

Chapter 23

ALICE (HOLTHAM) LAUBER

Seattle, Washington

July 7th, 1996

VM = Vivian Moses; AL = Alice Lauber; SM = Sheila Moses

VM: This is talking to Alice Lauber, who was once Alice Holtham, on the 7th of July, 1996 in Seattle. Alice, how did it happen that you joined Calvin and his group?

AL: Well, I was fresh out of business college and the University of California had advertised for secretaries. I interviewed at two different places on the campus and took the job in the lab.

VM: Where had you been living at the time?

AL: I was living in Oakland.

VM: Are you a Californian?

AL: Oh yes.

SM: What year was this?

AL: That's what I don't know. Certainly, it has to be in the '40s but I don't know the year.

VM: When you go there...well, let's start with the interview. Who did you talk to in the interview?

AL: I talked to Bert Tolbert and I think I talked to Andy (*Benson*). I mainly remember talking to Bert.

VM: And so you didn't meet Calvin at the interview itself?

AL: No.

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VM: When did you meet him?

AL: The first day of work, of course.

VM: What happened — what was it like?

AL: I don't remember that at all. He came through, I'm sure. He was much more concerned with the research that was being done than who was in the office.

VM: Did you know anything about the group you were joining?

AL: Not a thing. Chemistry was my worst subject — I don't know how I ever ended up in a chemistry lab.

VM: It wasn't a matter that concerned them that you didn't know anything about chemistry?

AL: No, it wasn't. Bert asked me if I liked to ski and I said, yes, and I was hired.

VM: Yes, that does seem to have been an important aspect of why people got hired. So you joined the group and...where were you working?

AL: In ORL.

VM: In ORL, itself?

AL: Right

VM: Whereabouts in the building, do you remember?

AL: Well, yeah. When you come in the door and you turn to the left and then turn to the right and went through a small office into the office where I was working.

VM: Were you alone in that office?

AL: Well, not the whole time.

VM: But it was an office, presumably, which was not that segregated from other people. Was there a lot of throughput of people wandering in and out?

AL: Oh, yes, because that office fed right into the lab.

VM: So from where you were sitting could you see people working there?

AL: Oh, yes. And, in the first little office that we went through. there were people using that as an office. That's where Kazuo Shibata was and there were other people in there.

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VM: I see. You were the only secretary there at the time?

AL: Well, the only secretary in ORL.

VM: Who else was there?

AL: Marilyn was in Donner.

VM: She was already there when you got there, was she?

AL: Yes.

VM: Alone? Was she the only secretary in Donner?

AL: I think she was alone there. And then Norma Werdelin worked there and there were some others, too, that came in.

VM: Did you spend all of your time in the group in ORL?

AL: When Marilyn, I think it must have been when she had her children, I would go up to Donner and work for Bert.

VM: I guess that was the main office, was it? Because Bert was really administering the whole thing, wasn't he?

AL: That was the main office, that's right.

VM: Did Calvin have his own secretary, as you remember, over in Chemistry?

AL: As I remember he didn't. As I remember it was Marilyn and I did secretarial work for him, too, when Marilyn wasn't around or when she was too busy.

VM: So when you got there, which was sometime in the latish '40s, you think, probably, who was there?

AL: Well, it was the earlier '40s, I think. No, couldn't have been: must have been the latish '40s. Who was there? Gosh.

VM: Well, who comes to mind?

AL: Al was there and Andy was there; Vicky...

VM: Lynch?

AL: ...Lynch was there. I can't...

VM: People like Murray Goodman. Was he there already when you got there?

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AL: As a student, he might have been.

VM: Alex Wilson?

AL: No, Alex came later.

VM: So it was really quite a small group, was it, when you first joined?

AL: It was. And I don't remember what foreigners might have been there.

VM: Did you get the impression that the whole building was full of people or was it not yet...?

AL: It wasn't. There wasn't anybody upstairs. There was a glass blowing shop there and that was about it.

VM: So you were all in the main section on the lower floor there.

AL: Yes. There were two labs.

VM: Did they have at that time those underground rooms where they did the counting?

AL: Yes, the counting room. I spent many an hour counting down there for Andy.

VM: Did you do counting, yourself?

AL: Oh, yes.

VM: Secretarial work wasn't restricted to typewriting.

AL: Secretary was just sort of a word! I did the drawings and arranged the parties, took care of the symphony tickets.

VM: I didn't realise that all these things went on. That's a very liberal form of secretarial activity. And how long did you stay there?

AL: I left in 1955, in winter of '55. Probably I started in the early '50s because I wasn't there in '49.

VM: You weren't there when Melvin had his heart attack?

AL: Yes, I was.

VM: That would place it. I think that was latish in '49.

AL: I think I was because it was just a part of the life there so I... I'm sorry my memory is very poor. I know that I went over to take dictation from him one day and I got half way down the stairs from where he had his office and I heard this terrible noise

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coming from him. And I thought, oh gosh, he's had a heart attack, and I went racing up the stairs and all he done, he had forgotten to tell me something and he was calling out! I was sure it was the end.

VM: As a secretary presumably you would work more regular hours than some of the other people?.

AL: Yes, oh I did.

VM: Did you used to get in at eight in the morning or something of that sort?

AL: Yes.

VM: Were other people in as early as that? Did you unlock the doors?

AL: Some. Sometimes Andy was there very early and sometimes he came in later.

VM: The others would drift in, presumably, during the course of the day?

AL: That's right.

VM: In terms of the social interaction in the building, there was the big white table people talk about. Was that there when you were there?

AL: Oh yes. That was funny one day. We had Alice and Altha as the dishwashers...

VM: That was Alice Smith, was it; she was a black lady?

AL: Yes; and Altha Vann. Kazuo had worked all night and had stretched out on the big white table (*to take a nap*). And Alice came in — she must have been the first one there because she was sure he was dead!

VM: And you used to gather with everyone else for coffee time. What used to happen at lunch time — what did you do for lunch?

AL: I usually went out; I mean I ate my lunch and then went out for a walk or went to the Avenue (*i.e. Telegraph Avenue*) or things like that.

VM: Doing your own errands, not necessarily together with other people.

AL: That's right.

VM: Were you married at the time?

AL: No.

VM: Did you tend to socialise with other people in the lab.?

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AL: Oh yes.

VM: In the evenings?

AL: Oh yes. It was a family. They worked together all day and then all partied together on the weekends when there was a party or everybody would go to the symphony or everybody would...That was the unique part about it.

VM: And that was commonplace for people to do that?

AL: Yes, I would say so.

VM: And you were part of the organisation that fixed things up?

AL: At times, yes.

VM: Who was the stimulus for getting people to do this — how did it happen?

AL: People would just...When the party was the Calvin's, of course, Mrs. Calvin would call me and said find out how many can come and get it all arranged. But otherwise things just happened. Of course, there were always the trips. Everybody went on trips together — I don't know if they did when you were there?

VM: Yes. Those weekends trips, usually to the mountains and places like that; the seashore, maybe?

AL: Death Valley was usually the first trip and then we would go up to Lassen and then we'd go skiing to Yosemite in the winter.

VM: So there was the annual cycle of trips.

AL: Yes.

VM: And the Christmas party, as I remember: was that in your day, too?

AL: Yes.

VM: In ORL, was it?

AL: In ORL.

VM: Were you there at the start of the Christmas parties or were they ongoing?

AL: I think they were ongoing because they already had the eggnog recipe, the famous eggnog recipe. Some of the Donner women did that.

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VM: How did you find the relationship between the people in Donner and the people in ORL? Were they very much the same gang, do you think, or were they separated a lot?

AL: They weren't always at the parties. They were separated. They weren't as together up there as we were.

VM: Did you ever work in Donner?

AL: Only to help out when Marilyn wasn't there.

VM: And people in Donner, as I remember, were in separate rooms, weren't they, up and down a corridor more or less.

AL: More or less, yes.

VM: And did they tend to stick inside their rooms to a greater extent than the ORL people?

AL: Well, of course, ORL was a big open room so it was different.

VM: When it came to writing papers you, presumably, were part of the process of turning thoughts into publications.

AL: Turning *words* into publications not thoughts.

VM: Obviously that was before the days of computers and even the days before photocopiers.

AL: Pretty much. I was there when we got a photocopier and it was a very laborious process.

VM: One of these terrible wet, smelly things, wasn't it?

AL: Well you had to run copies through like photographs, put it through all the solutions.

VM: So you were one of the people, anyway, who had the job of multiple typing of a manuscript to go through the various stages and carbons and all the rest of it.

AL: That's right.

VM: Did everybody write papers? Did Calvin write papers, himself? Did you deal with him as a paper writer?

AL: No, I don't think I did; I think Marilyn did that. His name was on every paper but the people in the lab. that I worked for would write the papers.

VM: And they would present the stuff to you in handwriting. Difficult to cope with?

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AL: Sometimes, particularly the foreigners.

VM: All the foreigners or just some of the non-English ones?

AL: Well, you know, some of the penmanship is different to ours because it was all hand-written.

VM: Presumably the people were fairly amenable about corrections.

AL: Well, they had to be.

VM: And did you have to go through many copies of producing these papers before they were finally sent off?

AL: At times.

VM: You were also doing the drawings, you mentioned?

AL: Yes.

VM: So you did graphs and things like that?

AL: Uh huh.

VM: And there was this famous drawing in which you were involved.

AL: That's right. Alex's.

VM: We've heard it from Alex's point of view but as one of the artists involved what's your...?

AL: I didn't have any artistic training, any drawing training, and that was probably the most difficult one to do because it was so complicated and so involved.

VM: Oh, you did that whole complex drawing of Alex's?

AL: The whole thing. You've heard of Alex's couple of days of running his research — everybody in the lab. was involved — that was set up right outside my office door.

VM: So you were aware of all this activity going on.

AL: I was one of them.

VM: Oh, you were one of them.

AL: One of them; he had to use everybody that was there to operate it.

VM: Right. And then you drew the equipment. Was it your idea to put the fisherman in?

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AL: Well, I think it was because that drawing just about finished me and I had got to do something. And, of course, it went all the way through the reviewers; it passed all the reviewers.

VM: Nobody spotted it?

AL: Nobody spotted it and just before it was sent off to print I went up — I finally couldn't stand it any longer — I went over and pointed it out to Dr. Calvin and he said "yes, he had seen it: didn't bother him a bit!" But Eric Kay's (*husband of Lorel Daus Kay*) professor here at Berkeley (*this should be "Seattle" — see below*) evidently didn't like it.

VM: Lorel was one of the authors, was she, on that?

AL: No, I don't think so.

VM: When you say "Eric's...?"

AL: Eric came up to University of Washington to do his graduate studies (*in chemistry*) and his professor here objected to it, Eric found out.

VM: It's so small, it is very difficult to see in the actual printed version.

AL: Yes; you have to really look at it.

SM: You have to know it's there.

AL: You do.

VM: I think that's, perhaps, the original joke in the ORL papers. There weren't actually too many.

AL: No, there weren't.

VM: There should have been more but that was a good one. You were never tempted to do it again in some of your other artistic efforts?

AL: It wasn't the right kind of set-up for it; I mean, that was perfect for a fisherman.

VM: Did you have fishing in your background somewhere?

AL: No!

VM: Well, it certainly turned out to be very nice. But just to explore it a bit more because this is clearly a story we are clearly going to have make much of: it was your idea to put the fisherman in?

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AL: I think it was. Alex and I...Alex was right round joking with everybody and whether he came up with it or I came up with it, why

VM: So even you had he would certainly have agreed.

AL: Alex? Yes, of course!

VM: (*Question apparently omitted*)

AL: Whenever I couldn't find something in the files, and had to tell Andy that I couldn't find, it he would say, "I think it's home under the bed," and he would bring it back at lunch time.

VM: Oh, I see. He used to read...

AL: He would take work home and leave it there.

SM: You should see his (*Andy Benson's*) filing cabinet in his office now. It's full of things which many years ago he took home. Vivian will tell you what sort of things.

VM: Well, he has, in addition to all sorts of papers, there are many relics he took home — bottles of various dubious solutions — which he pulls out of his filing cabinet and says, "Oh, it must have evaporated in 40 years!" It is a long time since Andy left there but that's what he's got and he hints, I have never actually seen this, but he hints that he has stacks of stuff hidden away elsewhere.

AL: I wouldn't be surprised.

VM: Things like chromatograms and stuff like that. Among the people who came through when you were there — you were there four or five years or something about that...

AL: About four, I think it was.

VM: ...there were presumably lots of foreigners coming through?

AL: I should say, yes.

VM: You remember some of the ones you dealt with while they were there?

AL: Rod Quayle, Malcolm Thain, Jean Bourdon, the Italian fellow whose name I can't remember (*perhaps it was Franco Mazetti*), Peter Massini, Arnold Nordahl, Alex (*Wilson*)...

VM: So there were lots of them.

AL: Lots of them. In fact, Norma Werdelin, the other secretary from the other office, and I got a crazy idea to take five of them to a football game and it was very exhausting trying to explain football to people who understood all different languages.

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VM: This was presumably American football.

AL: American football, yes. One of the Cal games.

VM: I remember my own difficulty the first time I was taken to a football game.

AL: Well, multiply that by five and we had a real problem on our hands.

VM: But most of the foreigners who came, I think, probably spoke English reasonably well, didn't they?

AL: The Italian, what was his name (*Franco Mazetti?*), had difficulty. It was obviously in the fall when football was played and, I think, all of them had just come.

VM: So it was all very novel to them.

AL: Very novel to them, yes.

VM: When they first arrived, were you one of the people who helped them settle in?

AL: Yes.

VM: Did you have to help people find apartments or places to live?

AL: Well, sometimes or meet them at the train or try to get things together for them — furniture sometimes — and tell them where to find shopping and other things.

VM: Was there not some sort of lab. supply of furniture?

AL: No, there wasn't. But it seems to me, if I remember correctly, there was something on the campus, through I-House or something, where they could borrow things.

VM: Was it difficult to find places for people to live at that time?

AL: It's always difficult to find places which people can afford.

VM: Yes. Because I guess these guys probably didn't have too much money, did they?

AL: No, not really. Of course, the single ones lived at I-House.

VM: Oh, so some of them came with wives.

AL: Yes. Dr. Calvin preferred them to have their wives there.

VM: Preferred them to have their wives there?

AL: That's right. Encouraged them to send for their wives.

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VM: Why do you think he did that?

AL: I think he just liked the idea of family. Maybe he thought they'd be happier if their wives were there.

VM: He didn't think they might work shorter hours if their wives were there?

SM: You mentioned that Gen used to be in touch with you about setting up the parties in their home. Can you tell us something about what you feel her part in the group was?

AL: She was definitely the person to relate to everybody and to make everyone feel welcome — the scientists that came in. Dr. Calvin was the scientific person and she was personal person.

VM: He was always friendly to people, wasn't he?

AL: Yes, but it was always on a...he always wanted to get back to science.

VM: He was friendly on a professional basis, as it were.

AL: Yes. That's kind of humorous. He would come in first thing in the morning — some of the people weren't even there — and say, "Well, what are the results, what results do you have?" You've probably heard of Paul Hayes.

VM: Yes, Indeed.

AL: Finally Paul made a little flag and when there were results he would raise the little flag.

VM: Where was this flag?

AL: Right next to Paul's desk.

VM: His results or anybody's results?

AL: Well, Paul wasn't doing...didn't have results but he would know what was going on. Just to lighten the mood a little bit.

VM: And did Calvin take any notice of the flag?

AL: I don't think so.

VM: I wonder if he knew what it meant.

AL: I don't know.

VM: So he used to come in regularly, did he?

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AL: Every morning.

SM: I don't think he missed much.

AL: No, I don't think so either.

SM: He probably enjoyed it.

AL: And he was always worried when we would all go off on a trip.

VM: Worried about what?

AL: That something...He would come in very early on the Monday morning afterwards to be sure everybody made it all in one piece.

VM: He would check you all back in.

AL: ...check us all back in.

SM: He was concerned for your safety, presumably.

AL: Yes, or whether the research was going to go on or something.

VM: Did he ever go on those trips himself?

AL: No.

VM: I remember how strenuous they were for someone who's not an outdoor type. You presumably are an outdoor type, are you?

AL: Yes.

VM: You found it easy to do, then?

AL: Yeah. Well, it was wonderful...well, it was a wonderful place for the foreigners because they never had to feel as outsiders and were always welcome to be able to be taken out to all these places and see what was there.

VM: What about parties — indoor parties, evening parties or weekend or picnics?

AL: I think there used to be a summer picnic for both labs. but I don't think it went on for too long. I vaguely remember that. There used to be parties in people's homes.

VM: Were people generally, do you think, friendly with one another, people in the lab.?

AL: I think they were. There was a lot of give and take around.

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VM: Was it your impression that the people who worked together also spent time out of work together?

AL: Yes, they did. The skiers, of course, skied together and the hikers hiked together.

VM: So it was pretty much a tight social group?

AL: That's the feeling I had.

VM: When you left there, presumably you began to work in other places, did you ever find anywhere like it?

AL: Oh, no. It was very unique. I worked for years in one of the engineering departments here ...

VM: Here in Seattle?

AL: Yes...and they barely spoke, certainly never said "good morning".

SM: How do you account for this sort of social set-up?

AL: I think maybe one reason was that everybody was about the same age and there were a lot of single people at the time; and I think that makes a difference.

SM: But on the other hand, you say many of the foreigners came with their wives and they, too, were made welcome and joined in.

AL: Yes, they were.

VM: So did not too many people have their own kids at the time?

AL: No, not too many.

VM: So they weren't tied up, particularly, with domestic arrangements?

AL: That's right. Clint (*Fuller*) had kids, was having his family then, and Louisa (*now*) Nishitani and her (*then*) husband, Rich Norris had their family when they were at the lab. because Rich replaced Louisa when she got pregnant.

VM: Louisa lives, actually, not that far from here but it's not going to be possible for me to get to her.

AL: Well, it's about three hours, anyway.

VM: Yes, but it's not a thousand miles away. Anyway, I gather it wouldn't be very convenient for her anyway, right now.

AL: That's right.

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VM: So I'm not going to get to see her. But you are friendly with her?

AL: Yes.

VM: What did she do in the lab.?

AL: She was a botanist and she did the algae, she took care of the algae.

VM: Was she there when you got there?

AL: No.

VM: Did she stay after you left?

AL: No. She was gone by then.

VM: I see; so she was there really a fairly short time.

AL: Her husband came to get his Ph.D. in California and Louisa came to work at the lab. And then when she got pregnant was just when he was finishing up so he came and replaced her in the lab.

VM: And that was Rich Norris. He was one of those guys, was he, who stands in the picture with the deerstalker hats?

AL: Yes.

VM: He's a tall fellow, is he?

AL: No, not that tall.

VM: Maybe he was just standing on one of the upper steps.

AL: Might have been. Or the other deer stalkers were short, I don't know!

VM: You remember that, do you?

AL: Yes, I do now. Malcolm (*Thain*) had one and I think Rod (*Quayle*) might have had one.

VM: Yes, Rod had one but he said his grandchildren had wrecked his. But I've still got Malcolm and Clint to see and they might have them.

AL: Well, I hope Rod still has his cowboy hat; he was give it.

VM: We have a picture of Rod in his cowboy hat which he was given on the way out.

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SM: Which is still in pristine condition, absolutely perfect.

AL: That means he hasn't worn it!

SM: No, he has. It is obviously a very good one and has kept very well. His grandchildren get to it but it has kept well.

AL: I think that somebody in the lab. (*it might have been Rich Norris*) went to the south-west and bought it. They were going there on a trip and were commissioned to pick one up.

VM: Well, he certainly treasured it for the last umpteen years and he's got it now.

SM: Had you organised his farewell when he left?

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AL: Yes.

SM: Tell us about it.

AL: I don't really remember it, actually.

SM: You all went to the train station and pretended they were just married?

AL: Probably.

SM: And threw rice all over them and this was the occasion of the deerstalker; no...

AL: No, the cowboy.

VM: Was there generally a going-away party for people when they left or was Rod a special case?

AL: Rod was a special person, really. I think we probably did something for everybody when they left.

VM: You mentioned when the tape recorder was off a few minutes ago...you asked whether I was going to see Hans Kornberg. Hans Kornberg must have some memory for you, then. Does he? Do you remember him well?

AL: When Hans left, you see, Rod and Yvonne and I went with him down to Yosemite, to Death Valley and to Grand Canyon. He left us at the Grand Canyon (*to drive on to New York*) and we took the train home back (*to Berkeley*).

VM: He wasn't in the lab. for a very long time: over a summer, I think?

AL: Yeah, it wasn't very long.

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VM: Have you tended to keep in touch with people that you knew at that time?

AL: Not really, no. Lorel and, of course, Louisa. And I did see Hans in England once and I saw Leonard Poel in Scotland once. Grant (*Buchanan*) took me up to Cambridge to meet Rod before Rod came over because Rod had some questions.

VM: Oh; before Rod ever arrived you were in England?

AL: Yes.

VM: I see; I hadn't realised you had been there at that time. You don't get down to Berkeley very often?

AL: No, now that my parents are gone so I don't get down there.

VM: But you have been to some of the reunions?

AL: Just the one.

VM: There's just that one?

AL: Yeah.

VM: Of course, many people who were part of the group...there is a core that sticks together.

AL: Yes, there is.

VM: I guess the people who live there.

AL: The people the certainly who worked at the lab. until they retired.

VM: Right, and they still gather every Wednesday morning. But clearly, people who live further away find it more difficult.

AL: Well, I mean I wasn't part of the scientific part of it — it's a little different with me.

VM: You've never been tempted to become a chemist?

AL: I told you: chemistry was my worst subject.

VM: Well, a biologist, you know: whatever you want to call it.

AL: Found it fascinating, actually.

VM: Since you spent your time working in ORL and you would have imbibed the spirit of the place and you visited the round building subsequently, how well do you think the

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round building was able to embody the spirit of ORL, bearing in mind that times were different and it's a modern building and all the rest of it? Do you think there is any remote connection between the two?

AL: I didn't get the feeling that there was although it was all open and people could interact. But then, I don't know...sometimes it is just the people that make things work and I don't even know whether it has worked. I haven't heard.

VM: Some of the people were, of course, the same people although necessarily they, themselves, were older and the times were different. It is an unfair question but if I were to say to you that ORL was to be pulled down and there was a chance of building something else, what does one build? Very difficult to...

AL: That's true. It is also hard to build the spirit. The spirit just has to be there.

VM: Yes. But did you get the impression while you were there that the building played an important part in formulating the spirit?

AL: It probably did because it was kind of ramshackle and it wasn't pristine enough to scare people to keep them in their rooms.

VM: The people in Donner who were, after all, part of the same general organisation, in many ways were similar people, you felt didn't have this same pulling together sense.

AL: I don't feel they did.

VM: I wonder whether that might partly have been because Donner was a much more conventional building not given to the sort of community activity.

AL: Well, I don't think the Donner work was as interesting to Dr. Calvin as the ORL work and that might make a difference. There was certainly a spirit of things happening in ORL.

VM: That's right. Since you left there what did you do?

AL: Well, I came up here to Seattle and...

VM: Were you married already in Berkeley?

AL: I got married and came up here because my husband was from here. I worked on the (*University of Washington*) campus, I worked in the Admissions Office, and then went into Materials Science and Engineering and eventually worked for the Associate Dean of Engineering and then he became a Chairman of the Department and worked there until I retired.

VM: So all of your working life essentially has been spent in an academic environment.

AL: That's right.

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VM: Have you had any regrets?

AL: No, I think it is a great place to work.

VM: Had you not been going to get married, or had your husband-to-be been in Berkeley, would you have been content to go on working in the place where you had been working or was it time to move on anyway?

AL: I think if I had gotten married (*even to someone in the Bay Area*) I might have moved on because the life in ORL was so consuming and when you get married you have to have other interests and considerations.

VM: So while you were there, if I may pick you up on that, while you were there you mean it really dominated your life as well as just the 9 or 8, 8 to 5, whatever it was?

AL: It did, it certainly did. Socially as well as everything else.

VM: Many of your friends were from the group?

AL: That's right.

VM: And presumably that's was because you wanted it that way. These were congenial people for you.

AL: Yes. They were doing things that I enjoyed doing with them.

VM: And the fact that you were not yourself a scientist...did you feel to any degree significantly cut off from what they were chatting among themselves?

AL: I found it very interesting to listen to them and there were always results coming out that were exciting to the scientific community, particularly when Calvin gave the seminar on DNA. That was very exciting because everybody was so impressed.

VM: When you joined the group, what sort of group did you think you were coming to?

AL: I had no idea. I was just going to work!

VM: You weren't warned about what sort of people you might come in contact with?

AL: Well, the Personnel Manager, when I was hired, said, "Now, you have to remember that they are just little boys." And I guess I sort of became almost a den mother.

VM: But you knew they weren't actually little boys — what did it mean to you when he said that?

AL: Well, that they had to be taken care of.

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VM: I see; they knew their size but had to be taken care of in the unknown. Were they...were they little boys like that?

AL: Well...I think all men are still little boys!

VM: But among men in general they weren't worse than any body else?

AL: Oh, no, they weren't worse than anybody else. And I would much rather have them than some of these others that are posing all the time!

SM: The Personnel Manager probably recognised you as somebody who would respond to people in that way, anyway. He wouldn't have said it otherwise!

AL: Either that or it was a warning!

VM: Well, I think the sort of secretary they needed to have in a group like that had to be someone who could, herself, mix easily and socially with these people. If you had been remote and stand-offish, it would have been as difficult for them as for you.

AL: It would have been, especially since I didn't necessarily do secretarial jobs; I did anything that came up.

VM: So it needed someone with a fair degree of flexibility and understanding and willingness to muck in with other people. That's fair enough.

AL: It makes a much more interesting job!

VM: Absolutely. But I'm not sure the Personnel Manager didn't get it right: (a) in telling you and (b) in hiring you. I think that probably was entirely appropriate.

Thank you very much for talking to us. I have to say for posterity that it's a marvellous day here in Seattle. It has been well worth the trip to come up and sit on your patio and chat like this.

AL: Well, I'm glad you could come on a day that is marvellous. It doesn't always happen.

VM: So I gather; thank you very much.