

ALTHEA PRATT-BROOME

TAPE 7, Side 1

November 17, 1995

M.O'R.: This is November 17, 1995, and this is a continuation of her oral history of Althea Pratt-Broome at her home in Tualatin, and I'm Michael O'Rourke from the Washington County Historical Society.

Well, as I said before we started the tape recorder here, I think that it would be good today to talk about the Sweek house, the house we're sitting in now. You told me before that you used to go out as a - I guess when you were in high school with boy-friends and drive around the countryside around Portland and that you had an interest at that time in old houses and that was when you first laid eyes upon this one.

A.P-B.: After I graduated from high school.

M.O'R.: Oh it was after you graduated from high school?

A.P-B.: Yes.

M.O'R.: Okay.

A.P-B.: Because I graduated from high school when I had just turned 17, and I went out to look for a job. So at any rate, the others - it started after that.

M.O'R.: Okay.

A.P-B.: Because in high school, as I said, I didn't do much of that, and we just went as groups and things.

M.O'R.: Okay. So it was after high school.

A.P-B.: But when I started working then different fellows would ask me out.

M.O'R.: Refresh my memory again: What was your first job, then, after high school?

A.P-B.: My first job - well, because I looked like I was 12 - I didn't wear makeup; I had just barely turned 17 - and I was out there. This was still in the Depression when there weren't many jobs. There would be lines for blocks for jobs. But I had decided that I wanted to work in a bookstore, because obviously I loved books. And so I started going around to them, and they'd look at me and they'd just start laughing, you know. "You're going to work? You're not even 18 yet. Aren't you in school yet?"

And I said, "No, I'm out of school."

So finally - I kept track of every sale that these book places had; I'd watch the newspapers. And I had decided that - well, I don't know whether you remember Lipman's and Olds & Kings ...

M.O'R.: Oh, yes.

A.P-B.: ... these stores? You do. Good. All right.

I discovered later that the man who had a big bookstore in San Francisco and one in Seattle, that he was the one who had the concession in Olds & Kings and Lipman's. I found all that out afterwards. But I decided Lipman's was the one I really wanted to work in. So every time they had a sale I'd go down there because the lady who ran the book department had said, "You have to be 18 and you have to have two years of college," none of which I was.

So they had this one big sale this one time. So I went down and I said, "Surely you need help this time?" Every time I'd ask, "Don't you need help?"

"No."

So this time she looked at me and she said, "For heavens sakes, aren't you ever going to give up?"

I said, "No, this is where I'm going to work."

And she said, "All right." And she handed me a sales book, and she said, "Downstairs on the main floor you will see a book section. We're having a sale, and there are a lot of children's books. You go down there and you sell books down there. And if you can sell books down there, then maybe I'll hire you."

Well, she didn't explain the sales book to me or anything, and I thought, "I'm not going to ask." So I went downstairs, and they had all kinds of children's books there. And of course I loved children's books and I was always reading to little kids in the neighborhood and all of this.

So they had this one little book that had a little toy duck that went along on wheels. So I was pulling this little duck up and down the aisles and selling these books, and I found one of the other salespeople to explain the [sales] book to me. So every time I had a sale. I was selling children's books and adult books like hotcakes down there. When I got through at the end of the day and went back upstairs she said, "This has been incredible." She said, "You have a job."

So at Christmas time they separated out the children's books from the adult books, and they had them down in the toy department. So she put me in charge of the children's books down in the toy department.

One day when I was selling books there was an older man, and he was standing off farther, and he had been standing there like

for a half an hour watching. And I thought, "Oh, dear. Do I have a masher, or what is this guy," you know.

M.O'R.: What's going on here?

A.P-B.: What is he? So I finally got a lull, and I thought, "Well, I'm just going to find out. So I walked over to him and I said, "Is there something that I can help you with?"

And he said, "No, I'm just watching you."

And I said, "Oh?"

And then he said, "Well, I'll relieve your mind." He said, "I happen to be the man who owns this concession."

And I said, "Oh, and you own the one in Old's and King's?"

And he said, "Yes, Seattle, San Francisco."

I said, "All right."

And so he said, "Well, I'd heard about you and so I decided to watch you."

So the next year he put me in charge of the children's books at Old's and King's. By that time I was 18. So that was my first big job, and from there it just went on to ten million things.

M.O'R.: Well, was that the job that you were in there when you were ...

A.P-B.: Going out and riding around in the country, yes.

M.O'R.: Uh-huh. And on one of those occasions you came across this house, I guess?

A.P-B.: Yes.

M.O'R.: Do you remember who was with you at the time?

A.P-B.: No.

M.O'R.: Okay.

A.P-B.: I do not. That wasn't very important. The important thing was it was here.

M.O'R.: And so what was your first sense about this house? Did you know right away that ...

A.P-B.: Yes.

M.O'R.: ... that it was a house that you were interested in living in?

A.P-B.: Yes. It was old and run down, but it had that beauty to it that is just unmistakable, that is Southern. I had a great-grandmother, my father's grandmother, who had come from the South, from Kentucky, and they had been plantation owners. I had never seen the home that they had or anything like that, but I just had these pictures in my mind. I still would love to find some say, maybe somebody who has pictures of the place that this great-grandmother lived in, I really don't know. There are lots of Potite I discovered all over Kentucky. I've never had the courage to go knock on somebody's door and say, "Hey, I think I'm related to you."

She was French, which is the Potite name. She was half French and half Welch. So the Celtic thing comes all the way along from all sides. So she - I never really knew. They were French. They had come from France to Nova Scotia, which was called Arcadia then. And then when the British kicked them out in the 1700's, why, they came down the Mississippi, and this is why you get all those French houses and towns along the Mississippi and down to New Orleans, but instead of being Cajuns and settling in New Orleans they had somehow gotten over to Kentucky. But these things I don't know.

So anyway, maybe this is what appealed to me. At any rate, the thing was beautiful in all of its being run down. Looked like it hadn't had a coat of paint on it for maybe 40 years. It was pretty gray looking, but lovely. And all the trees around it, small town - I always wanted to live in a small town in an old house. I wanted to have a farm. I knew what I wanted it to look like inside, and when I was taking college classes and was - during English composition you had to write all these essays, and I would write about this house and the way it must look inside, and that there would be geraniums on the window sill and there would be an old clock that would be going tick-tock all the time, and it would have white curtains, and it would be blue and white, et cetera, et cetera, which is what my kitchen is.

So I would write all these things, and then at that time I was up at the medical school, and the different medical students who would take me out and we'd go driving in the country, and I would say, "There's my house." And they would say, "Sure, city girl. You're going to live in a small town, and you're going to live on a farm in an old house as run down as that one is."

And I said, "Yes, that's where I'm going to live."

And so anyway -.

M.O'R.: How many visits do you think you made to this house?

A.P-B.: Oh, my goodness. That would be very hard to say.

M.O'R.: When you first laid eyes on it and on subsequent visits, were people living here still at that time?

A.P-B.: Oh, yes. Yes, it's never been in anything but the two families. I bought it from the grandson of the pioneer people who did not live here at that time. He was a retired doctor from

the Navy, and the War was over, and he had bought a place just above the river in Wilsonville. For a while later after he died, they had that place and made the City Hall in that house. It was a much smaller house than this. It was one story with an attic above. It was an old one, and a big old barn on the place, five acres.

But when I was at the medical school I read this ad, because I kept thinking, "Even if I could just live in the country and take a bus in, something."

So I saw this ad for his place, and I went out there and almost rented his place. The Navy had called him back in because they needed doctors again, and he was going to have to be up in Seattle for a year or two. So I thought very seriously about renting his house, never realizing that he was connected to this place. And then somebody else beat me to it, so I did not rent his place. And instead I bought a little house up by Lewis & Clark college that I could afford to buy with a \$500 down payment, and this was just after the war. And I thought, "Well, that will be - the equity I build up in that, then when this house comes up for sale someday, then I can sell this one and get that one," which is what I did.

M.O'R.: Right. And at what point, then, did you actually make contact with ...

A.P-B.: Dr. Harding.

M.O'R.: ... the Sweet family? Dr. Harding, yes?

A.P-B.: When they put the "for sale" sign on this. And by that time I was married and was beginning to have a family. Let's see, was Melissa born then? Yes, she must have been. Just born.

Because I saw the "for sale" sign, and Laurie, the girls' father - his name is Lawrence, but in those days, when he was young, the nickname for Lawrence was Laurie. His father was one of Oregon's well-known poets, Lawrence Pratt, and so rather than take his name Laurie went by Laurie, because he was a well-known musician in Portland, and both of them were in the newspapers a lot, and so Laurie just went by that.

M.O'R.: That distinguished them, I guess.

A.P-B.: Yes.

M.O'R.: Well, as long as we're on that subject, let's go ahead and back up just a little bit. So how did you meet Laurie?

A.P-B.: Well, I was doing a lot of singing around Portland and doing summer opera and Gilbert and Sullivan and musical things at Civic Theater and singing in symphonic choir. And Laurie was in symphonic choir. So I met him in two places, because I was taking classes at night all the time, and I got into a class with him, and like the house, I've always had this intuitive thing. And he was sitting way up in the front row, clear at the end, and I was sitting in the back row, clear at this side of the room. I always like to sit back in the back.

And I took a look at him, and I thought, "He's going to have something to do with my life." And then I went on with things. And one day after class he came up to me and asked me if I had a way home. And I said, "Yes, I take the bus." And he said, "Well, would you like a ride home?" And that's how it started. We became very good friends, nothing romantic at all. I wasn't interested in him romantically up until practically just before we got married. I felt romantic about a few other people.

M.O'R.: But not him, eh?

A.P-B.: But not Laurie. He is a very sweet and gentle person and very involved - I mean music is his life. And since we were both in symphonic choir and saw a lot of each other there, we had a lot in common. He was interested in literature and poetry, things like this, and he was an organist at the Fremont Methodist Church, organist/choir director.

So in 1952 he was still coming to the house all the time and we were still seeing each other, and every once in a while he'd ask me could you kiss me goodnight, and I'd say no, it would spoil this absolutely wonderful friendship that we had. And one time he said, "Well, I thought it might make it better." I said, "Oh, no, romance cancels out friendship many times. I don't want to do that."

Then I was going to go to Europe that summer, but I decided I didn't have quite enough money, so I'd have to postpone it and do it the next summer. I wanted to do one of these educational things, going to Europe. And so that summer I decided to go down to Ashland to the Shakespearean festival. Usually I went someplace like Monmouth and took classes and spent all my vacations that way. So this time I decided I was going to go down to the Shakespeare festival. And when he found out he said, "Well, I'm going, too." He said, "I've already rented a cabin down there. Why don't we get married, and we can go together?"

And I said, "I don't want to get married yet."

So then he kept talking about it and the romance sort of got started, and I let him kiss me goodnight, and things progressed, and so the last minute I decided, all right, we'd get married.

We had about three days before leaving for Ashland, so we made arrangements for this fellow to marry us, and we went and got all of our physical exams and everything and got the license and got the whole thing done in time to go down to Ashland, and that was where we spent our honeymoon, at Ashland at the Shakespeare festival.

M.O'R.: And how was that?

A.P-B.: It was lovely. We would drive out into the country and look at the orchards and things. But he knew - anybody who asked me to marry them, I always told them, "I want to take in children. I want to work with them," because I told you I had done this thing at Albertina Kerr Home, I had done volunteer work there when I was working at the library, before I went up to the medical school. We would switch off on days because it was open till 9:00 and so some days we didn't come until noon. And on the days I didn't come till noon, I did volunteer work at the Albertina Kerr Home with these little children.

And I discovered that some of these children could not be adopted, most of them, because Oregon had a law at that time that if the parent came to see them one day out of the year that they could still claim them and they could not be put out for adoption, which was a horrible rule. I mean, these children were institutionalized, and they would - the people who were running the place would say to me, "Well, we can't play with them." Well, what a horrible thing to do to children. "And you can't sing to them." Well, because I was a volunteer I'd do all these things anyway. Like we would be bathing them, there would be two of us bathing, one washing, one drying. So I would try to get the drying one

because while I was drying them I could do, "This little pig went to market, this little pig . . .," you know? And I could do all these fun things with them and I could cuddle them and talk to them. We weren't supposed to be affectionate, which was terrible. These little things, one and two years old, and not even one year old yet, and you can't cuddle them.

M.O'R.: And you weren't supposed to be affectionate because of what, or what was the reasoning?

A.P-B.: Well, their reasoning was that this was not particularly good for children because you weren't going to be there forever anyway, and that then when you were gone, why, the loss would be - so you kept it on this objective kind of scale. Well, that's horrible.

There was this adorable little black boy, and when we would be in the playroom with them and they had to go to the bathroom, they couldn't come and ask you; this was one of the rules. They walked to the door and they just stood there. Well, how stupid. Why not come and ask you? And so when I would go to take them down the hall to the bathroom, then I would throw them over my shoulder, and they were a big sack of flour, you know, and I'd play these games with them. And this little black boy, he would - I'd open the door, and he'd be looking up at me, and his eyes would be twinkling, and he'd start to run down the hall, and I'd chase him. We had these games that I played all the time with him.

So anyway, I had decided that I would take some of these children. When I got a home, then I would fill it up with these little kids, and not require any pay for this, but because I wanted to do it for them, and I would adopt as many as I could.

So I would always say this when these fellows at the medical school, for instance, would ask me to marry them. And I would say, "Well, only if you're willing to do this with me." Well, one of the doctors finally decided he did want to do it with me, but I wasn't in love with him, and I figured at that time you had to be in love with somebody or you couldn't marry them, which was kind of - I don't know. At any rate -.

M.O'R.: Maybe a somewhat idealistic view, I suppose, but probably a good idea.

A.P-B.: It helps to be in love with them, I can tell you. Otherwise how do you put up with all the stuff?

M.O'R.: Did you feel that you were in love with Laurie, then?

A.P-B.: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. By that time I was. One of the reasons that I did fall in love with him was a Christmas card he sent me, of all the silly things. I still have it, and it was this lonely little boy in a long coat and a little pack on his back, and he was walking down this snowy road in this open landscape. It was a famous painter who had done it; it was lovely. And it was on the front of this card. Laurie was a pacifist, which also appealed to me very much, and he belonged to the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a Quaker organization. This was one of the cards from the Fellowship of Reconciliation. And when I got that card I just sat down and just cried, you know. And I thought, "This man has a soul, and he's not afraid to show it."

And so I talked about this thing of an old house and a farm and children, and he would agree with all this. And then unfortunately - and when we would go past this place I'd say, "That's my house someday." And when it came up for sale he was with me when

we saw for the "for sale" sign, and I started calling Dr. Harding. Well, it took me a year to sell my place and get this one, and when I called Dr. Harding - because I kept calling him all the time, and I would call him and say, "Nobody's bought the place yet." And finally he said what the lady in the bookstore said, "Don't you ever give up?" And I said, "No, it's my house."

M.O'R.: And the problem was you just couldn't come up with the down payment?

A.P-B.: Enough of a down payment. So then he said, "All right. If I lower the price \$3,000 and I lower the down payment to a thousand, can you get it?"

I said, "I'll be right over." So I got it.

M.O'R.: And now up to this time Laurie was with you on your attempts to buy the house?

A.P-B.: Yes, he never said anything about it, not even after I bought it, until we brought the first load into the kitchen, and he just stood there at the back door, and he said, "I hate old places. I hate the smell of them. I hate the look of them. I hate everything about them, and I hate old things." I just stood there absolutely aghast, and I said, "Why didn't you tell me that before?"

He said, "You would never have married me if I had."

And I said, "How are you going to live here, because this is where I'm going to live?"

And he just shrugged his shoulders, and we moved in. Well, the marriage just sort of started downhill after that, and -.

M.O'R.: Was he particularly frustrated on this evening?

A.P-B.: He was very frustrated with it.

M.O'R.: The moving process just didn't ...

A.P-B.: I already had a lot of old things. I had been picking up these old things since I was a teenager, and I had them stuffed away in the attic of my mother's house, and I dragged them around everywhere with me, and I already had a lot of things. I had them in the apartment I was living in.

But at the time that I met Laurie I had gone back to my parents' house because I had been living in apartments and then to save money so I could take more music lessons and go to school and do all of these things, I had decided to go to a girls' boarding house where this lady had about five girls living upstairs, and then we had a shared kitchen and bath up there. So I was living in there, and I got very, very sick. She did not heat the place except for an hour or two in the evening, and all of us worked, but I had an extremely bad case of the flu, and I would be there not getting over it because there was no heat and it was a very cold winter. So my father finally came over and he said, "I just can't stand this any longer." He said, "You have to come home." He said, "You can have the sun room" at the side of - well, you've gone past the house. Or did you?

M.O'R.: I haven't yet, actually.

A.P-B.: Well, on 19th Street you'll see the sun room on the front at the west end. So it was a large room, and so my mother begged me to come home, they could take care of me. So I did, and that's where I was when Laurie Pratt - I was at the medical school then.

And so shortly before we got married he said, "Well, I come here quite often, and so could I move my piano into the sun room, and I can practice the piano while you're studying?"

And I said, "Well, I guess that would be all right." Because he was moving and he couldn't take his piano with him, and it was a small piano. So I said, "All right, all right." So I asked my parents, and so he moved it in there. So he would come in the evening, and he'd sit there going through music, and I would sit there studying. And then when I was ready to go to bed I'd say, "You have to go home now," so he'd go home.

But then when we got back from Ashland then we got an apartment. And then ...

M.O'R.: Oh, so you didn't yet have the Lewis & Clark house?

A.P-B.: That was when I bought the house. That was when I bought it.

M.O'R.: But after coming back from Ashland?

A.P-B.: After we came back from Ashland. We lived in that apartment, but I didn't want to live there. And so I went out and bought this house with my money.

M.O'R.: And you didn't buy it together with him?

A.P-B.: No, no.

[end of side one]

ALTHEA PRATT-BROOME

TAPE 7, Side 2

November 17, 1995

A.P-B.: No. I went to Spokane for a while and worked up there. In fact I was there a couple of years.

M.O'R.: Really? You lived in Spokane for two years?

A.P-B.: I lived in Spokane. It was a couple of years. I had an opportunity to take a very good job up there as a manager for a real estate company.

M.O'R.: So it was the job that brought you to Spokane, then?

A.P-B.: Yes. And then I guess I worked there for a couple of years. It was during the war, and this was when Gene was killed. I was up ther, and I came home a couple months after he had been killed. When he died, he came to me and told me, and I woke up - it was during the night when I was asleep; it was early morning. And I woke up crying and crying because he had - he was talking to me. I think I told you that he went in because his brother had gone into the Marines - this was before the war - well, before we got into it with the Japanese. So he was in the Philippines. He had gone with the Marines, was on the Philippine Islands when the Japanese took the Philippines, and he had been tortured and killed, and that was when Gene decided to go into the Air Corps, and he went to England. And then we got into the war, and at any rate when he was talking to me he said that he was with his brother Oliver and that it was very peaceful but that he was dead.

So a couple of months later I came home to visit, and my mother said, "I want you to sit down. I have something to tell

you." And I said, "You don't have to tell me." And she said, "What do you mean? What do you think I'm going to tell you?"

And I said, "You're going to tell me Gene's dead."

And she said, "Well, how could you know that?" All they had done was put a little article this big in the newspaper with his picture, and she had it. And she said, "You couldn't have known up there."

And I said, "He came to me and told me."

And so we talked about it, but at any rate, that happened when I was up there in Spokane.

M.O'R.: You had maintained still contact with him over the years?

A.P-B.: Oh, yeah. Sure.

At any rate, then I came back to Portland. I can't remember where I was when I - somebody - this wool-growing company - or not wool growing, but this place that took wool from farmers, and they had a newspaper that they put out called "The Wool Sack for the Wool Growers," or something like that. It was called "The Wool Sack," at any rate. And so I wrote for them for a while, and then - oh, there was a company down along on the east side, down near the river that was a wholesale company - I can't even remember what it was, and I did some secretarial work for them. And while I was in Spokane I was also taking classes. I was also going to school up there.

M.O'R.: How did you happen to get this job in Spokane?

A.P-B.: This man was going to start a real estate company up there. It was all businesses; it was not houses. And he was looking for somebody, and a friend of mine introduced me to him. He

was a man in his - well, he was 65 at that time, and he had been in the real estate business, but he decided that there was a real opening up there. Spokane was beginning to grow, and there was a lot of business opportunity up there.

M.O'R.: And so he lived in Portland?

A.P-B.: Yes. Well, he had lived in California, and then this friend of mine, when he was here, introduced me, and he talked to me about some of the different secretarial-type jobs that I had had. I had worked for some different individuals with bookkeeping and secretarial things. I used to do some letter writing and things for my father when I was in high school, and then different people that I babysat for gave me jobs to do like this. I can't even remember what all I had done, why this fellow decided that I had a lot of initiative and - I don't know, I guess my friend had told him all these funky things that I had been doing, you know. So anyway, he asked me if I would do this, and it was a good-paying job. And he said, "You're going to have to be responsible for not only helping to run the business but also to run all of the salesmen going out there." And he decided that I had the kind of personality that could get along well with men, and so he decided that I was the kind of person that he'd been looking for.

M.O'R.: And at this time you were in your early 20's?

A.P-B.: Yes. Very early 20's. I was 20 or 21, something like that.

And so I went up there and got an apartment in this house where it was the rooms and maybe a couple of rooms together would be an apartment, and it was run by this lady and it was almost all females, and so I felt safe and secure there. The attic - it was

a big beautiful attic, and it had two rooms and a little kitchenette and a little bath, so it had a living room and a bedroom. And it was all she had left at the time that I went up there. And this man had said that I could come and stay with his wife and little boy if I wanted to. He had been married two or three times, and this was a young woman, 35, and this was her first child, and his second, I think. His son came with his wife to work in the real estate company, came up from California. And so they also lived with him and with his wife and little boy who was two, I think, at that time.

His name was James Colvin. A very nice man, very understanding and very nice to work with. I never had any problems working with him. He was always - well, one time right after I had started working for him, the - he had to go out, and he had a sale coming in, and he said, "I'll be back to close the deal, and you can talk to them if they show up. But I'll be back even before they get here."

Well, I decided, "What if he doesn't make it back?" So I had become acquainted with the people in the big real estate company a few blocks down, so I ran down there and I sat down with one of the people and said, "Teach me how to close a deal. I may have to do it." And so I went through the whole thing with them, and then I ran back, and when the time came he had not shown up. So these people were in a hurry, and I said, "All right, I can do the paperwork with you."

So I sat down and I did it, and he got there just as we had finished. And he came in and he was just all apologies to them. "I'm sorry," you know, "I know I'm holding you up. I know that you

have this other appointment, and I'll hurry as fast as I can to close this."

And they said, "Oh, no. She's already taken care of the whole thing. It's all closed. We've already signed all the papers and everything." And he looked at me, and he looked at the papers and everything, and so they left. And he sat down, and he said, "How did you do this?"

I said, "Well, you didn't tell me how to do it, so I'm not going to tell you how I did it." I said, "That's going to be a secret between us." He was just totalled out by it. Every once in a while during the next few two years, every once in a while he'd look at me and he'd say, "How did you close that deal that time?"
[laughs]

M.O'R.: And you never told him?

A.P-B.: I never told him.

M.O'R.: Now, this is the person you worked with in Spokane, but it's not the same person that gave you the job, or was it?

A.P-B.: Oh, yes. This is the man who gave me the job.

M.O'R.: So he also went up to Spokane to run the place?

A.P-B.: Oh, yes.

M.O'R.: Okay. I see.

A.P-B.: I mean, he was opening it up there.

M.O'R.: Right. Right. Okay.

A.P-B.: Oh, no. He was there. So we had a very fine time together.

M.O'R.: What did you think of Spokane in those days?

A.P-B.: I loved it. I really did. It was small, and I walked everywhere. It was big enough so that if I didn't like

walking two or three miles at a time, I might not have liked it so much. They did have buses. Once in a while I'd take a bus.

In fact, that's how I got that picture because it was during the time in the winter when it was very icy and cold, and I was riding the bus then because it was pretty dangerous to be walking two miles to this house I was living in. And I would pass by this antique shop, and I saw that picture for months in the window, and one day I decided to get off the bus and go in and get it. I just loved it.

So I got off the bus and walked in and a man was standing there holding the picture, a customer. I thought, "Oh, no. I've been looking at this all these months, and now I'm not going to get it." And after a while he put it down, because I just stayed there looking at things, waiting to see if he was going to put it down. He put it down. I picked it up, I walked over to the counter and started to buy it, and he said, "Oh, but I wanted that picture." I said, "It was just sitting there." And so I bought it. Anyway, that I got in Spokane, riding the buses.

M.O'R.: That reminds me of a story from just this past summer - just a quick aside here. My wife and I were up visiting one of her childhood haunts, the Manatulum Island in Canada, and ...

A.P-B.: Oh, beautiful.

M.O'R.: Yeah, it was nice. It was my first visit there. But we came across this garage sale in front of one of the old farm-houses there, and one of the first things I noticed - Mary wasn't there at the moment - I noticed this wonderful old - well, not that old, but it was old - an eight-day mantle clock, you know?

A.P-B.: Oh, yes. My grandfather had one of those. I love those.

M.O'R.: Right. Well, this one was not as grand as some I'd seen by a long shot, but it still seemed to be the legitimate item, and they had a price tag on it of \$35, and this is Canadian dollars.

A.P-B.: You're kidding.

M.O'R.: And I'm thinking, you know, "Is this really what I think it is?" And I hesitated, unfortunately, for a few moments too long, and someone else then came along and picked it up, and that was it.

A.P-B.: You didn't ...

M.O'R.: I didn't get it.

A.P-B.: Oh, no. They didn't put it down.

M.O'R.: They didn't put it down. My story ends a little differently than yours.

A.P-B.: You were on the other end.

M.O'R.: Yeah, that's right.

A.P-B.: Oh, dear. Well, if I hadn't looked at it for so many months and wanted it so badly, I might have turned around and handed it to him. But I thought, "That man hasn't been looking at this month after month, and I have. And I know it's mine."

M.O'R.: Now, so you - the war was going on at the time you were in Spokane?

A.P-B.: Yes, it was. The war ended while I was up there.

M.O'R.: A couple of points. One was that of course you mentioned this terrible loss that you experienced with Gene. Can you tell me about - we've already talked about him a little bit

earlier, but when he went to war, how did he feel about it at that time?

A.P-B.: Terrible.

M.O'R.: Really?

A.P-B.: Of course.

M.O'R.: So he wasn't eager to get into it, necessarily, like so many others?

A.P-B.: Oh, I thought you meant how did I feel.

M.O'R.: No, how did he feel?

A.P-B.: Oh, how did he feel? Oh, no. He felt that it was his duty. He felt he was coming back.

M.O'R.: Sure.

A.P-B.: And, you know, everybody always feels that - well, not everybody; there were those who didn't feel they were coming back. But no, he felt that that was what he should do, and he was a first lieutenant by then, and he was a pilot and looked very handsome in his uniform. It was the man inside that I was interested in, not a uniform. The uniform I didn't want.

I mean, I already had pacifistic feelings and thought war was a horrible thing, but I certainly became a thorough-going pacifist after that. There were too many young men who were killed, and when you really stop and think about war - I've done a tremendous amount of research since then, particularly the Civil War, where families were fighting against one another. I have close to a thousand books on the Civil War alone, and many books on war and what is war, violence, aggression, what's violence and aggression. So I do a lot of wondering why human nature is what it is, why we can't solve things through words, not through wars.

M.O'R.: Well, I guess you could say that my generation - it's perhaps more apparent from some of the wars that the United States has been involved in since World War II that - I mean, it's easier to have an anti-war attitude, I think, with some of the kinds of wars that we've been involved in since that time, but of course World War II is a little different because ...

A.P-B.: Yes, it is because of Hitler and because we were attacked and ...

M.O'R.: Right. Even for people who maybe would have had pacifistic feelings otherwise, it was ...

A.P-B.: Didn't have them then. That's true.

M.O'R.: A lot of people were caught up in it just because of the threat and the fact that we were not the initiators, et cetera.

A.P-B.: Well, and the fact that he was killing all the Jewish people and ...

M.O'R.: Right. Exactly. There were terrible atrocities happening.

A.P-B.: Yeah, just horrible things. But Vietnam wasn't much better, you know. Vietnam had some horrible atrocities, also. But to wipe out three-quarters of the Jewish population in the world is carrying it pretty far.

M.O'R.: Yes, I would say so.

A.P-B.: And then of course as I told you when I was in high school a Jewish boy, Billy Granite, came over, got out, and you know, I heard these things from him, and he and his brother had gotten out, but some of the other parts of his family were still there.

And then when I was at USC teaching down there every summer, and my daughter married a Jewish boy down there, why, his relatives over there in Europe had been killed, too. I mean, I've known a lot of Jewish people, and I've heard a lot of the stories. The Jewish people have always, to me, felt very close, probably because of my experiences that I told you about early on, even though they discarded me while I was in grade school, still in high school I had many friends who were Jewish people, and many since then.

Any time you have an arts program like mine, summer arts program, you're dealing with a lot of Jewish people. Without the Jewish people I don't know how much culture we would have in our country. A lot of people have culture in their own lives, but they're not out there putting the money into it that the Schnitzers and people like this are doing.

M.O'R.: The other thing about your locale during the war, or at war's end, was that of course Spokane was just a couple of hours drive north of the Hanford works, and it played of course a very special role in the war.

A.P-B.: It certainly did.

M.O'R.: I'm just wondering if you had any inkling of what was going on down there during those years?

A.P-B.: No, I didn't. I knew very little about that. I think they kept it pretty hush-hush.

M.O'R.: Yeah, of course they did.

A.P-B.: And after the war, of course, we all knew about Hanford then.

M.O'R.: Right. Right.

A.P-B.: But before that during the war the first time we ever heard anything about real atomic power was when they dropped it on Hiroshima.

M.O'R.: Right.

A.P-B.: And it ended the war, and there were a lot of feelings about that, because not only was it a horrible thing, but it also was a new way of life. It was a threat to the whole world, not just a threat to bringing the war to an end - or a threat that did bring it to an end, but also there were the feelings of how many lives, perhaps, of our people did it save, but is this the way we're supposed to think of humanity, those against us. Those people living there in Japan who were the ones who suffered from the atomic bomb were not the soldiers, they were not the government. They were human beings living ordinary lives and maybe not wanting war. We don't know.

M.O'R.: Yeah, that's right.

A.P-B.: So there are all those questions that come into it.

M.O'R.: Right. And of course we still are living under the threat today yet.

A.P-B.: It is, a horrible threat that's still in our lives and will be till they blow the whole thing up.

M.O'R.: Unfortunately I'm afraid you're right about that. Especially disheartening to see how little progress we've made sort of getting a handle on this problem even now that we no longer have the big enemy across the water.

Well, anyway, that's off the subject of Spokane.

A.P-B.: So the war is over now, and I'm back in Portland and working at the library and at the Albertina Kerr Home.

I got to the medical school through this intuitive thing again. I was sitting in my apartment after I'd gotten home from the library. It was one of my half days - well, no, it was one of my full days, so that I had gotten home and I had had dinner, and I had gotten into my nightgown and bathrobe, and I was sitting there listening to classical music and reading poetry. And this thing said, "Get up. Get dressed. Go down to the library."

And I was saying, "Come on, now. By the time I get dressed, I walk five blocks down to the bus, I take the bus down, I walk from Broadway up to the library, the library is going to be just about closed. This is ridiculous."

And the thing kept saying, "Get up, get dressed, go down to the library."

So finally, because I've always listened to this thing, I got up and got dressed and went down - caught the bus, went down. I walked into the music room where I worked three minutes before 9:00. And Ms. Knox, who was the librarian in charge of the music room, she said, "What in the world are you doing down here at this time of the night?" I said, "I don't really know why I'm here." And she said, "Well, that's the funniest thing I ever heard."

Some of the people were still in the library getting things, and one of them was one of the medical students, who came in all the time and talked to me. And one of the doctors who came in all the time had been asking me to come up to the medical school and work up there. He was an Englishman from Oxford, and he was in the surgery department and was a surgeon, and he had gotten interested in me, and he wanted me to come up there and work in the surgery

department. He found out that I had done secretarial work, and he said, "We could train you."

Well, he wasn't there, but this medical student Bob was there. And Bob said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I don't know." And he said, "Well, the medical library is open till 10:00. Have you ever gone to the medical library?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Well, I have some things to research up there, and if you want to come up and see what the medical library is like, I'll take you home afterwards."

So I said, "All right." So we got up there, and it was a fascinating place. I loved science and I had done a lot of science things in school and taken science university classes. And so he said, "Well, did you ever think of coming up here and working?" And I said, "Well, it's funny, Dr. Delorem has been asking me for weeks now to come up there."

Well, Bob said, "That would be wonderful. So why don't I come get you? Are you working tomorrow?"

And I said, "No, I usually - that's my nine o'clock night, and so usually I go over to the Albertina Kerr home and do volunteer work."

He said, "Well, skip it this time, and I'll bring you up to the employment desk up here and have you talk to them. Because if Dr. Delorem would like to have you," he said, "I could teach you all of the medical terms and everything." He said, "I'd love to spend time with you working on all of this." So he said, "I could do that if you want to do that job."

Well, he took me up there and for about three months they had been looking for someone to start the bone tumor registry in the

cancer research department. They needed somebody who could work on their own and who would be willing to spend several months learning all about medicine and about cancer and all of the processes that this person would have to learn, photography and microtome slides in the lab and x-rays and the whole thing. And on my application it said office manager of a real estate company. And so then my education, science things, and they said, "You're what we've been looking for. Would you take this job?"

And of course the whole thing sounded absolutely fascinating. I'd be working on research papers with the doctors, helping them write them, and if they were working on a research book I would be working with them on that. I would be traveling around the city gathering materials for this bone tumor registry. I would be talking with all of these different doctors, pathologists and research people and radiologists, all the orthopedists. The orthopedist who was setting up the bone tumor registry was only going to be there one afternoon a week, Wednesday afternoons. The rest of the time I was on my own. And I got very excited about it, so I took the job.

[end of tape]