5-28-1993

Interview with Dorothy Bloom, May 28, 1993

Dorothy Bloom

Michael J. Birkner
Gettysburg College

Interview Participants

Interviewee: Dorothy Bloom (Dottie Bloom), wife of Robert L. Bloom, Professor of History, Gettysburg College
Interviewer: Michael J. Birkner, Benjamin Franklin Professor of the Liberal Arts & Professor of History, Gettysburg College

Follow this and additional works at: http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/oralhistall

Part of the Higher Education Commons, Liberal Studies Commons, Oral History Commons, and the United States History Commons

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.

http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/oralhistall/2

This interview appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution. Cupola permanent link: http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/oralhistall/2

This open access oral history is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact cupola@gettysburg.edu.
Interview with Dorothy Bloom, May 28, 1993

Description
Dorothy Bloom, wife of Robert Bloom, a professor of history at Gettysburg College, was interviewed on May 28, 1993 by Michael Birkner about her experience as a spouse of a faculty member from 1949 to 1981. She discusses other faculty members and administrators at the time, her husband’s work and the events they participated in on campus.

Length of Interview: 91 minutes

Collection Note: This oral history was selected from the Oral History Collection maintained by Special Collections & College Archives. Transcripts are available for browsing in the Special Collections Reading Room, 4th floor, Musselman Library. GetDigital contains the complete listing of oral histories done from 1978 to the present. To view this list and to access selected digital versions please visit -- http://gettysburg.cdmhost.com/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16274coll2

Keywords
Gettysburg College, Robert Bloom, Basil Crapster, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Robert Fortenbaugh, Charles Glassick, Charles Glatfelter, Carl Hanson, C.A. Hanson, Henry W.A. Hanson, Walter Langsam, Willard Paul, Wilbur Tilberg

Disciplines
Higher Education | History | Liberal Studies | Oral History | United States History

This oral history is available at The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College: http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/oralhistall/2
MJB: Bob's first year at Gettysburg was 1949. Would you tell us where you were when you first heard about Bob's opportunity to come to Gettysburg?

DB: Both Bob and I had been in the service and we got out in 1945. He had been teaching in public school in Tyrone, Pennsylvania, and the rule was that (teachers) had to get their jobs back when they got out of the service. However, the job he had was being filled by the daughter of a member of the school board, who they were not about to let go. They offered him a job teaching seventh grade math and eighth grade science, for neither of which he was certified to teach, and neither of which he had the slightest interest or confidence in teaching. So the hunt began for a job. He had his master's (degree in history) and wanted to work on his Ph.D. degree. A job turned up in a junior college in Long Branch, New Jersey, which meant he could commute to Columbia (University) and get his course work done for his Ph.D. That was completed after three years. He wanted to get settled somewhere and get a real job. He sent out about seventy vitae, and one of the nibbles was from Gettysburg College. Since Bob had lived in Carlisle at one time and gone to Dickinson College for a year, he knew about Gettysburg and was very interested. He came down for an interview, got the job, and so we came.

MJB: Was there at any point a choice that you had to make between Gettysburg and another place?

DB: There were a couple of other nibbles, but once he (visited) Gettysburg, he decided to come here.

MJB: What did Bob know about the college?

DB: He knew it had a good reputation. I don't know exactly how much he knew about the inner workings, but his general impression was that it was a highly respectable college.

MJB: Did he have to come to Gettysburg College before he was offered the position?
DB: Yes, he did.

MJB: Can you tell me about that?

DB: At that time his mother was living with us. At that time I had a part-time job at the college at which he was teaching, so he had come down here for the interview. I remember the evening very well. His mother and I and my first born son were having dinner and he called to inform me that he had been offered the job. He said, "at first they didn't want to give me what I'd been making at Monmouth College, but when I told them what I'd been promised they upped the ante and were going to match it. Needless to say, I was very happy. I went back to the college and told my mother-in-law, who said, "I wasn't worried, because I prayed every night." (Laughs)

MJB: So you had to get ready to move from Monmouth to Gettysburg. Tell me a little about your first impressions of the community in Gettysburg and the college itself.

DB: Having spent several years in service . . . I don't think I was here more than two or three weeks when I said to Bob, "this feels like home." It turned out to be a very good place to raise kids. I'm sure he could have made more money elsewhere; he had several offers to go other places. But he just liked it here, and felt some identification with the college and the people we got to know. So we just decided we wanted to stay.

MJB: The town was smaller and quiet than it is today by a good deal. Did this seem to be a plus to you, or a minus?

DB: Unlike some small towns, I never felt we were in the boondocks. When you can get to Baltimore in an hour and a half and Washington in a couple of hours, you just don't feel like you're buried out in the middle of nowhere.

MJB: Where did you move when you first came to town?

DB: Well, we lived on Hanover Street when we first came to town, and it was a big old house that had belonged to an elderly couple. It was crawling with cockroaches. I remember making formula for our second born son and having nightmares about these roaches getting into the baby's food. We were only there for about a year.
MJB: What made you decide to move? The roaches?

DB: Partly that, and a house turned up across the street from the college library, where Ted Baskerville lives now. (This is 211 N. Washington St.)

MJB: Did you rent that or buy it?

DB: Rented. It was much closer to school and I could walk to town. It just worked out better that way. We moved there in the fall of 1950 and lived there until 1952.

MJB: You then moved out. . . .

DB: We moved to a house on the York Road, where Wendy's sits today.

MJB: What made you decide to leave that house? Traffic, or other reasons?

DB: We had to dig a well, and then we had problems with the septic system. Also, it wasn't really big enough. . . . Bob didn't have a study. . . . A lot of things combined and we decided we ought to move. The criteria were, it had to have city sewer and water, a study, and a garage.

MJB: Is that this house?

DB: This house, yes. We moved here 32 years ago.

MJB: Well, let's go back to 1949. I want to talk about some people, as well as the environment at the college. Let's start by getting your fix on Henry W. A. Hanson, who had been college for 27 years when you arrived.

DB: I'm sure he was a very fine man, but at that point he was past his prime, and probably shouldn't have been still head of the school. They lived in what was then The White House, next to Glatfelter Hall, and each year they had an organization on campus called "Campus Club," which was all the wives and other women on campus. The first meeting was always at the Hansons. The first several years, three or four years, I was there, she would come up to me and say,
"Welcome to Gettysburg College; it's so nice to have you young people join us." (Laughs)

MJB: Did Bob have anything to say about Henry Hanson and his stewardship of the college?

DB: He was a man you could respect. I would expect that Bob did not think a great deal of him as an administrator.

MJB: When you came in 1949 the department consisted of Bob and Professor Robert Fortenbaugh and who else?

DB: Basil Crapster, who was also here for the first year.

MJB: What was the impression that Robert Fortenbaugh made on Bob and you?

DB: We both had a great deal of respect for him. Both he and his wife Lena. They were the soul of kindness to those of us who were new. They had dinner parties and other entertainments at their home to be sure that we met people we would find congenial. Mrs. Fortenbaugh saw that I was invited to join various organizations in town. You might almost call them surrogate parents. And of course Basil was not married at the time. I don't know what specific things they did, but he also was made to feel welcome. . . . They were very kind to us. Mrs. Fortenbaugh probably belonged to every organization in Gettysburg, yet she cautioned me not to join too many things right away, to decide what I was really interested in. I thought this amusing. . . .

JB: Was Dr. Fortenbaugh still at the top of his game in the late 1940s?

DB: Yes. He had a stroke or heart attack in 1958, . . . and he died rather soon after that.

MJB: Fortenbaugh was the Chair of the Department for as long as he wanted it?

DB: Unless you did something really horrible it was a lifetime appointment.
MJB: When you were a young couple in Gettysburg, who were the people you associated with on a regular basis?

DB: We became acquainted with a few townspeople and socialized with them, but not as much as the more recent faculty members.

MJB: Who would these have been?

DB: Of those we came to know and became friends with over the years, Norm and Nancy Richardson. Then Dick and Betty Geyer came, and we became close friends with them. The Pickerings. For a number of years, when we were living on the York Road, our friends were in apartments in town. They wanted to do something on New Year's Eve, and they figured our place was the logical place to have it. . . . It was very much a joint venture, a BYOB affair. As other members of the groups began to (buy) their own homes, we rotated.

MJB: It seems that there was a certain esprit that existed among faculty members at the college that doesn't exist any more.

DB: Salaries at that point were minimal. You didn't have the money for concerts out of town and that sort of thing. You made your own fun, and you did it on a collaborative basis so no one was required to spend a lot of money to produce a really fun time.

MJB: Charlie Glatfelter told me that he made somewhere around $3000 when he was first hired to teach Economics in 1949, and that Dr. Hanson didn't give him a raise for several years. Finally, he said to Dr. Hanson, you can't not give me a raise, and he got one around 1953. I take it Dr. Hanson really guarded the college's money.

DB: (Laughs) As I told you, they agreed to give Bob what he was going to get at the Junior College, some magnificent sum like $3400. But he was here for three years without a raise, and didn't get one till word came that his Ph.D. thesis had been accepted by Columbia.

MJB: So, he didn't have his Ph.D. when he came here.

DB: No, he had finished all his course work at Columbia and had started his dissertation. His first years here he was teaching 15 hours which didn't give him a lot of time to work on the dissertation.

MJB: Did he do it over the summers?
DB: Whenever he could work it in. I think it was '53 when he got it done.

MJB: I'll be that was a great relief.

DB: Especially for me, since I typed all 649 pages, five carbons. (Laughs)

MJB: Bob had to face a tenure process. Was it the six year process that goes on to this day? Was Dr. Fortenbaugh the person who decided whether Bob got to stay?

DB: I think there was a committee. . . . I think he got tenure the same time he got his Ph.D. and got his raise to $3700.

MJB: Am I right to think that you were pleased at the prospect of staying for the long haul?

DB: Yes; The first three years we had to . . . get established. By (1953) the prospects looked pretty good, (and) we liked it here. . . . He had some nibbles, one from a southern college, and of course several nibbles from Shippensburg, where he had graduated. But no firm offers, because he hadn't indicated he was ready to leave.

MJB: What were the big events at the college that you participated in?

DB: The Civil War related events attracted the really big names in Civil War History at the time. I think there was the 100th anniversary celebration, when we had Alistair Cooke here as MC. After that the Fortenbaugh Lectureship was established. That was run by Bob. That was kind of interesting, because all those people I had heard so much about came to campus. It was Bob's job and mine to entertain them, so I got to meet everybody who was anybody in Civil War History.

MJB: When I asked the question I was thinking of much more modestly scaled activities, for example, whether or not you were doing chaperoning.

DB: In those days any fraternity group that wanted to have a dance had to have chaperones. Naturally they tended to ask the younger
faculty members to chaperone, and we chaperoned many a fraternity dance. It was rather interesting. . . . Some of them treated the chaperones very nicely. They set up a card table, bring you refreshments, that sort of thing. Others resented you having to be there. Of course, there was no alcohol in those days. We chaperoned one dance, and about half way through the evening Bob got awfully thirsty. He asked a young fellow for something to drink, figuring (he'd get) punch or something like that. The young guy said, "oh, there's a bubbler over there." But then we heard sounds from the basement, and figured there was a punch bowl down there, so we went to the basement. But as our legs became visible the fraternity guys in the basement scuffled about. We saw somebody carrying a punch bowl out that was probably well spiked.

MB: Were you expected to interact with the students?

DB: It varied with the houses. Some of the houses, we were treated like royalty. They greeted us, saw that we had a comfortable place to sit, plied us with refreshments, that sort of thing. Other fraternities seemed resentful that they had to have these old fogies around. (Laughs)

MJB: Did you find the evenings worthwhile?

DB: There were always two couples chaperoning. If the other (couple) we particularly liked, we made our own fun. We didn't want to seem like we were hovering. . . .

MJB: How long did that last?

DB: I think it was through the fifties. In the sixties, things changed dramatically on campus here, like everyplace else.

MJB: When you were supposed to chaperone, were you required to make your own provisions for a babysitter for your children?

DB: Oh, yeah.

MJB: You couldn't say, "we have children at home, we can't chaperone."
DB: No. Of course, we were lucky, in that Bob's mother at first lived with us. . . . Of course she was crazy about her grandsons, and she loved to babysit.

MJB: What did you make of the rules pertaining to women in those days. Obviously women had much more restricted rules about when they could be in and out of the dormitories.

DB: In my own college days we had to sign in and out, we had to be in at a certain time every night. . . .

MJB: So this was the way it was, and you didn't question it.

DB: No, because that's the way I had done it.

MJB: Do you recall when Bob was originally being interviewed for the job, whether he was asked any questions about his religious preferences?

DB: Yes. In fact, Dr. Hanson informed me that all members of the staff were Trinitarians. I don't know how he knew that. At that point we weren't affiliated with any particular church. Of course I was a missionary's daughter, and Bob was raised in a fairly strict Baptist/Disciplines of Christ home. So we both had religious backgrounds.

MJB: Did Dr. Hanson literally ask the question, did you have a church preference?

DB: I don't recall. He asked whether Bob was a Protestant. It was made very clear that we were expected to support compulsory chapel.

MJB: Did Bob have to attend chapel?

DB: No, the faculty didn't have to attend. . . .

MJB: Do you remember Dean (Wilbur) Tilberg?

DB: Oh, yes. Wifty. (Laughs)

MJB: Wifty? Who called him Wifty?
DB: The students.

MJB: And why did they call him that?

DB: I have no idea. There's an interesting story about him, when he and Mrs. Tilberg were asked to chaperone a dance. They had driven their car over to the college, and when they returned they were heading to their car and noticed students in it having a smooch, so they kept on walking home. On the surface you'd think he was very prim and proper, but he had a delightful sense of humor, a dry wit. They used to have a faculty flower fund, people put, I don't remember, a dollar a year in it. He got up at faculty meeting one year when the fund was in need of sweetening, and he said, "I think it's very important. After all, you could be next." (Laughs)

MJB: Was Dean Tilberg respected by the faculty?

DB: Oh, yes.

MJB: How about by the students?

DB: Yeah. As I said, he had a nice sense of humor. The students joked about him, but it was not nasty humor. They liked him and felt comfortable making little jokes about him.

MJB: Did Dean Tilberg entertain at home, and if he did, did you attend any of these soirees?

DB: No. They may have entertained, but we didn't go. They were older when we came. . . .

MJB: So you knew him mostly from campus functions or what Bob was telling you in the evening. You yourself got hooked into the college fairly early. I recall a story about a cover with Arnold Toynbee on it.

DB: . . . . This was during the tenure of General Paul. He was a very interesting person. Of course he had a military background. Before he came, some of the faculty who'd been in the service told some of the others, "Now we're going to have reveille in the morning" and that sort of thing. Everybody was rather uptight. Well, when he came, his way of doing things was very different from what those with experience in academe were used to. He was a very feisty guy,
made snap decisions, but if you explained (yourself) he was very reasonable. I was editing the alumni magazine at the time and we had the opportunity through the American Alumni Association to buy articles from people who one alumni magazine (alone) couldn't afford. One time it had an article by Bertrand Russell, and it was very good, and I decided I would like to use it. I asked a young man who worked for the college to draw a sketch of Bertrand Russell for the cover (of the magazine). So, when the issue came out, the first copies always went over to Glatfelter Hall to the President and the Deans, and we were working away on the address labels for the mailing, and my phone rang. It was General Paul, and he spoke quite bluntly: "What the hell is the picture of an atheist doing on the cover of the alumni magazine of the oldest Lutheran College in America?" He was really teed. I was sort of taken aback, and I said, "General, have you read the article?" He said, "No!" I said, "I wish you would." And he said, "OK!" and he hung up. About a half hour later the phone rang and he said, "Damn good article!" (Laughs)

MJB: Did you ever have any other run ins, good or bad, with General Paul?

DB: At the time the alumni office was in the old ATO House, opposite the Water Street gate, and I was walking over to Glatfelter Hall one morning. The campus was absolutely deserted. Suddenly I heard this wolf whistle. I looked around to see if there were any pretty girls walking around, and there weren't. And I heard it again, and turned around, and here was General Paul striding along behind me, and I said, "is that you whistling?" And he said, "Yes!" And I said, "at what?" And he said, "At you!" (Laughs)

MJB: He was a character, wasn't he.

DB: Yes, he was.

MJB: People, though, respected General Paul.

DB: Yes, they did.

MJB: Do you have any memories of the man who preceded General Paul as president, and that was Walter Langsam.
DB: The one that comes to mind immediately is that he loved to play bridge. When we were invited to the Langsams for dinner, we would expect to play bridge. Neither Bob nor I was a bridge player, but we tried. One time there were quite a number of people, and we wound up playing bridge. Bob I recall was Langsam's partner, and he was pretty uptight about this. But he went ahead and played it . . . and when he finished, Langsam said, "that was a beautifully played hand!" Bob was so shocked, he didn't know what he had done right. (Laughs)

MJB: Where was this event? Where did Langsam live?

DB: In what is now the Eisenhower House. It had belonged to a biology teacher, a man named Stahley. He had built the house, and he did, and she moved to Stratton Street. The house was empty, then willed to the college. That was the president's residence. Then when General Paul came, he married Luella Musselman Arnold, and she had a home on the Biglerville Road. The house was just sitting there when Eisenhower needed an office.

MJB: Did you have any brushes with Eisenhower?

DB: My parents were rock ribbed Republicans. I wrote my mother once, "oh, by the way, we had dinner with the Eisenhowers the other night." I figured that would get her. Well, I got a phone call from her as soon as she got the letter, and she said, "What's this about you having dinner with the Eisenhowers?" And I said, "well, there were about 300 other people at the dining hall.

MJB: Was he president at the time?

DB: No, this was after he had retired.

MJB: So you didn't have any connections during his presidency.

DB: No, but I had an interesting experience with Mamie. This was after the other Hanson was president of the college. (The Hansons) lived three doors down the street from us . . . . When the trustees were coming to their semi-annual meeting, wives were invited to come along. Of course, Jean Hanson entertained the wives. So she enlisted the aid of some of the wives of department chairmen to help out. I was among those invited to help entertain the trustees' wives. We were all sitting in the living room. Eisenhower was at this time
on the Board of Trustees. So of course Mrs. Eisenhower had been invited to the coffee. We really didn't expect her to show up. We were sitting there, having our coffee, chatting, when the doorbell rang. We heard her say, "Oh, how nice of you to come." In she walked--it was Mamie Eisenhower. Well, it was just hilarious, watching these women, trying to decide whether they should jump to their feet and salute her, be casual, or what. So anyway, Jean brought her in and then she sat down in the empty chair next to me, and I thought, "What in the world will I talk about?" She said, "Is your husband on the faculty?" (At this point the tape is defective, but the burden of it is that Mamie was very friendly and chatty.) And of course at that time their son John and his wife lived in Gettysburg. His wife Barbara used to shop at a little store on the corner of Baltimore and Middle Street, Minter's. And she was always very cordial.

MJB: When you think back on the fifties, what are the first impressions that come to mind about being a young mother, wife of a rising faculty member at a good college?

DB: From the time our youngest was about a year old, I had a part-time or a full time job. I had a busy social life, and got involved in a lot of volunteer things, taking care of the kids. I had a busy time.

MJB: Bob becomes acting Chair when Dr. Fortenbaugh gets ill and becomes Chair when Dr. Fortenbaugh passes away.

DB: Yes....

MJB: Richard Marius. Was he someone Bob was involved in hiring?

DB: He was a great favorite of ours. As you know, he had rapport with some people and not with others. (She tells a story about passing their family dog on to the Marius family.) We kept up with Dick over the years. . . . Last I heard from him, he had just finished his third novel.

MJB: Was the '64 sabbatical your first?

DB: Yes.

MJB: Bob was doing research on the English press and the American Civil War.
DB: He thought he might get enough to do a couple of articles.

MJB: Did he go and spend a certain number of hours each day doing research?

DB: Yes. As a matter of fact, we lived in North London (during) both sabbaticals because he was working in the newspaper annex of the British Museum. He also went to Central London to the British Museum itself.

MJB: Did your kids go to English schools?

DB: The two youngest ones.

MJB: And what about your day?

DB: Well, I had an awfully good time. We had half of a duplex and it was very sparsely furnished, so there wasn't a lot of housework. I'd get the kids off to school, do the dishes, and then open my "London A to Z" and point a figure somewhere, and decide to go and explore it.

MJB: You did your tourism.

DB: Yup. I ended up in some pretty odd places.

MJB: Did Bob take time off to do some traveling with you?

DB: Yeah. When the kids had their eastern (vacation) we hired a car to go down to the West Country, Devon and Cornwall, and on the weekends we always tried to do something, things that would be of interest to the kids.

MJB: You had an affinity for England, didn't you.

DB: Yeah.

MJB: Give me a fix on C. Arnold Hanson and what you thought of him.

DB: Personally, I liked him very very much. He was very down to earth. He had a son who was roughly the age of one of ours. I was
very fond of his wife. I found him a bit stiff and formal, but I just accepted that because he was the boss.

MJB: What did Bob think of him?

DB: I think he admired him.

MJB: Who were Bob's cronies on the faculty?

DB: I suppose Basil (Crapster) and Charlie (Glatfelter). We were always pretty good friends with the Pickerings. The Geyers, Richardsons and Blooms had something called a "pot luck" for about thirty years. Each couple contributed part of a meal.

MJB: Did the Vietnam War result in strains in any friendships.

DB: Yes. I remember many of our pot lucks ended up in violent disagreements.

MJB: Was this strictly among the men, or did the women participate.

DB: Women too.

MJB: Did that interrupt the pot lucks?

DB: No. We saw eye to eye on the majority of things; yet most of our pot lucks ended up in arguments.

MJB: You went to some of the big Civil War related events and were host for various Fortenbaugh Lectures for many years. Are there any outstanding memories from either of those that you would share?

DB: Well, I remember Clinton Rossiter was the speaker one year. As was our custom, after the speech, ... we would invite (speakers) to come over the house, take their shoes off, unwind, have a drink. I had all kinds of things to drink, except Scotch, and that's the only thing he drank. So the next year I made sure that we had Scotch. The speaker that year was Roy Nichols. He was at that point past his prime. He didn't give a very good speech, and he was a little, I'd say, fuzzy in the head. We got him over here and offered him a drink. He said he'd love a Coca-Cola. Well, I had everything under the sun except a Coca Cola.
MJB: I recall your telling me about one speaker inviting you to his motel for a drink.

DB: The Gettysburg Hotel. That was Bruce Catton. We invited him to come out to the house, and he said that the hotel management had left a bottle of bourbon in his room. He said, "I certainly can't drink a whole bottle of bourbon," so he suggested we go up there. So we did and literally all kicked off our shoes, and had a delightful time...

MJB: Did you ever have any events where you worried that the speaker was not going to make it, or other worries?

DB: I don't recall anyone that failed to show up on time. I remember T. Harry Williams was married for the second time to a very interesting lady. He was here a couple of times. I remember one time they came out to the house and Harry was supposed to quit smoking. I had my cigarettes on the coffee table, and Harry went over and took one, and was sitting there smoking it very contentedly, and Stella looked over and said, "Harry Williams, what's that thing in your mouth!" And he looked sort of sheepish and put it down in the ash tray. (Laughs)

MJB: Did you enjoy being a hostess?

DB: I enjoyed it. I found over the years that people who had the most reason to be smug were the least so. They were just delightful people.

MJB: You had Henry Steele Commager here, but you never had Allen Nevins. Can you comment on either of them?

DB: ... I think the reason Nevins wasn't here was that he wasn't in good health when we started the series.

MJB: Did Bob call the shots as to who was going to be the Fortenbaugh Lecturer?

DB: Yup.

MJB: What would you consider to be the highlights for Bob of his tenure at the college as a faculty member?
DB: When he came here he had not done any special work in the Civil War. . . . Dr. Fortenbaugh asked him if he was willing to specialize in the Civil War, . . . and he came to enjoy it very much. . . .

MJB: Did you do any travelling with Bob when he was doing research or giving talks? Did you go to the conventions with him?

DB: I went to several. By the time he started going regularly I was working full time and of course had the kids. But I went to several of them. . . .

MJB: Did you develop any particular friendships with people in the history profession?

DB: Phil Klein and his wife. . . . She was in the WAVES. We saw them half a dozen times, and always liked to reminisce. . . . He was a very nice man.

MJB: Did you as a faculty wife talk with Bob about the changes on the college campus in the late 1960s? The end of the parietal rules, the Vietnam War, that kind of thing?

DB: Oh, yeah. We were concerned about what was going on.

MJB: Were the students in any particular era stronger or weaker?

DB: Well, I don't thing there's any question that when we first came here the requirements for admission were not as strict as they are now. The curriculum was good, but it wasn't as sound as it is now. I think there's been an improvement over the years in the expectations of the students and the quality of students that we get.

MJB: But it is interesting that when you look back at the alumni, the people who went through in the early 1950s really stand out when it comes to life achievement. The college produced some very fine scientists, lawyers, doctors, and what have you.

DB: When we first came here, the majority of students went on to seminary or teaching or law, but a lot of them did very well.

MJB: Did Bob keep up with his former students?
DB: Interestingly enough, mostly girls. There was a gal named Kathy Smith (Kutolowski), now at SUNY Brockport. Two or three others kept up with us for a long time.

MJB: Did you have students out at your house?

DB: Oh year. For a number of years, Bob was a freshman adviser, and we'd have a picnic here. (She goes on to tell a story about a woman student named Bitsey Owen, who was a nervous wreck about her senior oral exams in history, and how she got through them after Bob brought her out to the house and gave her a bottle of beer and Bob and Dottie talked to her about everything except history in order to calm her nerves. She did fine.)

MJB: In the latter part of Bob's career, Charles Glassick replaced Arnold Hanson as president. Any particular memories of Charlie Glassick?

DB: He was a very heavy smoker, and he was having some minor health problems and decided he should quit. I was over at the house and decided to smoke, and he inhaled my smoke and said, "Blow some my way. I sure do miss that!"

MJB: He was a pleasant fellow?

DB: Yes. I always felt he was kind of a lightweight so far as intellectual things went. Not dumb, but not deep. But he was a very pleasant. I liked his wife very much. She was an entertainer par excellence. She did all her own cooking.

MJB: Bob gave up the chairmanship about 1969 or 1970, when he had more than a decade to go on the faculty. How do you remember the 1970s? Were they good years?

DB: Yeah. He was an elder statesman at that point.

MJB: He seemed to still have a tremendous enthusiasm for teaching.

DB: Oh, he did. He was a born teacher, loved it even when he was busy being department chairman. And he was very conscientious about it. If he taught the same course over again every two or three years he'd completely revise his lecture notes. And I don't think he ever went to bed at night without looking over his notes.
MJB: Did he ever say to you, "Dottie, I really did it today. I really got it right."

DB: Well, he was occasionally asked to make speeches. And when he returned, he'd say, "I think I was a smash," or "I don't think I did so well."

MJB: I asked you earlier about highlights. Were there any disappointments?

DB: No. Mostly it has to do with retirement, when you sort of just fade away. . . . Treatment from the college has been pretty cavalier at times. . . . But during the years that Bob was on the staff we were treated very well.

MJB: You worked how many years as Alumni Magazine editor?


MJB: Did you feel bad when you had to give it up?

DB: I wasn't forced to give it up. But I felt it wasn't fair to go away (with Bob on sabbatical and keep things in limbo regarding the job). (We go on to talk at some length about Dottie's career as a journalist with the Hanover Sun and the Gettysburg Times.)

MJB: For years after 1981 you were able to have Bob full-time and to travel a good deal.

DB: Yeah, but don't forget I was also working.

MJB: We're running to the end of the tape. Is there anything you expected me to ask about that I haven't?

DB: No. Laughs. In fact there are some things I have talked about that I don't think I should have!

MJB: You give me the impression of a person who had a good match, not only with her husband, but with the community and the college you were associated with over thirty years.
DB: Yeah. (She reflects on her reluctance to move anywhere. She feels rooted here.)

MJB: I thank you for giving me your time and sharing your memories.