes. ... It was probably once a week. I can't remember much about that. I remember [that] their choir was so great and they had a lot of good concerts. Then, they had a little theater up the road.

LV: Right. Did anyone famous make their way over to NJC campus?

VB: Well, at our graduation, we had Margaret Mead. ...

LV: What did you think of her?

VB: Well, I was impressed at that time. I don't have any idea what she said. ...

LV: You just remember being impressed by her words.

VB: Yes. You know, I'm not used to seeing famous people.

LV: Had you been familiar with her work as an anthropologist?

VB: I knew what she had done. I don't think I had read any of her books at that time, but I was aware of what she had done. No, I was pretty naïve at that point, still, in college. I mean, we did chemistry and that's what we did, but we had a good history teacher. His wife was just in the papers. She's over a hundred. It was just in the *Bulletin* this week of this year, George, I can't remember. Anyway, he was very good and I had a good English teacher. I wrote a paper for English lit. in our writing class on, I think I called it, "*Only A Bus Child*," as I was living on the farm at that time and, of course, now, kids are all bussed, but, in those days, only the farm kids were bussed and I just wrote, you know, how it felt to be different from all the rest of the people. ... I never thought anything about it, but he gave it back and I tore it up, threw it away, because it was a real personal kind of a thing and he asked me for it later, because he wanted to do something, because it was a good paper, and I had already torn it up.

LV: You had this feeling that you were missing out on what the kids in town had.

VB: Yes, yes.

LV: In your social life?

VB: Right, right. Well, we didn't have any money. ... I wanted to go to a Nelson Eddy movie one night and we didn't have twenty-five cents, so [that] I could go. That's the way life was [in] those days, but, as I said, we had plenty of good food. ... My sister came along nine years after I did and she was very [different]. I mean, she stayed in town with somebody and went to all kinds of stuff and she was just a different kind of a kid. She always danced and she had a thousand boyfriends. I mean, we're completely different, but we're very good friends at this

point, but she had a completely different high school experience than what I had. She was a people person, too.

LV: By the time she was in high school, the war was about to end.

VB: She was in high school when my brother was killed. ... She and my cousin, who lived with us, were at school and they always danced at lunch hour and she asked if it would be all right and she did. I mean, she kept on her dancing and stuff. As I said, she's a people person. Mine came later.

LV: Do you have any questions for her?

TK: Is there anything that we forgot to ask?

VB: Gee, I can't think of any[thing]. I brought up a lot of stuff I had forgotten about. Go see things outside, because we have thirty acres and you could walk all afternoon.

TK: Do you think that living on a farm, in a way, prepared you for living on the reservation, as far as the way of life goes?

VB: Probably, probably, because I enjoyed being outside. I'm not an inside person, as you can see. I'm not one of those house-proud people.

TK: Had you heard about a Professor Friedrich J. Hauptmann in the NJC German Department?

VB: Yes, and the fact that he was close to the German Government.

TK: He was a member of the Nazi Party.

VB: Yes, I can't remember all the details of it, but I probably learned more of it later, after reading some of the stuff they've written.

TK: Do you remember those events going on when you were a freshman or a sophomore?

VB: Right, right, yes, yes, I remember him.

TK: Did you hear any of your friends or anyone else talking about it?

VB: No. You know, the German people all lived in that German House. ...

TK: Otherwise, they were kind of isolated.

VB: Yes, they kept to themselves. Well, I suppose with what was going on in Europe, ... they felt, probably, sort of ostracized.

TK: How did your experience at NJC shape you? Did it provide you with a good education for your future life?

VB: I think learning to write was important, because I spent a lot of time writing and, I think, the chemistry is a good foundation for thinking, because you have to think in an organized way. Physics, I never was a great success at, but I had a partner; she'd write my name on our experiments, B-O-R-E-D-M-A-N. I wasn't bored, but she thought that was real funny. I never was a great success in physics class. ... Calculus, I think I almost flunked out. I never did figure that out. Either of you take calculus?

TK: Yes.

VB: I mean, I still don't know what it was about. I've got a bunch of big paperbacks, you know, that were put out by somebody, *How to Learn Calculus*. I gave it to my niece's husband, because he was taking courses.

TK: Have you remained active with the Douglass Alumnae Association?

VB: Not except to send my money in every year, you know. I do that. I did give a little speech on Navajos at one of our reunions.

TK: Have you attended the reunions since you came back?

VB: Just a couple. I wrote and told them, I said, "What you need to do is hire a little bus that will come down around South Jersey and pick people up and bring them, because I don't drive in that area anymore, and, you know, we'd be glad to pay what it costs," but to get all the way to Wilmington to ride the train up is a real problem. I mean, I could do it, but I don't.

TK: It is more trouble than it is worth.

VB: Yes, I don't have that kind of pull to go back there. I'm not a great reunion kind of a person. ... As I said, being a waitress, you know an awful lot of people and you know them quite well, because you waited on them all those years and I write back and forth and I get invitations. ... I throw them away, but I give them money every year.

LV: What do you think when you go back to the campus? How has it changed?

VB: Boy, I mean, you can't find anything. I mean, that big thing is there by the ... Sacred Bridge. There's a big building there.

LV: Hickman.

VB: Is that the history building?

LV: It holds all classes.

TK: We are on College Avenue.

VB: I love Woodlawn, because I lived there, right next to it, but it's a shame they had to wreck that whole garden. They put a big building back in there, didn't they?

LV: Your victory garden is gone.

VB: No. That's still empty, I think, in back of the Alumni Cottage, but, in back of Woodlawn, there used to be a gorgeous ... English garden and that's all gone.

LV: In the interest of space.

VB: That's where I did my courting.

LV: Is there anything else that you would like on the record, anything about your time at NJC, your time on the reservation or as a professor?

VB: Something I'll tell you about the reservation, I don't know if you should ... print it or not, the schoolteacher, he was also six years older than I was. He came the last year I was there and he had an airplane and we flew all over the Southwest in that airplane. Yes, I dated him and he took me for airplane rides ... and we flew all the way to California over the High Sierras.

LV: Did you stop and have lunch at the reservation?

VB: Yes. We visited friends or something, you know, somebody we would visit when we'd go to these different places, but we went to California. I stayed with a friend of mine that I had known, oh, I had known her at the mission at Ganado ... and I stayed in Oakland. He went over and was shooting, you know. He was in the Army Reserve, so, he had shooting matches, but, when we came back, we gassed up at Tonopah, Nevada, on the way out and we came back and stopped at Tonopah, coming this way. ... They told us that they had a newspaper clipping of a Navy guy who had ejected, by mistake, out of his plane over the High Sierras on the way to California there and he had fallen about a quarter of mile. His parachute didn't open. He fell into a forty-foot snow bank, bounced off and broke his arm. It showed him in the hospital. He said, "I love snow," but it took two helicopters to get him out, because it was very high altitude and they had trouble flying in that altitude. It took two of them to get him out of there, but that was one the most amazing things, oh, and then, [when we] went to California, this friend of mine from Oakland and I went to the Chinese New Year parade and Bing Crosby and his wife came walking by.

LV: A brush with stardom.

VB: Yes, it was my brush with stardom. He was like this, [in] his trench coat and she was walking all over there, young wife he had. His plane was great, because we flew over the Monument Valley and all those places.

LV: Very interesting scenery.

VB: Oh, my, over Zion and Bryce Canyon. We flew everywhere. That was a good experience.

LV: Is there anything else you want to add?

VB: No.

LV: This concludes an interview with Virginia Boardman on March 25, 1999, at her home in Woodtown, New Jersey, with Tara Kraenzlin and Laura Vallenge.

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Reviewed by Colleen Shanahan 11/10/04

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 11/20/04

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 1/26/06

Reviewed by Virginia Boardman 1/28/06