

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARY HANCE OWEN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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WEST LONG BRANCH, NEW JERSEY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview with Mrs. Mary Hance Owen, on July 24, 1997, in West Long Branch, New Jersey with Sandra Stewart Holyoak and...

Melanie Cooper: Melanie Cooper.

SSH: Thank you for having us into your home today, most of the day so far. [laughter]

Mary Hance Owen: It's a pleasure.

SSH: We are very thankful that you agreed to participate in the project and we thank you.

MHO: Well, thank you.

SSH: We'll start the interview out by asking you a lot about your family and, as we sit in your family's historical home, you can tell us all sorts of things. Your father was Edward Hance?

MHO: Yes.

SSH: Was this his home?

MHO: No, it was my mother's family that ... lived here. Father had a farm, maybe in Colt's Neck. I'm not sure whether he owned that farm after his parents passed on, but, the farm that I connect him with is on Burlington Road, going East, or South, still exists. It's a dressage horse farm now. ... He lived there, I'm not sure how long, but, retired, came to Freehold, and was a supervisor for Bakely's Canning Factory, supervisor of farms, when I was a little girl.

SSH: Okay, and, as far as you know then, he lived all of his life here in New Jersey?

MHO: Yes.

SSH: The farm that he was associated with, the canning industry, also leased this farm?

MHO: No, Brakely suppliers were in the Freehold area. Grandfather Edwin O. Woolley Raised vegetables, melons, hay for the horse and cow, had chickens, supplying family needs and selling produce and milk.

SSH: Is that how it worked?

MHO: I think not. I would think Brakely's contracted to buy various farmers' crops, father checking on the production.

SSH: Now, when you say that he was reformed, is that Dutch Reformed?

MHO: Yes.

SSH: And, he was a Republican.

MHO: [laughter] Yes.

SSH: On your survey, I'm sure, you're going to tell me you're a liberal Democrat.

MHO: [laughter] Yes.

SSH: Did your political affiliations ever clash? [laughter]

MHO: [laughing] No, because my affiliations changed after he passed away. I was only fifteen when he died, so, we didn't clash. But ... this family (which lived in this house) also was Republican. Bob's family [laughter] were Republicans. So, what they think of us, if they're witnessing our political opinions now, I don't know.

SSH: Your mother, her name was Mary Alma Woolly, from the survey.

MHO: Yes. Yes.

SSH: And, Mr. Owen told us that your mother was your grandfather's third wife.

MHO: Right. My father's, father's third wife. Well, you know, you would think that, because he was much older. Yes. But, you know, that farming life for women must have been really killing, so, there were two wives gone.

SSH: So, this was the home where she was raised then?

MHO: No. No. They had a place in Elberon, as it happens. That's where she grew up as a young woman, and then, they came here.

SSH: Oh, all right. And, did your mother have an opportunity to go on to school at all, like you?

MHO: She didn't go on to school, but, she was really a persevering woman. ... She did painting for a photographer, worked on his photographs, and painted china. Of course, lots of women painted china in those days. She volunteered, did some kind of volunteer work, in World War I.

SSH: Did she have many siblings?

MHO: There was the two brothers. Grandmother Woolley had five children, two of whom died at birth or early, and then, there were the three surviving children, the older brother, James, mother, and then, the younger brother, Owen. As it happens, Owen, wasn't that funny?  
[laughter]

SSH: That is.

MHO: Isn't it? And so, he lived here, as a bachelor, after Grandmother and Grandfather Woolley passed away.

SSH: Now, after your father passed away, your mother was an antique dealer?

MHO: Yes, struggling. He didn't leave her enough money. The money ... and property, income from the sale of the property on Court Street in Freehold, went to ... my two half brothers. Mother was left with this little bit of money, with me, whom she hoped to send to college. So, there she was, selling antiques and baking, as this says. ... We had to move from that big house and large lot, next to what is now the Monmouth County Historical Association building, to a little apartment, ... we just kind of struggled. She, I mean, ... didn't complain, she just struggled along.

SSH: Did you remain close with your half brothers?

MHO: They were so much older. I called them "uncle." They were that much older that I didn't consider them half brothers.

MC: Did they share the same mother?

MHO: Yes, they had the same mother, yes. Both had farms. The one was a banker and a horseman, and the other ... he had the family farm, you might say, my father's farm. Having lost his young first wife to tuberculosis, he wasn't happy, married a second wife who didn't want to have anything to do with farms, so, he left it. It was sold; I remember its being sold, and he went to work for a feed company in Red Bank. Then, [they] went to a wonderful estate in Rumson, the Haskell Estate, where he was superintendent, and to visit that ... [MHO makes a pleased sound.]

MC: Did your mother always have an interest in antiques?

MHO: Yes. I think she did.

MC: Where did she get them from? Where did she acquire them?

MHO: I don't know. She sold some family pieces and scrounged around. There was an interesting little gentleman who lived on the other side of town in Freehold and ... he and she had a wonderful connection, and he'd bring her things.

MC: Did she have a store in Freehold?

MHO: The front porch was the store, on Court Street. ... And then, when we moved to South Street, what would've been the living room, was the shop.

SSH: So, all your education was spent in Freehold then?

MHO: Yes.

SSH: Basically, you were the city kid.

MHO: [laughter] Yes, that's right.

SSH: Do you remember what it was like to grow up in Freehold? Now, it is probably totally different than what it was.

MHO: I suppose so. Of course, I haven't lived there in so long it's hard to judge. It was a wonderful town to grow up in. We could walk to town to do the shopping. Saturday nights, to go down in Freehold. ... After father died, then mother and I could go down to see what was happening in Freehold on Saturday nights. The stores were all open, busy, marvelous!

SSH: You were about fifteen?

MHO: When he died? Yes.

SSH: So, you would've been in high school?

MHO: That's right, yes. And, the courthouse was there. I remember when that wonderful, old courthouse burned. Oh, what a tragedy! ... You know, it had a lot of interest. A wonderful bookstore was down the street in an old, colonial building, in the basement, just enchanting!

SSH: So, it sounds like you've always been interested in antiques.

MHO: Yeah, I guess. Yeah. Yeah.

SSH: [laughing] You got the bug early?

MHO: That's right.

SSH: As you were growing up in Freehold, were you aware of any political situations at all? We know now that you're quite a letter writer. So, I'm wondering if there were things that triggered your interest in the rights of the downtrodden?

MHO: Of people.

SSH: Right.

MHO: There we lived, on that Court Street, and past our house, every school day, went the colored children to school, and a dear, little, tiny teacher would walk to and from school. And, you know, my mother was wonderful. She was an open-minded, fair person, ... had compassion, and, I think, really influenced me a lot to be friendly and open-minded.

SSH: Do you remember any incidences?

MHO: No, there never was. ...

SSH: Any memories growing up that would've triggered you to be this wonderful, conscientious person you are today?

MHO: Well, it was amazing. I mean, it was such a different time. You know how the paperboy delivered papers? In a little two-wheel cart with a horse. He was dashing, ... I can only remember sort of that feeling, of his being so glamorous in a way, standing in this cart with the horse trotting along, and tossing the paper out to us.

SSH: Now, I know that you went to high school in Freehold.

MHO: Yes.

SSH: What were your interests in high school then?

MHO: The newspaper. [laughter] Isn't that funny? ...

MC: Your interest in journalism stemmed from the good looking, dashing paperboy?

MHO: Could be, never thought of that. [laughing] That could have been a big influence. But, I had a dear, good friend, Betty Crawford Van Mater. Had all "Betty" friends, and I still do. She lived over on the other side of the railroad tracks, and so, we would walk to school together. She was interested in the newspaper. ... We were really kindred spirits and are still good friends. So, you know, the two of us kind of joined in our interests.

SSH: As a single mother during the Depression, how did your mother and all of you survive that?

MHO: I don't know. I do remember mother serving dinner to the Monmouth County Historical Association museum director and its librarian five nights a week after father died for extra income.

SSH: Were you conscious of the Depression's effects?

MHO: Oh yes, of being careful about things, I should say so. I can remember, now this was while father was still living, I was in third grade. So, if I were born in 1920, what would it have been? 1929? So, eight or nine. Someone in class, ... it was fourth grade, not third grade, saying to me, "Don't you have ... anything else to wear, Mary?" Here I was, wearing something that somebody had given me, and I thought it was all right, I didn't mind wearing it ... day after day.

SSH: Does your family ever talk about how they were careful? With the farms and stuff, were you able to get food and eat?

MHO: Father had a garden, a great, big garden. There is no one in the family left but Bob and me to remember being careful; we do remember sometimes, mother managed so well wherever we lived, whatever we had.

SSH: It didn't affect the canning industry at all?

MHO: I don't know. I suppose, you know, that canning industry was important and kept going until frozen foods, maybe, came in.

MC: Did your father have to travel to farms?

MHO: He had a little Model T Ford that he [drove]. And, every now and then, I would ride along with him. Yeah. Interesting.

SSH: Now, did they have migrant workers working on the farms at that time? Do you remember?

MHO: I ... couldn't say. I couldn't be factual about it. I imagine they were local "farm hands."

MC: How great was the influence of the rug mill in Freehold?

MHO: Oh, it was a big influence, yeah. You know, you realize the children that were, since I was living in the north-western side of town, and the rug mill was on the south-east, there wasn't a connection, until I began to go to school, and then, [I] realized that these children were children of rug mill families. Some of them were English, you know, the parents had come over from England to work in the rug mill. That's a big industry there. So, that was ... kind of an enlargement in my perspective of life. Here I was, with the colored children going by in that part of town, and then, on the other side of town, small as it was, were the ... children of the rug mill families.

SSH: Was your mother, or you, involved in any kind of charity work that would service either one of these communities?

MHO: Red Cross. You know, I remember that from early years. ... It seems to me, she wasn't active in church. I went to Sunday School, but, they didn't go to church.

SSH: Now, what was your involvement in the Red Cross, then?

MHO: Just giving. ... She may have done some collecting for the Red Cross. I was going to tell you something, I forget what that was now. Oh, it'll come. I know what it was, the military school. Do you know about the Freehold Military School?

MC: No.

MHO: It was ... on South Street, and there it was for boys to board, [to] be dressed up in their little uniforms. And, they had dancing classes, and had us poor little town girls come and dance with those boys, oh!

SSH: Now, how did you get elected to do that?

MHO: [laughing] Oh, I suppose I was from such a high standard family.

SSH: Now, who volunteered you for this kind of activities?

MHO: My mother, I suppose, thought it was such a great opportunity for me to learn to ballroom dance. Oh! It was torture, misery, and the boys were as miserable as the girls. [laughter] What an experience! Well, that only went on a couple of years, seasons, you know, dancing seasons.

SSH: Now, was this when you were in high school?

MHO: No! It wasn't.

SSH: How old were you?

MHO: Maybe what? Ten? Twelve? Fourteen? I don't know. [laughter] ... Trying to grow up to be proper young ladies and gentlemen.

SSH: Was there anything from that experience that you do remember?

MHO: Only misery. [laughter]

SSH: I thought there would be something in that which you carried into the Foreign Service with you.

MHO: No, not that! But, I did carry into the Foreign Service ... helping the lady who had the inn, or whatever it was, tea room on South Street. Mother baked pound cakes and made orange marmalade. "Made At Home" was her brand-name for Mrs. Boschen to serve and sell there. Mother would go and help with wedding parties, or some other kind of special parties, this wonderful, southern lady would arrange. And so, that was an introduction to getting food out on a table and serving it nicely, and making sure it was replenished, and all that kind of thing. And then, of course, at Woodlawn, when I lived there for that year, 1941-1942 being alumnae clerk ... why, we were expected to help with functions at Woodlawn. And, Ada and Henry, what was their last name? Hoffman? It must have been, maybe that's it, were just marvelous. Oh, they were an exceptionally wonderful couple! To prepare this food, and serve it, ... and see to it that everything ran smoothly. College students would come in to help with those big functions, but we were to help, too. So, I learned a lot.

SSH: Well, we'll have to get to your Douglass experiences, because we want to know more about life on Douglass. But ... let's back up a little bit. You said you were very interested in

journalism in high school. Were there other things that, you know, was proper for young women to get involved in in a co-ed high school?

MHO: Yeah, right. French Club. And then, we did this ... funny project. I think it was an NJC graduate, God bless her, Pearl Button, Class of '28, maybe, who was my English teacher. And, she'd do these great things. She made a project of a "faculty graveyard" and we were to write poems that would go on the faculty members' ... stones. And, here, in this annex to the library, was this exhibit of all their gravestones. Wasn't that interesting? It was a great success.  
[laughter]

SSH: Were all of the poems quite flowery?

MHO: I'm not sure. [laughter] Humorous or flowery, ... I can't tell now. That was fun.

MC: Did you go to the movies a lot?

MHO: Oh yes. Oh, that was fun, wonderful. There were two movie theatres, The Strand and The Liberty, both on Main Street. The Strand was much better quality than The Liberty, but, now and then, you went to The Liberty.

SSH: Did you have a favorite actor?

MHO: Oh, of course! Another friend, Betty, and I were the movie-goers. [laughter]

SSH: Who was your favorite movie actor or actress?

MHO: Oh, first, Mary Pickford, of course, and Douglas Fairbanks. And then, Ronald Coleman. Then, of course, Clark Gable. [laughter]

SSH: Now, I know the dances in the military school were torture, but, did you enjoy dancing by the time you were in high school?

MHO: Yes, began to, yes. ... Little by little, and I really wanted to be a "career" dancer. Isn't that funny? Oh, I took tap dancing lessons in Freehold and ... I tried toe dancing, too.

SSH: Really?

MHO: This uncle, here, gave me toe dancing shoes. He taught me to tap. We would be out in that kitchen and he'd be teaching me to tap dance. [laughing]

SSH: Did you take any kind of musical instrument training at all?

MHO: Oh ...

SSH: Or voice or anything?

MHO: Oh, I tried piano. Again, torture. Oh, couldn't stand it. [laughter] Isn't that funny?

SSH: Did the school have a dress code, back in those days, for young people?

MHO: Not really, but you were supposed to be properly dressed.

SSH: Were your classes co-ed, and did you notice any difference in the expectations of graduation for girls or for boys?

MHO: It seems to me that, maybe, in intermediate school, seventh and eighth grades, we'd have some classes that were all girls. Our homeroom was all girls. I'm not sure now. But, otherwise, it was co-ed. ...

SSH: Were there tracks available for women who wanted to go to college?

MHO: Anyone who wanted to go to college ... was supposed to take a certain course, curriculum, but, I forget what it was called.

SSH: But, the boys were not encouraged more than girls?

MHO: No, not that I noticed. No.

MC: What did you do over the summers in high school?

MHO: Oh, ... well, [laughing] I did have an unpaid job at the little newspaper in town.

MC: So you could see the guy?

MHO: Dear Elizabeth Yard had the *Monmouth Democrat*, which had been, perhaps, founded by her father. There she was, a single woman running that paper, that little weekly. There was also ... another weekly, the *Freehold Transcript*, which still exists. ... I tried to get a job there, and they didn't want me, but, that dear soul took me in, which was probably a terrible nuisance for her. To just get that experience.

MC: Did she become like a role model for you because you admired what she was all about?

MHO: I admired her, but I wouldn't say that, no. After I graduated, I tried to get a newspaper job. I don't know if I had said that. Went to all kinds of papers and they didn't want me.

SSH: Now, was this when you graduated from high school?

MHO: College. Now, that was in '41. The men were going to war. Wouldn't you have thought they would've wanted somebody? And so, I went to work for the college.

MC: Did you go to the shore a lot when you were younger?

MHO: With Bob. We went to the shore a lot, once we got to know each other. And, Mother and Father took Betty, the ... movie-goer, [laughter] and me, and also, her parents had a home at Seaside Heights. And, they were wonderful, and asked me to come for a weekend, or so.

SSH: What did your bathing suit look like?

MHO: Oh, it was woolen, uncomfortable, one-piece things.

SSH: Did you wear a hat and gloves to the beach?

MHO: Not to the beach, a bathing cap in the water. Yeah. ... Hat and gloves, my goodness, hat and gloves were part of the uniform in the Foreign Service at first.

MC: Did you do any other traveling when you were younger?

MHO: The one trip I remember when I was little was with Uncle Owen ... taking us up to Schooley's Mountain. Do you know Schooley's Mountain? Yeah. Oh, I thought that was a journey indeed. And so, it really wasn't until we were married, and ... Bob had to be sent to San Francisco, that either one of us had any major traveling. He ... had gone to Pittsburgh as a boy, but, I hadn't traveled, except for a trip to Massachusetts with a family friend and Mother.

SSH: Did you ever go into the city, or to Philadelphia, or anything like that?

MHO: Oh yeah, to New York, yes. We'd go to New York, Mother and I would go to New York, shopping.

SSH: Oh really?

MHO: Yeah, to Macy's. [laughter]

SSH: Were there certain things that you bought at Macy's and certain things that were at B. Altman's or Bloomingdale's?

MHO: Or Best. Yeah. Clothes at B. Altman's or Best and sort of household things at Macy's. Mother always got her glasses at Macy's. I can remember sitting in that little waiting area for her.

MC: And, you took the train from Freehold?

MHO: Yes.

MC: Did it go straight into the city?

MHO: No. Had to change at Matawan. 7:42, that was the train we got in the morning.  
[laughter] Tried to make that home. (It must have been a 4:30 or 5:00 train home.)

SSH: Were there certain times of year that you went more often than others? Did you do a family outing for, say, the Christmas decorations?

MHO: No.

SSH: Or for the ...

MHO: No.

SSH: Just whenever.

MHO: Just, well, I suppose, spring and fall, don't you?

SSH: Do you remember anything about certain customs, or traditions, as far as holidays? Either religious holidays, like Christmas or Easter?

MHO: Oh, Christmas and New Year's were special times, because Mother would get the big dinner for the family. Her family would come for Christmas, and Father's family would come for New Year's. For Thanksgiving, we would go to Uncle Jamie's in Long Branch. And, when he passed away, then, ... the family began to come here, to this house. Uncle Owen had a housekeeper and that good lady would make a big dinner.

SSH: So, when did you decide you wanted to go to Rutgers? Or, excuse me, not Rutgers, New Jersey College.

MHO: NJC. It was the only place ... to even think of. ... I hardly knew what college was, really. And, a friend of mine, another, not a Betty, [laughter] Virginia Cole, was going to NJC. So, I thought, well, if she's going, I thought, that must be where I should go. [laughter]

MC: Did you have any question as to how you were going to pay for it? Did you have scholarship?

MHO: Well, we'd thought that I'd better apply for a scholarship and, fortunately, I got one of those hundred or two hundred dollar scholarships, which helped. In those days, of course, it didn't cost all that much. ... I inherited ten thousand. I was to get the ten thousand from Father's estate, I suppose, maybe, when I was eighteen, twenty-one, whatever, I don't know.

SSH: Legal age?

MHO: Right.

SSH: Is that what you used it for then, to go to school?

MHO: I think some of it was used for that.

MC: Did a lot of your friends from high school go to college?

MHO: Virginia was the only one I know ... that went to NJC. Others went to Trenton State. Strange ... none of my "Betty" friends were as close in the college years. One worked, one went to Rutgers School of Pharmacy, one to Vassar.

SSH: Were there a lot of people who went to, they called it, "Normal School?"

MHO: That was it.

SSH: That was what Trenton State was?

MHO: That was it. Yes. ...

SSH: We heard Mr. Owen's side of the story of how you met. Can you tell us how you met your husband?

MHO: Well, of course, as you might say, he was a kind of "big man on campus," since high school. ... You know, into everything.

MC: That's what he said.

MHO: Yeah. So, of course, you couldn't help but notice him. And, he was good looking. I don't know. It seems to me, ... didn't he mention the journalism club dinner? We went to a journalism club dinner, seems to me.

SSH: Well, what's your side of the story?

MHO: All right.

SSH: You tell us about the journalism club dinner.

MHO: And, it seems to me that, you know, that was a sort of a little introduction to one another. But, then, he had so many girlfriends that he didn't pay much more attention to me in high school. So, it was that fireworks night.

SSH: Now, had you already started at NJC when you had the fireworks date?

MHO: Yes, that was ... between freshman and sophomore year.

SSH: So, you were in the same class in high school?

MHO: Yes.

SSH: Okay.

MHO: Yes. Yes. Which was nice.

SSH: Did you live on campus at Douglass?

MHO: Yes.

SSH: Because ... he had said that he had been a commuter student for a couple of years.

MHO: That's right. Yes.

MC: And, where did you live?

MHO: The first year, yeah, first year on Douglass ... what was then Douglass campus.

MC: Now, Corwin.

MHO: Yes. ... The second year, friends I made in that house wanted to live in the French House. And so, by hook and by crook, they let me, only a sophomore, live in the French House. And, I was taking French, and did take French even for the third year. So, that's how that happened.  
[laughter]

SSH: Were there a lot of social activities on Douglass?

MHO: Oh, they did nice things. You know, they had teas, do you know about that? Having had afternoon teas, every now and then, for people to come to the Lodge and get to know one another. Have a little social time and, of course, there were the dances.

SSH: Now, you'll have to tell us how these were structured, as different as they are today. How were the teas set up and how were the dances set up?

MHO: There was a ... campus director who organized those little teas. ... I think that, for a while, I was supposed to be in charge of the refreshments. Kind of helped, or ... prepare things, or she told me what to do and I did it. [laughter]

SSH: There was a kitchen facility that was going to be used to do this?

MHO: Yes. Yes. So, that was nice. And then, it was different clubs, as I recall, that would have those Saturday night dances at Douglass, or what was the other one? Gibbons.

SSH: How chaperoned were they? Did your date need to be cleared by the administration?

MHO: Don't ask me. [laughter] I don't know. Isn't that funny?

SSH: I just remember reading in the *Targum* ... something about there was going to be a dance, and I don't know if NJC members were coming, and it listed who the chaperons would be ... and had been approved for, and I just wondered if you remembered how that came to be.

MHO: I don't remember.

MC: On that note, do you have any remembrances of any of the deans, Dean Boddie, there?

MHO: Yes. I remember Dean Boddie, Dean Corwin, yes.

MC: Did you have any encounters with them?

MHO: Unfortunately.

MC: Well, please share it.

MHO: Yes. I did a terrible thing. I was working for the student newspaper, *Campus News*, I think it was then. [Named *The Caellian* after February 13, 1941] And, that poor dean had called a special chapel, for what? To make us ... understand something, now what was that? She wanted to clarify something that the college was doing. I wrote the headline and I made it sound as if it was just the same old thing. And, she called a special chapel, or, at a regular chapel, told of her bitter disappointment at *Campus News*' handling of the story and that *Campus News* would cease publication. She also had the *Campus News* staff come to her home and said how terrible it was. And ... I felt obliged to go up to her and apologize and say that I was the one that wrote the headline. Well, I felt I did ... it. And, no, I guess that was when the whole thing blew up and there had to be a faculty advisor. There hadn't been one before. And, the name of the paper changed, *Caellian* it became. Well, you see, it was exhaustion. We worked too late there. There weren't enough of us working and we had a deadline to make. Of course, there was an editor who could've caught that I had the thing wrong, but she didn't.

SSH: Well, how could the headline have been so controversial?

MHO: Misleading. Well, it was misleading. Just didn't say the right thing. So, there was my first big experience in journalism, wasn't it? [laughing]

SSH: [laughing] Oh, dear.

MC: Did you stay with the paper once it changed?

MHO: Oh, I don't know that it hardly functioned after that.

SSH: But, would you have stayed with it? I mean, ... did they ask you not to come [back]?

MHO: ... Oh, no! Nobody said stay away. And, I did write that column, called "NJC-ing," for the *Home News* for a year. I wasn't so disgraced that I didn't do that.

SSH: So, did you work with any of the papers in New Brunswick, then?

MHO: Just the *Home News*. ... I mean, you might as well say that was a very detached operation. I mean, I just typed that out on the typewriter in the dorm and took it in.

SSH: Now, what were you reporting on? Could you write down anything?

MHO: Oh, just little funny things at college. But, Mister, whoever was the editor, was really very nice and said that he thought I'd done a good job ... there. I had never done anything to rock the boat. [laughing] He even once called me up and [asked] ... did ... I want to buy a paper down in Charleston, West Virginia and run it? I said, "Thank you just the same."

SSH: Had you been involved with the *Campus News* for the four years that you were there?

MHO: Yes.

SSH: So, this was in your senior year that the incident occurred?

MHO: Yes.

SSH: What was it like, taking a journalism class at Rutgers College?

MHO: Fine. There were five or six of us. We'd walk over together and back together. ... The men were fine, nice, friendly.

SSH: Was Rutgers College kind of "off limits" for women from NJC at different times of the day, or you could go over anytime?

MHO: ... You just didn't go unless you had a purpose, like a journalism class. But, it was in the Carpenter Hall, near the chapel.

SSH: Right.

MHO: So, you know, it was kind of on the outskirts. You had, what's this one? Winants. So, you just were coming in that little slope and going in there, so, you weren't so visible. [laughter]

MC: You were dating Mr. Owen by your sophomore year, but, did you go to any of the fraternity parties? Were they chaperoned?

MHO: Yes.

MC: And, how did you get there? Did you walk all the time?

MHO: Must have, I don't know. How did we get there? I don't know. Maybe he borrowed a car, or something, you know, his parent's car. ...

SSH: Did you double date then?

MHO: Did what?

SSH: Double date with another couple? Or, was it just the two of you?

MHO: Not really. No. No. Just the two of us. I did go with a boy freshman year, before. I met him maybe at that freshman/sophomore dance. Wasn't there a freshman/sophomore dance? Yes. ... He was Theta Chi, and so, for that freshman year, I'd see him, every now and then, and go with Marty. ... [laughter]

SSH: Did NJC women go to the Rutgers football games?

MHO: If they had a date, I guess. Not ... really, you know, on their own.

MC: Were there any sports for women at NJC?

MHO: I was not a sports woman, so I really can't be very authoritative about this. We played soccer and hockey, and there might've been teams. But, you know, it wasn't anything to be broad, big, tough.

MC: More intramural, within the school?

MHO: Yeah, that must've been it. Yes.

SSH: ... Did they have a very strict curriculum for you to follow?

MHO: Not very strict. And, really, in a way, that was the beauty of taking journalism, because they wanted you to have a broad ...

MC: More liberal-artsy?

MHO: Yes. And so, I was able to take all kinds of interesting things, zoology, kept on with the French, political science.

SSH: Did you have a favorite professor?

MHO: Dear English professor, older gentleman, can't remember his name. He was so nice. Dr. Coad was nice, English. And, the journalism professors, really they all were.

SSH: Was there any one particular, one that you basically called a "mentor," or were there any upperclass women or someone that you had a special bond with? I mean, we know you were watching Mr. Owen. [laughing]

MHO: No, I don't really think so.

SSH: Did you get pinned? Or, did you become engaged?

MHO: I got pinned first.

SSH: Do you remember how that happened, or can you tell us that story?

MHO: I don't remember. Isn't that awful? But, there I was with a Phi Gamma Delta pin on me! [laughter]

MC: What do you remember about some of the traditions at NJC, like the Campus Walk?

MHO: Yes, that was nice.

MC: They were well attended?

MHO: Yes. Yeah. And, really meaningful.

MC: Did you have any sort of mandatory chapel?

MHO: Yes! Tuesdays and Fridays. ... I'll never forget some of the speakers. Sin-, the socialist?

SSH & MC: Upton Sinclair?

MHO: No.

MC: Sinclair Lewis?

MHO: No. He ran for president as a socialist. ... I ran after his car to tell him how wonderful he was, 1932 Election, Norman Thomas.

MC: Did you ever get to interview any of them as a journalist?

MHO: No. William Lyons Phelps, was that a person from Yale or Harvard? He spoke and I will never forget him. Yup. Maddening. I'll tell you a course that was of influence; Bob really made me take it; it was called the "Bride's Course" with Mary Raven. Cooking! [laughing]

MC: That's what they taught you in the "Bride's Course," cooking?

MHO: That's right!

SSH: What else did they teach you?

MHO: Yes! That's it! ... That was the ... name for it, "The Bride's Course." And, I learned a lot there, too, so that was good.

SSH: Well, if we are pinned, is there an official engagement story? Or, had this just kind of evolved?

MHO: Evolved. Yes. [laughter]

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

MHO: Mother objected to the engagement ring, which Bob brought to me at Woodlawn one weekend in the Fall of '41. I kept it in Woodlawn's safe and put it on at Christmas, feeling in my heart it was right. All her [MHO's mother] life, kept on work, work, working. Didn't want me to get married too soon, thought all it meant was work. So, I can understand how she felt.

SSH: Now, did she want you to go on and have a career and work?

MHO: Yes, that's what she did. And, yes, there I was, I mean, as it turned out. What could've been a more interesting life? And, a life where I didn't have to work, at least not in the kitchen.

SSH: What was graduation like at Douglass? Were you busy making applications to go on to further education?

MHO: Who knows? I don't remember anything about it. It was a kind of a rainy day, the fourth of June in '41. And, Uncle Owen came with Mother to attend the graduation, but ... it was just a dream. Isn't that funny? Maybe like an anti-climax.

MC: Did you live in the French House for the duration of college?

MHO: No. No. After that one year, then, I went back to Douglass.

MC: Okay.

MHO: I really liked it, you know. I was a house, what do you call it? Chairman, House Chairman, senior year.

SSH: So, you were really involved in all the activities that Douglass had to offer then?

MHO: I think so. Not sports. ... [laughing]

SSH: Were there service clubs, or organizations that did charitable work from Douglass at that time? Do you remember?

MHO: I remember some girls belonged to the League of Women Voters. I didn't even have any interest in knowing what it was about. Isn't that funny? But, I looked through ... and there they were. French Club, but, I mean, I don't remember any service clubs.

SSH: Did you think anything about politics? I mean, as a journalist, were you ... ?

MHO: Conscious?

SSH: Yes.

MHO: I don't really think so. You know what was fun? They sent us out to ... cover meetings in town, as an assignment. And so, that kind of gave me an introduction to what people were doing. I can remember that Bob would come to some of them with me. I can remember being in one of them. I particularly remember being in a church, covering some women's talk or gathering. But, I don't remember. Maybe, I was so entranced with him, I was probably going through it all unconsciously. [laughing]

SSH: Did you learn to drive as a young woman?

MHO: Oh, I couldn't wait to drive!

SSH: When did you start driving?

MHO: The minute I could! [laughing] Dear Uncle Owen gave Mother an Oldsmobile, whatever it was called, two-door whatever. And so, that's what she and I drove. And, I'm afraid again, I was not a very responsible person. I can remember, again, with Bettys, one was another Betty, her family would take their family out to the pond, we called it Lake Topanemus, in Freehold. They had a membership there, and so, we went out there to swim. And, I couldn't swim, I couldn't learn to swim, but, somehow, I floundered around and made a decent showing. But, ... this family had a canoe and we'd go out in the canoe. And, you could rent canoes at that place, and the other Betty and I would do that, ... explore, we called it exploring, and finding turtles and frogs. Oh, it was marvelous! [laughing] Oh, dear, but, on the occasion of which I speak, we were going down to the beach, these Bettys and I, and I can remember racing home, maybe to get back in time for a date with Bob that night, and looking in the rear-view mirror and seeing those two Bettys ... with their eyes rolling around in their heads, poor things, and their hair standing on end at my driving! [laughing]

SSH: Did you get back safely?

MHO: Yes, thank the Lord! [laughing] Oh dear, didn't get a ticket.

SSH: So, you graduated in 1941. When did you and Mr. Owen get married?

MHO: Well, that dear Edna Newby, she was so wonderful to hire me in the first place, as an alumnae clerk. I mean, I didn't have shorthand. I walked across town to some dear old lady, a retired teacher, to study shorthand in the evenings, so as to be halfway adequate. I could type, although not really that well. But, I was pretty serious about the records, keeping all those card files. So, maybe I earned my money. [laughter] But, anyway, she said that she couldn't hire me unless I promised to work a year, so maybe I started in July. And then, here he wanted to get married before he'd have to go overseas, whatever, and so, she let me go and we were married in August of '42.

MC: Working in the alumnae office, did you come in contact with a lot of alumnae?

MHO: Yes, and memorably. It was wonderful. ...

MC: Because, NJC was not around for all that long at that time?

MHO: ... Who wasn't?

MC: Douglass was pretty new.

MHO: That's right! Wasn't it?

MC: Or, at least it was new.

MHO: Certainly!

MC: So, these must have been pretty young women to be the first graduates?

MHO: Yeah, isn't that something to think of?

MC: Yes.

MHO: Grace Shepard was a good friend of Edna's, and they would see each other and Grace had a place at the shore, I forget where. But, they were kind enough to take me down once.

MC: And, did anyone else live at Woodlawn at that time?

MHO: Betty Johnson Abel, Class of '38, was the kind of director of Woodlawn, I forget the title. So, she was there, I was there, Agnes Adamy, ... whether she was an exchange student or a poor refugee student from Hungary, lived there that year.

SSH: Did you have a lot of exchange students on campus?

MHO: Not so many, not that I remember. A few, yes, but not that many.

SSH: As part of Kurt's class, we've done research on the *Targum*, and some of the research shows that there were exchange students.

MHO: Yes.

SSH: I just wondered if Douglass had done the same.

MHO: There were.

MC: When you were in college, were you aware of what was going on in Europe?

MHO: Yes. Yes.

MC: Did you anticipate that the United States would become involved?

MHO: I think we felt it, yes.

SSH: Were there ... any of the women of Douglass who volunteered for the military before the war, or was this only after?

MHO: No. Not that I remember.

MC: Did anyone that you graduated with go?

MHO: It seems to me ... Helen Eldridge Vogel, either was in the service herself, or married ... an active ... naval officer. But, she's, you know, the only one whom I can pinpoint.

SSH: What did your friend, Betty, do during the war?

MHO: Oh, the one, the poor soul, married this soldier. Bad news. They went off to Tennessee and the marriage finally ended in divorce. She had three children, had to go back to her parents. The Betty whose family went to Lake Topanemus was blessed, married a Count, I guess a real Count from Germany. [laughter] ... [She] was just fine, worked for IBM in New York. He, unfortunately, passed away. The third Betty, with whom I walked to school, married and that husband must have been in the service. But, that wasn't very happy; whether he wasn't well [or] had something wrong, he died. And then, she married somebody else's husband, eventually. [laughter] Stories and stories.

MC: So, how did you keep in touch with Mr. Owen while he was at MIT?

MHO: Oh, my dear, letters.

MC: Did you visit?

MHO: Yes. And, went up to Boston to visit. Mostly, I went up ... to see him, because he was working so hard on those dreadful courses. He couldn't leave.

SSH: We heard a story in the next room about a trip to the World's Fair?

MHO: Uh-huh, '39.

SSH: Did your mother ever recover from that?

MHO: I think so. But, wasn't that an adventure? Oh, dear, poor Mother!

SSH: I just wondered how much contact you had with your mother during the school year?

MHO: Oh, she was wonderful. She came up every week. And, you know, there she was, home alone, [it] wasn't easy.

SSH: Did she come to visit you often when you were in New York and the Boston area?

MHO: Never in Boston. But, she came up a few times in New York. Yes.

SSH: You'll have to tell us about your wedding and how you were able to pull that off in such quick order.

MHO: With the help of those dear people at Woodlawn. Dear Betty Johnson, she wasn't married yet, I don't think, no, you know, manage[d] that reception. And, there we were, married at the Rutgers chapel. We differ on who married us. Isn't that funny? [laughter] He thinks it was ...

SSH: Metzger?

MHO: Metzger. And, I think it was the other elderly, white haired ...

MC: Dean Metzger?

MHO: Huh?

MC: He first said Metzger.

MHO: Is it? Well, see? Maybe I went to talk to the other one, and he couldn't do it, and said, "Go to Metzger." But, I just had him in my mind, cause he was ...

SSH: You're talking about Demarest, right?

MC: Demarest.

MHO: That's it! There, I couldn't remember his name. Yup. Isn't that funny?

SSH: Now did you write the article for the newspaper?

MHO: No, Mrs. Jennings did, didn't she?

SSH: I don't know if there is a by-line.

MC: Yes, Viola Jennings.

MHO: Yeah, and, you see, she was the wife of our Professor Jennings in journalism.

MC: I was wondering how you got that big picture on the front page. [laughter]

MHO: Isn't that something?

MC: A full page headline there.

MHO: I know it. Wasn't that [amazing]?

MC: It's impressive. And, it's a beautiful picture.

MHO: It was, wasn't it? I should say.

MC: Were you nervous, walking under those swords?

MHO: Just unconscious. [laughter]

SSH: They said Elizabeth Butcher was your maid-of-honor?

MHO: That's Betty.

SSH: That's Betty. I was just going to say, that's got to be one of the Bettys.

MHO: We grew up on the same street, you see. She'd come up with this little basket, or whatever it was, with what she called a "mayonnaise sandwich" in it. We had a little child's table in the kitchen. It was a big, old kitchen like this, and so, she'd sit at that table and eat her mayonnaise, or else ... condensed milk spread on bread, sandwich! And, her family had dogs. My father couldn't stand dogs, or cats, and I was scared of the dogs. But, finally, a dear, white cat came to our house. And, somehow, he accepted that cat, and that cat was so sweet! So, finally, I had a pet. [laughter]

SSH: Did you stay on then, at Douglass in the alumnae office, after you were married or did you go right off to Boston?

MHO: No, off we went to Boston.

SSH: Tell me, the adjustment from living at Douglass, with all the women, Woodlawn, the whole bit, to now living, not on the base, but definitely in a male-dominated situation.

MHO: Well, oh, no, it wasn't male, I ... was absolutely disconnected from the Navy, really. I mean, here was this handsome husband in his uniform, yes, but, here we were in this little basement apartment. Did he tell you about the apartment?

SSH: Not much, just that it wasn't big.

MHO: Well! We were lucky, you know, in those days, to find a place to live. We were fortunate to find a room to stay in until we found this apartment. But, it was a cute, little place on the wrong side of Beacon Hill, with a great, big living room with a tile floor. And, of course, as with so many things, "living room makes bed," that's what the ... apartment sign said in San Francisco, when we got out there. A funny little store was made into an apartment there. Well, in this one, there was this little alcove with some kind of curtain around it that had the bed in it, in this great, big all-purpose room. I mean, you didn't use the word "all-purpose" then, but, obviously, it was the living room, the dining room, and the bedroom, with this little, tiny kitchen off here. [laughter] Isn't that funny?

SSH: What did you do with your time, then, when you were in Boston?

MHO: Oh, well, I didn't know how to cook, even with the "Bride's Course." So, I went shopping every day and cooked! [laughing] Oh dear!

SSH: Did you wind up entertaining a lot of the other wives?

MHO: No! I never met anybody, hardly. I don't remember, maybe one couple, or so.

SSH: Now, did you work during this time?

MHO: No, it was only that three months, you know. He had those funny hours, I think, even there, so that he would be coming home and we could go to a park, or a zoo, or whatever, sightseeing.

SSH: How did you move all your things? I guess you didn't have much to move, or just in a suitcase?

MHO: No. I guess, what was it? Was there some kind of, railway express it was called that in those days? And, Mother and I were so dumb about shipping things! This wonderful china that I wanted so much, ... I forget the title, ... it had green leaves all around this lovely, soft kind of eggshell pottery. Well, we didn't re-pack it when it came from Macy's, we just let this company take it and, of course, a few pieces were broken.

MC: And some stemware.

SSH: So, then, you had all this china that was now in pieces.

MHO: I had one friend, my own friend, who was there, Margaret Hackett. You'll be interested in this. She had been librarian at Monmouth County Historical Association Library, like the founding librarian, you might as well say. Well, she left, after a time, and went to the Athenium, in Boston. So, there she was in Boston and ... she's the only one I remember entertaining. Except, maybe, for some poor Indian friend that Bob had at MIT, whom he asked over.

SSH: Was he "Indian" from Asia or Native America?

MHO: Asia.

SSH: Now, how did you make your way, then, to San Francisco?

MHO: ... We had home leave for ten days, I think, or whatever you call it. And then, off we went by train. And, he managed to have all these lovely ways for us to enjoy it. It was the honeymoon, at last! So, we went to Niagara Falls for a day. We toured Chicago for a day. Went on down to Carlsbad Caverns. Went up to Grand Canyon. And then, there we landed in San Francisco.

SSH: How did you like the burro ride down into the bottom of the Canyon, at Grand Canyon?

MHO: Wonderful! [laughter] Little bit exciting! We'd met a friend on that trip, with whom we kept in touch. I mean, made a friend.

MC: Yes.

MHO: And, she was a Christian Scientist, and knew my half-brother, Clifford's, daughter from Principia College, which they both had attended. And so, we had that connection. Isn't that funny? I didn't finish about those half-brothers. I mean, they were just like another world to me.

SSH: Now, Owen (MHO's true uncle) was a dentist, is that right?

MHO: Owen was a dentist, and mayor of this town for a while. He'd been on the town council. So, he was born in June, June 12, and I'm June 8th. And, you know, I've always thought maybe we had sort of a kindred spirit about [us], even if he were a Republican. [laughing] We cared.

SSH: And, the other uncle?

MHO: Jamie was an insurance man, poor soul. I'd go visit them and that poor man had to go around in the evening to collect his insurance payments during the Depression. I'd ride along, all the way from Long Branch down to Sea Bright. He had no children. Uncle Owen had no children. Isn't that funny?

SSH: They must've really looked on you as, not only as their sister, but also as a kind of daughter.

MHO: I think this is true. It was Harry and Clifford who would have looked upon me as a half-sister. ... They weren't easy uncles, they weren't. I mean, here I was, an ... only child, and kind of shy, and they teased me. ... Uncle Jamie teased me and Uncle Owen was always trying to make me learn things. [laughter]

MC: Were they younger than your mother, or older?

MHO: Uncle Jamie was older and Uncle Owen was younger.

SSH: How did they treat your mother?

MHO: They were good to her, you know. They helped her after Father died. Why, you know, Uncle Owen gave her that car. The half-brothers, as I recall, were not very close to Mother and me.

SSH: To jump across the country, then, to San Francisco.

MHO: Yes.

SSH: How long were you in San Francisco before you had to come back?

MHO: Three months. That was a black day, March 6th, '43. Off he went, who knows? I mean, it was as if he went off in the blue. I wasn't supposed to know, of course ... anything about it. And so, I had to gather myself up, and close the bank account, and say goodbye to the people who owned that store, rented it, whether they owned it or not. They lived upstairs and he worked in the dog food factory on the next street. [laughter]

SSH: How much notice did you have that Mr. Owen was going to be shipping out?

MHO: Oh, well, we knew he would be.

SSH: But, I mean, did you have any prior notice?

MHO: I suppose, what? A couple of weeks, a week.

SSH: Did you go down to the pier to see the ship off?

MHO: Said goodbye at that door of that little store. [laughter] Somebody went past it one night ... a couple, ... and he said to her, "Is this where you live?" And, she said, "Do you think I'd live in a place like that?" [laughing]

MC: Did you like San Francisco as a city?

MHO: Loved it. Oh, wonderful! But, the beauty of that place was ... there was a supermarket close by. I mean, you might as well say it was the first supermarket I'd ever dealt with. Safeway, maybe it was. And then, in the next block, was the park, Golden Gate Park. Well, now, who could ask for anything more?

SSH: Practicing all those "Bride's" skills, right?

MHO: Yeah. And then, you could get on the trolley and go to the ocean. So, there were lovely things about it. Well, I got myself collected and cried on the train, all the way back to New Jersey.

MC: How long did that take?

MHO: I don't know. Of course, I wasn't making any adventurous stops, was I? Maybe, what? Three days. Yes. And so, ... it seems to me, that that was the point where Mother didn't want to be in that house alone. And, I came and she wasn't there, she had gotten herself a job as housemother at Monmouth, what is now Monmouth University, what was then, I guess, Monmouth Junior College. So, my dear Betty kept me company. We'd go out to dinner, or she would come and have a bite to eat with me, or we'd go to the movies. And so, that put in time, and I began to apply right away for jobs. Bendix, I don't know, but, anyway, Fort Monmouth, and I was hired quite quickly to go work at Camp Wood. And, a good friend took two of us down from Freehold. We ... didn't carpool, because she always drove, except when the car broke down, or something.

SSH: So, then, you lived with your mother and carpooled down there?

MHO: Yes. Yes.

SSH: I wanted to ask another question that's backing up the bus again, but, you had said you wanted to work for newspapers when you graduated and you'd made applications. Do you have any idea why they weren't hiring women?

MHO: No idea.

SSH: There was never any follow-up?

MHO: No.

SSH: Would that have changed any of your plans, if you had gotten a newspaper job?

MHO: I don't know. It's hard to say, isn't it?

SSH: I just wondered how badly you wanted them.

MHO: I know; right. [laughter]

SSH: So, when you came back, then, you were limited in what jobs you could apply to, as to what was in the area where your mom was?

MHO: Yes. And, you know, it seemed really appropriate. It was ironic, to be working for the Army, when my husband was in the Navy, but, it just worked out fine. First, I worked in what was called "Consolidated Mess." Isn't that a scream? And, it was quite an experience; they were preparing cooks for duty. And so, there was this one wonderful man, a sergeant from Massachusetts, he was a real gentleman. And, he'd bring in things from classes for the other secretary and me to taste. She was not a lady, she was an interesting person, but she was no lady! I hadn't quite run into anybody like her before! [laughter] But, we got along. The major was a hard, tough gentleman from Trenton, who had run a hotel, I think it was, so it was a good job for him. Then, this other sergeant was a real, tough guy from Brooklyn, or wherever it was, and then, this sweet little boy, as I'll always think of him; his name was George, little blond boy with glasses, I mean he just was so sweet and innocent. So, you know, you just had all kinds of people. And then, these men being tested for this cooking school, whether they could do the job or not. Well, somehow, I mean, the powers that be moved us, or the cooking school moved, whatever happened, and so, then, after a while, I went over to Training and Testing, which was really very interesting. Battalions were tested on different skills: creeping, crawling, running, and falling, wire splicing and all that kind of stuff. Funny names, interesting names.

SSH: Coming from all over the country?

MHO: Surely.

SSH: Now, did you have to wear a uniform?

MHO: No. Nope.

MC: How often did you hear from your husband?

MHO: Oh, he was wonderful at writing. And, I think those letters are all up in the attic.

SSH: We will talk to you when we finish! [laughter]

MHO: The attic is a disaster! Sometime somebody's got to get up there.

MC: Maybe we should start that service, just going and cleaning out people's houses.

MHO: And, of course, I wrote to him every night. V-mail. What was it? V-mail. What am I talking? E-mail? V-mail! Yup.

SSH: How often did the letters come back to you censored?

MHO: They didn't seem to have been.

SSH: Did you write to anyone else in the military at all? I mean, did you keep any correspondence with any friends from Freehold, or that were in the military at all? Or, just with Mr. Owen?

MHO: Yes.

SSH: When did you start your letter writing campaign and why did you start?

MHO: To get that husband home!

SSH: Tell us how that came to be.

MHO: I guess I started with the Senator first. Mr. Barbou was senator. Walter Barbou, maybe? So, I wrote to him. I mean, I must've been listening to the radio and hearing what they were saying about war's ending, ... and I thought, "Let him hear that I need that husband back and I'm tired of this life." That job was eight to five, six days a week.

SSH: Would the newspapers, the television, radio ...

MHO: No television. Radio. [laughing]

SSH: Did you keep up with it, or did you find it was better not to listen?

MHO: Oh, no, I listened.

SSH: Did you?

MHO: What I could, you know. So, I thought, write the Senator, then I decided on the President. What's that letter there? Is that one of them there? ... In the middle, to your left. No, to your right now. That.

SSH: This is from the Office of Naval Affairs.

MHO: Oh, that's his.

SSH: "Dear Mrs. Owen, We thank you for your splendid letter. Probably if all of us here at home had close relatives on the fighting front it would be easier to achieve an approach to our domestic problems and a greater spirit of unity and agreement."

MHO: What pearly words! [laughing] I suppose that poor senator passed my letter on to this poor soul! Right?

SSH: The Department of State.

MHO: Yes.

SSH: Yes, you're right. It is Mr. Warren Barbou.

MHO: Warren! There you go.

SSH: Did Mr. Owen know that you were writing these letters?

MHO: [laughing] I don't know if I told him or not.

SSH: So, tell us about the homecoming then.

MHO: I'll tell you first about hearing that President Roosevelt died. There I was, in the kitchen, with Mother, April 12, wasn't it? ... 1945. It was an awful shock. Of course, you knew he didn't seem well. But, to see those TV documentaries about him, recently, oh, he was really sick. Well, anyway. How did I know first? The telegram came that very same day.

MC: Saying, "Dear Darling, please get in Saturday evening. Be at the Commodore about ten o'clock p.m." Is that the one?

MHO: No, that was a later one. He wanted me to meet him in San Francisco in the first one.

SSH: I wonder if he's the Commodore?

MHO: The Commodore Hotel was wonderful. They had all this service for servicemen. Oh, they were so good. And so, ... I mean, I guess we knew of it before he ever left. And so, it was automatic that we would meet there.

SSH: Where was that located at?

MHO: ... It was near Grand Central Station.

SSH: Oh, okay.

MHO: What's that street, the cross-street by Grand Central Station? I don't know, but, anyway. Oh, ... it was wonderful. And, I guess there was a service of finding rooms for service people, so they helped get us a room at the Hotel New Weston. That's still there. We happened to see that when we were in New York recently. Well, I don't know, there was an early telegram that said that he would be coming, or he was already in San Francisco, and when he had transportation, he'd let me know when he would be in.

MC: How much did you know of what he was doing while he was in the service?

MHO: Well, he had prepared for the degaussing work, you know, in Boston, and went on with it in San Francisco. So, ... and, you know, it wasn't all that ... high level, secrecy. So, ... I really had faith that he was going to be all right. I guess, maybe, I was more worried about his diving and his adventures with the natives than I was about his degaussing! Pigs! Wild boars and things!

SSH: Had you started to make any kind of contingency plans, what you would do when he came home?

MHO: Not at all. No, just took things as they came. And, of course, he was assigned. Was he first assigned to Swinburne Island? Was that it? And then, of course, got sick. Been an adventure with one of us sick, or pregnant, or whatever, one after the other, in strange places.

SSH: After he passed the Foreign Service exam in D.C., how much time elapsed? He mentioned going to different schools and things. Did you follow him to each one of the schools then?

MHO: He went to school right there in Washington, which, of course, was wonderful. So, I could be there.

SSH: So, when did you start your family?

MHO: So, we were in Princeton for him to be at school. And, of course, that's before we went to the Dominican Republic in 1946 ... there I was, pregnant. But, maybe it was all right. I mean, it all worked out, blessedly. [laughing] But, you know, to start a new post, get in a strange country in August, have an earthquake, the worst they'd had in years and years. Happened four days after our arrival.

SSH: Really?

MHO: We were in this little hotel. There was a main building where the restaurant was. And then, there were these little cabins, little frame cabins out on the area. So, we were walking up to lunch with a friend and passed this little goldfish pond they had, and, here, the water was sloshing back and forth. There it was, an earthquake! ... That was August, and they kept up until December, when Jim and I were in the hospital, there on the seventh floor. There it was rocking. ... And then, you know, a whole new life, after all, running a house, with servants that spoke another language.

SSH: I was going to ask you about what kind of stories you had.

MHO: Hot climate that ... I was not happy with.

MC: And, how did you get along with not knowing the language?

MHO: Had to study! [laughing] There was a refugee, a Romanian refugee, did Bob tell you that? A very nice gentleman, who tutored us in Spanish.

SSH: Really?

MHO: Yes, came, I forget, maybe twice a week, to teach us.

MC: How long were you in the Dominican Republic and did your son start to speak two languages?

MHO: He spoke a little Spanish. Two years, we were there two years. So, he was old enough to learn. The pictures are in here.

SSH: Did your mother come to visit you in the Dominican Republic?

MHO: Nobody did. [laughing]

MC: Did you do your food shopping, or did you have the servants do it for you?

MHO: Well, I did a little, but, the cook did it. We had two different cooks. One, Dolores, I don't know what happened to her.

MC: She was in the newsletter.

MHO: What?

MC: We read about her in the newsletter.

MHO: Yup, big, husky, but nice, really nice woman. And, a house boy, Jose, and a laundress. I'm not sure. Do you know how she did the clothes? She had a big pail with ... whatever it was, she took it outdoors, where she had a little faucet to run the cold water in, and built a little fire to heat the water. This was in 1946. Then, sloshed it around in cold water in some kind of big tray. Well, that's the way they did it!

MC: Did you have any friends there? Any other diplomats' wives?

MHO: Oh yes, yes. Really had a lot of friends and some Dominican friends. So, it was a good post.

SSH: Was there quite a compound built for just the Americans?

MHO: No, thank goodness! That was one where you weren't in a compound. We were in this nice house, which happened to be next door to the home, did Bob tell this? Of the Chief of Staff of the Army, whatever he was, General Fiallo, that's it. Oh, dear, and Bob, talk about me and the *Campus News*! Bob played the Marine Hymn on a phonograph while up on the balcony, or roof,

one time! Oh! Honestly! [laughter] Isn't that terrible? You know, the Marines had been there! Well, anyway, this nice man, Mr. Hurst, lived down on the next corner. I think he was married to a Dominican. He'd been a Marine and he was like some kind of overseer for the embassy, like a maintenance supervisor. And, the embassy was just up on the hill above us, up there, the embassy building itself, and the residence. That was as much of a compound as you had. Lovely up there. And then, other friends were in apartments or private houses.

SSH: Did you get together a lot socially?

MHO: Yes, we were social. Receptions.

SSH: Better for the wife than the Navy had been?

MHO: In a way, better. I mean, more obligations and complications, but interesting, you know. And ... but there, there was such a division between rich and poor. Here they were driving the cattle to market past our house from the country, here this dear little boy who lived up the road somewhere would come to talk over the wall. (Everything was walled in.) Sweet little boy, and then his brother later on. You know, you just couldn't be all that happy there, with such a division. This Hotel Jarabe, which may still be there, all elegant and white and beautiful, and then poor people living not in such terrible conditions because that Trujillo demanded that things be clean. The streets had to be swept and things had to be painted, kept up, but still. ...

SSH: Did you have any receptions where you attended with Trujillo?

MHO: Yes.

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

MHO: We had really good friends. Bob had met the American husband through embassy work; she was Dominican, but, spoke excellent English. They had a son, one-and-a-half or two, and we enjoyed many good times. Sadly, we lost touch after some years.

[break in the tape]

SSH: As wife of a Foreign Service diplomat, did you find yourself involved in any sort of charitable organizations, or?

MHO: We ... there was something there, but I can't remember what it was. In Finland, ... absolutely.

SSH: Well, tell us now, let's go chronologically here.

MHO: Yes.

SSH: And from the Dominican Republic, then we go to Finland?

MHO: We went to Finland because Bob had asked for Russian training ... or to go to the Soviet Union; that was what he wanted to go: to that part of the world. And they felt he should have experience in that region first, and so they sent him to Finland. And I could not stand another month of that terrible climate, that tropical climate. And so I was just delighted to go, the Soviet Union or anywhere where it was going to be colder! [laughing] And so we got it! Yup! So off we went on a freighter, a Moore-McCormack line Freighter for a month's trip to get to Finland.

SSH: With a two-year old?

MHO: Yup, that dear little boy. That's where he learned to bite his nails, from too little activity for a two-year-old. We stopped in Oslo, Stockholm, and Copenhagen on the way, which of course was a treat. And got to Finland and everybody was friendly, but of course that was October or November. Gray; I guess it snowed as we approached the harbor. So there we were! But what did I want to tell you about Finland?

SSH: We were talking about charitable work.

MHO: Oh yes! Of course! So already, women were teaching veterans English, and so I could get involved in that. We went out to (they were handicapped veterans) the hospital. Once a week, at best.

SSH: Okay, I have to back up to the ship. You were going from the Dominican Republic, a very tropical climate, where did you, you had to have made a detour to get ...

MHO: Clothes.

SSH: Clothes. [laughing] Tell us about that.

MHO: Honestly, went to West Long Branch and Marlboro, ... we had a month's leave I guess. ... There was a wonderful storekeeper in Freehold, I can't remember the name, and that dear man went into his store of winter things and brought out a grand, warm snow suit for Jim and somehow something for us, so we could survive! [laughter]

MC: Did you fly to the Dominican Republic and back?

MHO: Yes.

MC: How was that in the early day of flying?

MHO: Yeah, it was all right. We must've flown, no, we took a train ... to Florida, that was it. And then flew from Florida. So that wasn't a long flight.

SSH: Was that the first time you had flown?

MHO: Yes. Yup.

MC: Were you scared, or were you excited?

MHO: It was exciting. I wasn't scared, oh no!

SSH: After the two years experience in the Dominican Republic, other than the winter clothes, was there anything that you took with you to help you with your duties as a wife in the foreign service?

MHO: No, I don't think so.

SSH: Did you have your etiquette book, or?

MHO: I had that. Surely. [laughing] Oh, and we studied Finnish, of course, on that ship. A solid month of studying with the State Department manuals. What a language!

MC: You didn't have a tutor this time?

MHO: I think Bob had had a little bit, so he knew ... enough ... to help ... ourselves.

SSH: How much notice did you have between knowing your service was ending in the Dominican Republic and knowing that you'd be going to Finland?

MHO: Adequate.

SSH: Adequate?

MHO: Yes, uh-huh. So, there was an apartment available, fortunately. So we could go in that apartment, which was lovely, and I wish I had the postcard downstairs here. ... We're still in touch with our upstairs neighbors. Isn't that wonderful? They were about our age and just really kindred spirits. Wasn't that just marvelous? They had a little boy older than Jim and ... there was this handsome, old building with a ... not an elaborate apartment, but really pleasant and comfortable and behind it was a park. And so it had that lovely view. And in the park were what were called *puistotaties*, park aunties. And so the children could go out with those women, in the morning in the cold or pleasant weather, and be supervised, for three hours.

MC: What a good idea.

MHO: Wasn't it? ...

SSH: How long were you stationed then in Finland?

MHO: Too short a time. As it turned out he was called back for Russian training after eighteen months.

MC: How much Finnish did your son pick up?

MHO: He picked up some, yup, yup.

MC: He was trilingual at a very early age!

MHO: Yup, yup. One thing he learned from the park aunties was, "*Ei saa heita Kivia.*" "Don't throw stones." [laughing] We never forget that! ... You know, it was not easy there then. The bread was still rationed. We went to a little bread and milk store in the neighborhood. But, they were all so friendly and it was just a marvelous post.

SSH: Now were your supplies, your food and all that, sent in to you from the States, other than bread and milk? Or you shopped right on the economy?

MHO: I'm not sure that we had, I can't remember a commissary there. We just shopped on the economy.

MC: Did you have servants there?

MHO: Yes. Two maids I guess it was. Dear Annikki was one, I can't remember the [other one].

SSH: But when you came back then for Russian training where did you come to in the States?

MHO: Washington, DC, then, Columbia University, so we lived in New York. How was that? We went to Middlebury College during the summer. He had had pneumonia in Finland, he came home and he contracted polio at Middlebury, so we came back from Middlebury to go to Columbia, finding, by the grace of God, an apartment not too far from the campus. This one where Jim was shifted from bed to sofa when we went to bed in the one-bedroom apartment. [laughter] So he went down to somewhere in lower Manhattan for therapy.

SSH: I was going to ask what kind of treatment did they do for polio then?

MHO: Exercise.

SSH: Was he hospitalized at Middlebury in Vermont?

MHO: Yes. But he drove home from Vermont. He couldn't stand my driving that little black Chevy of his father's, so after about twenty-five, fifty miles he took over. [laughing] Oh dear!

SSH: Did your mom come to visit, or were you usually down to West Long Branch?

MHO: Oh, listen, where we lived, we lived in a little shack on the lake in Middlebury. Again, I mean housing, and it seemed ideal, but that maybe why he had polio because he'd come home all tired from the college and go out and fish, get chilled. That's what they said: "Don't get tired and

chilled.” So here he was aching and we thought he had the flu. But anyway, we had bunk beds in that place! But it was beautiful.

SSH: Let's go on to the next adventure now. We've got to Columbia. Then what happened?

MHO: Then we went to Moscow, didn't we?

SSH: Did you go by ship?

MHO: No, we flew to Finland, I think. That was what? 1951, right?

SSH: I'm trying to figure out the year. It must've been.

MHO: '51 or '52, I think. ... We flew to Finland and then took a train in.

MC: How was that?

MHO: Oh, it was all right. It was better than I thought it would be, uh-huh. And we stopped in St. Petersburg to see things, so that was nice. So there we were in Moscow.

MC: Now did you have any other children by this time?

MHO: No, thank goodness! There Jim was in that storage room on his bunk bed with the stored food and supplies.

SSH: So when you were in Moscow the first time Stalin was in power?

MHO: Yes.

SSH: What did you think?

MHO: Oppressive! That's all I could think.

SSH: Were you basically contained within the compound?

MHO: ... We could go out, but you know, you had to get permission to go out of the city. There we were, we lived right on Red Square, or on whatever square it was, but Red Square visible through a street here, with the Kremlin facing us. It was a marvelous view. Wonderful when the parades happened, ... here all the parades were there. The hotel, I forget what that hotel was right next door.

MC: Now all this time that you were a diplomat's wife did you ever want to work on your own in journalism, or were you too busy being involved?

MHO: And working. I was supposed to work there. I did work there.

SSH: In Moscow?

MHO: Yes. I couldn't be there with him if I didn't work.

SSH: Really?

MHO: So Jim went to school, and we had this poor, dear little sweet Natasha maid who'd never, I don't know that she'd ever worked for anybody before, poor little thing. All she could do was make soup. Well, ... I can understand, I thought it was terrible that all she could do was make soup, but I ... could well understand after awhile how that's all she could do. ... She wasn't used to having anything else. So Jim had her to come home to while I was down working with the Publications Procurement Officer, who went around buying, buying publications, obviously. [laughing] To send back to Washington to let them know what's going on in Moscow or the Soviet Union! [laughter]

SSH: So we were well informed, right?

MHO: Interesting.

SSH: Now whose rule was it that you must work to go to Moscow?

MHO: State Department.

SSH: State Department.

MHO: They couldn't provide housing for somebody, I mean it was short. There was only a certain amount of room and if you couldn't --

SSH: But was it Russia trying to keep -- ?

MHO: Oh no. Now they, of course, had a commissary. Had to have a commissary, but the good Russian bread, oh, even from those days. Oh that good bread, you could live on it! [laughing]

SSH: Did you get a chance to travel very much in Russia?

MHO: I didn't, but he did. We went out to the dacha, the embassy had a dacha in the country, country house. Little, kind of poor, what would you say? Middle class residence in the woods. But it was a way to get out of town, you know, get a break, for the men especially. We were followed and all.

SSH: Was it very obvious? The following?

MHO: No, no.

SSH: Were you ever involved in any intrigues that you can tell us about now?

MHO: ... Nothing outstanding that I can think of. But you know, they wanted the wives to keep their eyes open to see if anything unusual happened. We did have a friend; no, that was the second time. See we had the other two children then, shall I go ahead to that?

SSH: Why not? We can backtrack.

MHO: Cause it connects. I mean, there was no contact for Jim, except maybe one time in the park. Some nice lady did ask who was I. And say a couple of words. But no real contact. But the second time, here this dear, little girl, it was, she lived in a neighboring building, and maybe played in the playground at this apartment house and was so friendly and sweet. And she'd come up and play with the children, I can't remember her name now. But she gave me a little kind of doily I still have. Just really a nice, friendly memory.

SSH: For the most part did the people look at you more curious or friendly?

MHO: Yes, curious and friendly, yeah, really. I don't remember maybe once there was a man who was antagonistic somewhere. That's the only faint memory I have.

SSH: Now, did they have church services for the Foreign Service diplomats? Was the church still operating in Russia?

MHO: It seems to me the first time there was a priest, a Catholic priest came in. ... I'm remembering vaguely. There were two different priests and one of them wrote a book, Bissonette, do you remember anything about that? The other was Father Dion. We still correspond at Christmas. John, I think his name was. I'm mixing up Zagreb and Moscow now, because we had services at our house in Zagreb. And there were African students at the University of Zagreb and they came, some of them. It was nice. I can't tell you, but it seems to me we had something where we could go to the British Embassy for services in Moscow.

SSH: That was the other question I was going to ask, how much between the diplomats of other countries of the Allies did you have contact with?

MHO: There was ... good mixing, we kept in touch with a lot of them afterward.

SSH: So, after your first tour there you came back to the States, or where did you go?

MHO: '52? Seems to me Bob was in Washington from '53 to '56.

SSH: And then back to Germany.

MHO: Oh we were in Regensburg, after we came out from Moscow in the Fall of '52. Ellen was born in the Army hospital in Nuremberg, and then, we were in Regensburg until summer. We were in Regensburg for a little while, for him to study.

SSH: What was he studying in Regensburg?

MHO: Oh, the whole eastern European affairs.

SSH: From there you came back to Washington?

MHO: Washington. That's it. So we were in Washington '53 to '56, then Frankfurt '56 to '58.

SSH: So, in Washington when you came back things had definitely changed for you, you definitely moved up the ladder.

MHO: Right. Yeah.

SSH: What were your responsibilities then?

MHO: To entertain more. And go to more functions. We had Ellen, and then we had John. So we had the three children.

SSH: How often did you go to the White House?

MHO: Not often, but we did go. Yup. Yup. It was memorable.

SSH: What do you remember about it?

MHO: Well, it was beautiful and impressive. ... I was in the Rose Garden to see him get some kind of award, I forget what that was. There's a picture of it in that other room. You can see, that isn't exactly what I remember in my life! [laughing]

SSH: Ellen was born in Washington then?

MHO: No. ... Ellen was born in, what's that place?

SSH: Do I have it in this?

MHO: Down in the south, Nuremberg. I came out for Ellen to be born. '52, October '52.

SSH: I don't have it, oh, okay.

MHO: ... By chance we had been in Garmisch, Germany for a vacation, met these dear ... people, he was a doctor in the army and she [was] a really nice person. And those dear people said, "We'll take care of you, come out to Nuremberg for the baby. And we'll see to it that you have an apartment." And there I was just downstairs from them, and Jim could go to school, in the Army school. So that was wonderful.

SSH: And that was okay with the State Department and everything?

MHO: Yes, yes. So then we were there until Ellen and I got on our feet and then went on down to Regensburg for this nine months or so of study.

MC: Were you keeping in touch with your mother and your in-laws?

MHO: Oh yes! Oh, of course! I mean we were good letter writers or postcard writers. So, you know, not like children today. Now Jim and Ellen are good, but the younger two, telephone calls or e-mail. [laughter]

SSH: So when you went back to the Soviet Union you went back to Moscow?

MHO: Back to the Soviet Union in '58 to '61. ... We lived in the new building, what does he say?

SSH: He said the Soviet Union and then to Washington and then to the --

MHO: Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was '66. He ... went to that Foreign Service Institute, wasn't it? What's it called? Senior Seminar, that's it! He went to the Senior Seminar for a year, '65 and '66, which was a wonderful experience learning about the country, his own country. Traveling around and meeting people, it was excellent. So then he was prepared to go be Consul General in Zagreb.

SSH: But before that?

MHO: Oh.

SSH: Jeffrey's born in Moscow?

MHO: Yes, in November, 1960.

SSH: So you stayed in Moscow for him?

MHO: Yes, well, that's where we were and he decided to come a month early! [laughter] And so there I was in the Moscow hospital.

SSH: How was that?

MHO: Amazing! They took me in what's called *hitna pomosh* [*skoraya pomosh*, fast help, literal translation], a small ambulance. Oh dear! And then you go in this great big room where they sort you out and then send you to where you are supposed to go. And there was a Sudanese doctor, as well as a Russian doctor.

SSH: Childbirth in any other language is the same?

MHO: I guess. Well, except it was a different position. It was kind of a half-seated position, isn't that interesting?

SSH: Really?

MHO: But it went all right. However, he got thrush, you know what thrush is? Yes. Had to fight that.

SSH: Did you use the medical facilities then in the compound after having given birth?

MHO: Well, what did we have? One doctor, he did what he could, but it wasn't so marvelous, but it was all right.

SSH: When you entertained did you have a lot of the people from the Soviet Union?

MHO: Not a lot, but some. That second time ... we did have some.

SSH: Were they very interested in what you were doing, or?

MHO: Well, it was more business. ... The one evening I remember, [it] doesn't seem to me that I was with them very much. Whether I was busy serving or what? Or struggling so hard with the language that, you know I don't know anymore than having been there!

SSH: Now how did the children, did they just pick up the second languages?

MHO: Yeah, with the servants, you know. They got along fine. But they went, of course, to that British, what did they call it? International School?

SSH: Uh-huh.

MHO: So, they had more contact with children of other countries than with Russian children.

SSH: So how did you find moving in Yugoslavia then?

MHO: Wonderful. Finland had been our favorite post up to then, but that beautiful country! Friendly people, interesting.

SSH: Did you travel around a lot?

MHO: Yes! Could travel.

SSH: So Tito's form of communism was quite a bit different then?

MHO: Quite a bit different.

SSH: Than Stalin.

MHO: Yeah. Jeffre was so funny. Course, he was what, five or so, and we'd travel and he'd say, "There's another ruin!" And there would be another castle up on the hill, you know, not in the best of shape, but just, you know, all kinds of interesting things!

SSH: How did you find the difference between the Moscow under Stalin and the Moscow under Khrushchev?

MHO: Oh it was much improved. You know, much more available in the stores and the market, we could have a car, people better dressed. The city running well. But, you know, you always felt that cover over it, so to speak; and yet, when you think of what we've heard this week about the way things are now, you'd think that they were better off then! Than what they're enduring now, not being paid, not having food, they had to stand in line then, yes, but at least it was there.

MC: Were your children, were they American children, although they were overseas, were they conscious of American culture? There was a lot going on in the mid-sixties and late sixties, music, (slides?), television shows, and movies? How did they adapt?

MHO: I think it was hard on them. I mean there was that space between these children, with Jim being seven years older than Ellen. Then John being only sixteen months after Ellen, that meant those two were really close, and distanced from Jim. And ... he was beyond that sixties business, but Ellen and John were just hit by it. ... Ellen was all right, but John got into drugs. John left home ... for Krishna Consciousness, was gone five years.

MC: You had mentioned at lunch that Jim, the oldest son, had come back to the U.S. for high school.

MHO: That's right.

MC: Did the other children do that also?

MHO: Ellen and John went to Switzerland. They had to go to Switzerland from Yugoslavia.

MC: So this would be around 1968?

MHO: That's it, see?

MC: And that's where they encountered it? In Switzerland?

MHO: ... Ellen was all right. But he, he wrote us a letter when he came home for Christmas after those first three months and said, "please don't make me go back."

SSH: To Switzerland?

MHO: To Switzerland. ... I can't remember now whether we said he had to go back for those last months, but we arranged for him to be home the next year, and did so. But I guess it was just a terrible experience for him and he got into those drugs when we came here then.

SSH: Where did he come to school, then, in the States? Where did you make arrangements?

MHO: He went to Switzerland, studied at home in Zagreb, and then we all came home, see?

SSH: Oh, okay, okay.

MHO: In '70. And so he was at ... Walt Whitman in Bethesda.

MC: He was about sixteen years old?

MHO: Yeah. And so there he was, coming to the door with the policemen one night because he had tried to climb the wall of some girl's house. And whatever else, so he came here and it was going to that West End. (I don't know if I managed to talk about West End in Long Branch, being confused with West Long Branch.) Anyway, West End was one of those far-out places, so he got there, I don't know. Finally, in September, '71, he just left home, that's all. But he came back sick, he was a wreck with pneumonia, so he stayed and he went to Brookdale Community College. Got his certificate, high school equivalency. But then I think he still went back to Krishna Consciousness group for awhile. And then some good man down in Florida said, "You'd better go to college." The Krishna Consciousness wasn't letting him do what he wanted to do, go to India and study Sanskrit. So he left them, went to college in Florida, worked for Florida Power for some years. Now there he is a big property owner in Florida, can you imagine the contrast? [laughing]

MC: Now your eldest son, after he graduated high school, he went on to Drew? Or did he?

MHO: ... He went to Rutgers, for one year; it was too big for him. ... Then he went to Drew and graduated.

MC: Were you disappointed that he didn't stay at Rutgers?

MHO: No.

MC: Such a Rutgers family. [laughing] Two of your children went to Drew?

MHO: Yes. Yup, three really. Ellen went one year to Drew and didn't like it ... and went out to Michigan.

MC: Now your husband retired in 1971 and you came to this house?

MHO: Yes. We came here.

MC: Did you have any children at home?

MHO: Yes, Jeff, the youngest.

MC: And did he go to high school?

MHO: At, Shore Regional here, yes.

MC: So your children adapted fairly well.

MHO: Yes, yes they did. You know, we didn't quite finish that. ... Except for John they adapted, and they have become strong, giving individuals.

SSH: Now did you retire right from Yugoslavia to here?

MHO: No, Bob was in Washington a year.

SSH: Why did he decide to retire?

MHO: They offered a benefit. I think they were, you know, trying to cut staff and there was this opportunity to retire. And his mother was not well, she was in ... Freehold and she just had to have help. ... So we decided, all things considered, we'd better come here. So she came here too, for three months or so.

SSH: So how was the adjustment then, back to civilian life in America?

MHO: It was all right.

SSH: No problems? You weren't bored?

MHO: Oh no! You know what I got into? Recycling!

MC: So you caught some of that sixties spirit yourself! [laughing]

MHO: Jim wrote to us from Drew on a test paper ... and wrote on the top: "Recycled." So that planted the seed. Then here on the radio, Asbury Park radio station, was this pioneer from Long Branch saying that we should recycle, and he started this place by City Hall to collect stuff. So there I was! Well, in Moscow they have shops to take your jars and bottles, you remember that? Do they still do it? Well see, there it was!

MC: Did you do anything for the first Earth Day in 1970? Do you remember that?

MHO: I remember hearing that and thought what a good idea. ...

MC: Now, how did you feel about moving? Had you wanted to move back into this house? Into your grandparent's house?

MHO: Just seemed ... the best thing to do.

MC: So then you became farmers?

MHO: There he was -- organic farmer. See, I came back by myself in '69, Uncle Owen was sick and they called me. Here it was just before the big trade fair in Zagreb and poor Bob and Ellen had to hold the fort with all the parties and things. The dear cook, Dragica. But I had to come back. And so, poor Uncle Owen passed away. And there was this friend of his who also was a banker. He handled things and had somebody come and live in the house until we decided to come back here. So it worked out. ... I guess we were meant to be here. I meant to say, when we were in the car coming from Hungry Hobo, I meant to say, and Bob shouted out in our car, "Here's our church!" Because that white church up on the hill...

SSH: Melissa had asked about it.

MHO: Yes. 1809.

SSH: It has a great steeple.

MHO: Isn't it? And it's got to be repaired, it's leaking.

SSH: So what takes up your days now?

MHO: What?

SSH: What takes up your days now?

MHO: Still the environment, when I have strength.

SSH: Where's your letter campaigns taking you now?

MHO: Global warming.

SSH: Now did you continue, you started writing to get Mr. Owen back from the Pacific as soon as you could. Did you continue your letter writing campaigns as a Foreign Service wife?

MHO: I had a letter published in *The Washington Post*, once, I thought that was good!

SSH: What were you writing on?

MHO: How I had dreamed that we were being invaded and that we'd better behave ourselves and not be. [laughing]

MC: In Mr. Owen's (long left out?) letter writing that were all, in your family newsletters, and I guess you had sent them to one of the Bettys in the Alumnae Office (Betty Johnson Abel) and they are all still in there. They're just amazingly well written and very informative and the Rutgers Alumnae Magazine even published some of them in their entirety. Had you heard from any of your classmates? 'Cause that must have been a remarkable thing for them to know someone in these remote, well, not even remote, exotic places.

MHO: That's right. Well, they're dear classmates, you know. When I go back to reunion they're always so nice and talk about it. And, of course, I've kept in touch with some. Some, a couple in the Class of '40 who were roommates, and then I'm sorry to say that some have passed away that I used to write to. But I wrote this afternoon to Pat Paterson Thompson, Class of '41, who was also a journalism major. She's out in Missouri. So, we keep in touch. But the one I stood beside at our fiftieth reunion, that dear friend is gone. So, that's the way it is.

SSH: Being in these Foreign Service posts and American policies and activities, were there times when you had to be stoic, even when you might personally disagree with what the American government had chosen to do, like Vietnam and things like that?

MHO: In Zagreb. There were demonstrations in Zagreb about the war.

SSH: And you were opposed to the war?

MHO: Well, you know, we had mixed feelings. You know, we couldn't be all for that war. And Jim was a conscientious objector. ... Bob had been in World War II and he disapproved of Jim's being a conscientious objector. But I didn't, I knew just how Jim felt. And right now, I still feel the same way. My dear friend, Betty, her son, first son, was born ten days before Jim, that boy went to Vietnam and he never was the same afterward and on a St. Patrick's Day night he shot himself. So.

SSH: Did you ever feel that you needed to make excuses, or were you militantly defensive of?

MHO: No. You ... were just non-committal. ...

SSH: Is that the way you had to be? Because I know there were a lot of, during this time period there was such a lot of?

MHO: Big gap, schism. Yes. You just had to, just tread lightly.

SSH: There were so many changes taking place. Administrations and policies, so you just laid back? Did they ever ask you as the wife of a diplomat to go to any women's organizations in these countries and speak?

MHO: Again, in Frankfurt there was a women's organization. But you know, I was busy with those children. ... I honestly only went a couple of times.

SSH: Okay. If there's anything that you'd like to tell us that we haven't asked you.

MHO: No.

SSH: Do you have any other questions?

MC: I don't.

SSH: Thank you.

MC: We're almost at the end of the tape.

SSH: Thank you so much.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

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