

ELIZABETH MUNGER

February 21, 1996

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**Mame Warren,
interviewer**

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is February 21, 1996. I'm in Lexington, Virginia, with Elizabeth Munger.

So let's just head right on into this. I want to know when you arrived in Lexington and why.

Munger: Well, we arrived the fall of 1941 to practice medicine here. My husband, Bob, had been teaching at Tulane Medical School in New Orleans for two years, but it was perfectly obvious that I, a transplanted New Yorker, could not survive in — this was, of course, before the war when we were living in New Orleans, and there wasn't any air-conditioning in the whole city. It just didn't exist. It hadn't been invented, practically. I got down to ninety pounds, and it was obvious I would have to go home to New England in the summer for four or five months.

So we got in the car and drove from New Orleans and looked at every town we came to, and we picked out Lexington, looking for an academic community, a place with hills for me, because the flatlands of New Orleans flattened me, too, as well as the heat.

Then we also wanted a place where he could practice, and Dr. Reid White, who was the university doctor at the time, in 1941, when Bob was a student there, he had loaned Bob a copy of Dr. William Osler's *Way of Life*, and that had persuaded Bob to go

to medical school in the beginning. So we stopped here in Lexington to see Reid and to see the Cy Youngs, who were very close friends of Bob's mother, and we stayed.

Reid said, at the time when we first came, that if war came, he was attached to the Pennsylvania Hospital Unit, and he would have to go, and he would see that Bob was hired by Washington and Lee as the university doctor, which he did. Bob, who had never even gotten an A.B. degree, he went to medical school after three years of college. In those days they did it once in a while.

Warren: And the college that he went to was Washington and Lee?

Munger: Yes, yes. If you go into the wrestling room there at the university, there's a picture of him. He was the Southern Conference wrestling champion. He won every single meet, match, whatever they are, by a fall, and then he went on. When he entered medical school at Tulane, he wrestled that first year in the Southern Amateur and won that. Somewhere we've got the medals that he got. But his picture, and his neck is wider than his head. [Laughter]

Warren: I never knew that about him. Isn't that interesting.

Munger: Yeah. And wrestling was the sport here. They just packed the gym. Bob's mother was a house mother for Sigma Ki House for, well, four years, I guess, three years, and she went to every lickin' wrestling meet, and I couldn't any more have gone to watch my son go through all those contortions in a matter of six minutes, turned them into absolute states of collapse, they worked so hard.

There was a superb coach in those days who would be, I think, worth looking into, Archie Mathis, who was a very unusual and interesting man, and the commitment was total. There were days, sometimes two or three days ahead of a meet, where Bob would be allowed three eggs a day and that was all to eat, to get his weight where it had to be.

And the crowds of students who went to it! It's like lacrosse now, lacrosse being the sport at Washington and Lee now.

Warren: What years did he attend Washington and Lee?

Munger: From 1930 to '33, I guess, because he entered medical school the fall of 1933.

Warren: And his mother was here when he was a student. Tell me about that.

Munger: When Bob was at Choate School in Connecticut, his junior or senior year, 1928, I think it was, his father dropped dead. He was only forty-eight. And here was this kid all alone, two nights' travel from Dallas, Texas, and went home, seventeen years old, and his whole life was wrapped up in his father. They hunted and fished and did all the kind of western Texas things, and he was very close to his father. It was a very dramatic and traumatic experience for him at seventeen and riding two days and two nights all by himself home to Dallas for the funeral.

So the following year, he entered Washington and Lee, where his brother already was as a Sigma Chi, Collett Munger, who was a great old boy, but academics really weren't his thing, took him five years, in the twenties, to go through Washington and Lee. [Laughter] As I say, he was a good old boy.

And here were her two sons here, and her husband was dead, and her house was rented, so she came to live here, and she lived for the first year in the Robert E. Lee Hotel, and then after that she moved over to the Sigma Ki House. It was the loveliest apartment she fixed up on the right-hand side of the Sigma Ki.

It was Prohibition, and in order to try to keep the boys from drinking, she would get expensive food from New York and feed them on Saturday nights and make them play games. I don't believe it was a success particularly, as Bob had the agency for Canadian Club Prohibition whiskey. [Laughter] Once a month, the man came down from Washington with the Canadian Club whiskey. And it's very interesting compared to the ruckus over marijuana, that here it was against the law, the liquor, and he was considered a benefactor to the whole college. He did very, very well on it.

Warren: What do you mean, he had the agency? This was a formal arrangement?

Munger: I guess. I don't know. I don't believe any papers were signed, but the guy came. It was on his route, and he brought the supplies for the month.

Warren: It was delivered to the fraternity house?

Munger: Well, Bob lived in the building that is gone now, and it was a lovely building, next to the Episcopal church where the Sunday school building is now. He had a room there in Mrs. Beverly Tucker's house. I remember her. She came to call on me. We were living, when we first came to Lexington, in the little white house next to the Sigma Ki House, in the middle. That was the Mattingly home. In fact, Mr. [Earl Stansbury] Mattingly lived on one side, and two maiden lady nurses lived on the other, and we were in the middle.

Mrs. Beverly Tucker came to call one day at eleven o'clock in the morning, and I was making a cake. She said, "Is Mrs. Munger in?"

I said, "Oh, no, I'm so sorry, she's gone downtown." [Laughter] People called. People called.

Warren: Tell me about that. What was Lexington like when you first arrived?

Munger: We were in the spotlight right away, a new doctor coming to town with Washington and Lee connections. It was very simple. It wasn't until Pearl Harbor came along and Reid left, Reid White, that the university looked at us, and Bob was immediately made a full professor. He, without an A.B. degree, was a full professor. And they came to call. It was the darnedest thing. I guess I was three or four months pregnant and queasy, and they would come to call. They would leave three cards, two for the man and one for the woman. The man left his card for both husband and wife, but the woman, it wouldn't have been seemly if she had left one for the husband.

And all the faculty, all the deans, I kept a list in Bob's study on the wall of all these people, because I had to return them. Of course, the first thing to do was to go and get cards printed, which I did. I've still got them. I would keep a list and cross them off as I did them, and I learned fairly soon that winter that the thing to do, since all of the

proper ladies in Lexington were making bandages on Tuesday afternoon, the thing to do was to go from house to house and leave your cards and come home and cross them off. [Laughter] White gloves, hats, always hats, always hats.

And it was at that time that we made the oldest and closest friends that we made here, because they stayed the same for four years during the war. The population, they were wives, and there were about ninety students who were 4F or something like that, and so we got to know everybody that we met on the street. We knew who they were. I could be very sure that I was known right away as the doctor's wife. For thirty-eight years I was the doctor's wife. [Laughter] And doctors' wives didn't work; they did good works.

Warren: That's a nice distinction.

Munger: Yes, yes.

Warren: What were good works? What were considered good works in Lexington?

Munger: Margaret McCrum, Dr. McCrum's wife, took me to the Junior Women's Club. And what else? Oh, the cancer drive, that kind of thing. I remember being involved in the establishment of the United Way. It wasn't called the United Way, I don't think, at first. It changed names several times. It was the Junior Women's Club, which had been started in late 1930s, which went looking for a project, good works. This was unified good works kind of thing. There was a senior women's club. There were several women's clubs, as a matter of fact.

Mrs. Adelaide Davies [phonetic], whose son-in-law is on the Board of Trustees, or was, she had a lot of connections with W&L, suggested to the Junior Women's Club—she was the senior women's advisor to the Junior Women's Club—suggested that they think about a bookshelf, lending library kind of thing, and one of the banks gave, I think—this was before I came in the late thirties—and everybody ransacked their attics and put books in. I think it was open one afternoon a week, something like

that. I'm not absolutely sure about that, and I'm not sure there are any documentations, although I've looked at a lot of that stuff in the library.

Then they began to raise a little money, and "Tex" Tilson gave them a room up over McCrum's, where they could put the books. I don't know where they got the shelves, because when I saw it, it was a one room on a very creaky floor on the second floor of the McCrum building, and it was open afternoons. So the Junior Women's Club had the project which was raising money, \$300 a year for the public. It wasn't even a public library then; it was the Junior Women's Club lending shelf, lending library, called something like that. I remember seeing some of the books that were still stamped with this kind of thing. But that's sort of off of Washington and Lee.

Warren: But it gives a feeling of Lexington.

Munger: Lexington, yeah.

Warren: I would have to say that my sense of this place is that there's such a bond between the university and the town that it sometimes gets hard to make that distinction. What do you think?

Munger: Certainly it's one of the two big economic contributors. One of the deans did a study, and I have a copy of that somewhere, of the economic contribution of Washington and Lee to the community. Town and gown is complicated. It always was, I'm sure, sometimes worse and sometimes not. The resentment of the academic – for instance, pressures which were very strong when the League of Women Voters took over a study of the school system, the pressures for getting the children of Ph.D.s into Harvard conflicted strongly with, say, the people who lived on North Main Street who wanted their kids to get better jobs, which made for also attention there, and also the amount of money that the town had to spend, and sometimes it was the town and sometimes it was the city, depending on how mad it was at the county. And they needed a bigger police force, a bigger fire force, than they would ordinarily have had,

than the town of Bedford has, for instance, because Washington and Lee was more at risk, put it at risk. So the town's budgets were big.

And there was no question but what at a time when the League of Women Voters first began to study the town and the county, that Washington and Lee and VMI, it never appeared on any book. Now they support the town in lieu of all the taxes they don't get because so much of the land is taken up with tax-exempt stuff, including fraternity houses, I think. I don't know whether it's still that way or not, but it was. And we got them to say, yes, that we helped out, was the idea back when the League did its first study of the town of Lexington. I don't believe we were ever told how much it was, but we suspected, looking at the budget of the town and income and all, that we suspected that it was \$20,000, I don't know, which would contribute to the police and so forth, because the town bought the equipment, even if it was a volunteer fire department.

Warren: Let's get back to 1941. You mentioned that there were some students who stayed. What else happened at Washington and Lee? First of all, let's address that. The school continued to function as a university?

Munger: Many, many of the faculty went away, of course, into service, but there were a lot of the older people who were here, older faculty whom Bob looked after and delivered, and also cared for people like Fitz [Fitzgerald] Flournoy, who got chicken pox in the middle of the war, and his mother, Mrs. Flournoy, absolutely – Mrs. Flournoy was a character. His temperature shot up. He taught English. He was the Shakespearean scholar. You had a feeling about Fitz that when he walked around Lexington, he was seeing Shakespearean England, and he was wonderful as a teacher of Shakespeare. It just roared in the pines, it seemed to me. I audited a couple of courses, I think, from him.

The last thing Reid White had said was, "Watch out for Fitz Flournoy and pneumonia," the last thing he said to Bob before he left. There's a funny story about his

departure, too. Anyway, there he'd been sick, running a fever and all, but the fever had gone down and everything. Lo and behold, up goes the fever, and Bob rushes over there. They call up. Mrs. Flourney's sitting on the top step with an apron over her head, screaming, so Bob goes and listens to his chest and then he tells him to lean forward so he can listen to the back, and he's covered with chicken pox. [Laughter] And Bob came home just absolutely convulsed.

Warren: What age person are we talking about at this point?

Munger: Oh, gosh, late fifties, something like that.

Warren: Are you saying that his mother was there?

Munger: Oh! Now, Mrs. Flourney, Sr., is a case unto herself, really. F.F.V., dowager, big-bosomed, dominant, she, on her ninetieth birthday, the United Daughters of the Confederacy wanted to give her a birthday party, and she went down to the *News Gazette* and asked that they be careful not to put it in the paper that the UDC was going to give her, because they might take away her license. [Laughter]

Warren: Her driver's license?

Munger: Because she was ninety. [Laughter] Oh, she did once go up on the sidewalk and crash into the pay place at the movies. She was one of Lexington's characters. When I was invited in 1942 to be a member of the Ignorance Club, I thought this is going to be pure hell in Hockinson [phonetic], the cartoon, the lady in the *New Yorker*, who was always presiding at clubs. Oh, so funny. I went to laugh, and Mrs. Flourney had the paper and it was on Erasmus, and I came home bowed over, I was so impressed with the quality of the papers that were given at the Ignorance Club, the [unclear] outside of Washington and Lee.

Warren: That was quite an honor for you to be invited to be part of the Ignorance Club so early, wasn't it?

Munger: I'd never heard of it when I got this letter, and I went across to Rachel Biere. We were living up on Morningside Heights at that point. I went across to ask her what

this was. Biere's Pharmacy, John and Rachel Biere. Then she said, "Oh, oh, that's egghead. You'll like it, Betty." [Laughter]

Washington and Lee during the war. I don't know. Our contact was after Pearl Harbor. That fall I didn't know much about it, although we used – no, it was later we used to go swimming over there. Pearl Harbor. I was in bed with a threatened miscarriage, and Bob had made some cocoa and soup and brought it up, and we were reading out loud. I was reading out loud *War and Peace*. The next morning he went to the hospital and called up and said, "Hey, did you know we were at war?" And we were the only people in the United States who didn't know about Pearl Harbor, the afternoon in the symphony when it happened.

Warren: How appropriate that you were reading *War and Peace*. [Laughter]

Munger: That's right. We've always thought that was funny, interesting. Things changed very fast. All the people who were in the reserves were called up fast if they hadn't been already drafted. In fact, Bob had expected to be drafted, and we decided that the thing to do was to move to where we wanted to live and get me settled, and if he got called into the Medical Corps, why, I would stay put wherever it was, if I couldn't go with him.

There were, for instance, Al [Allen Wesley] Moger, Ollie [Ollinger] Crenshaw, who wrote the history, Fran [George Francis] Drake was here, John Graham, who was one of the great men of Washington and Lee. There was a kind of nucleus that we saw all the time, and some of them were town people like Stewart Moore, Louise Moore's father, and mother, and the Barkley sisters, who lived in the house that the Tutwilers live in now.

There was a whole row of old maids along there, with the Gadsden sisters on the corner, where the De_____ live now, and then there was the Barkley sisters, both of whom worked at Washington and Lee. One was alumni secretary, just one person, alumni secretary. And Cy – not Twombly, Young was the alumni secretary. And Mary

Barkley did a lot of the work. Then there were the Anderson sisters right behind where the rectory is now, two old maids. They danced too long. They partied, you see, year after year to the dances and all, until they didn't settle down, so they ended up old maids.

Warren: What a charming way to say it. [Laughter]

Munger: Yeah. They had a wonderful time. Mary Monroe and Marshall. Mary Monroe Penick is, certainly in my years here, the most important person in Lexington.

Warren: I am very sorry I didn't get to interview her.

Munger: Yes. Well, it was a long years before you would have – I mean, back before, because she was over in Roanoke most – oh, for six or eight years.

Warren: But I do remember her. I met her.

Munger: Good. Good.

Warren: Back when I was doing the Miley exhibit. I had a very nice evening with her.

Munger: Yes. She was quite a gal. She never married. Her sister Marshall married twice, fascinatingly each time. Marshall was the gal who – there wasn't anybody like her. She was just crazy, but marvelous. After she got ill with cancer, her name was Marshall Penick – well, first, gosh, I can't remember. Jimmy. It was Winfred Tyree's cousin, nephew, something. And I went by to see her often, and one day I got there. She loved chartreuse nightgowns, chiffon all over the place and chartreuse. She had two books, one on each side. She had cancer. One was called *Healing Through Prayer* and the other side was *How to Win at the Races*. And that is Marshall. That is Marshall. The Marshall stories are wonderful. Their father was treasurer of Washington and Lee.

Warren: Paul Penick.

Munger: Paul Penick, yes.

Warren: Where was this street that all these ladies lived on? Which street was this?

Munger: Lee Avenue.

Warren: By the post office?

Munger: Yeah. Reid White's father sold the post office lot to send his kids through medical school, and Reid White grew up in that house behind where the Philbins live, the house behind the post office, and it had been all the way down to Lee Avenue with a walk and stuff. He sold it to the United States Post Office to get the money, country doctor that he was, to send two children – yeah, Preston and Reid – to medical school.

Warren: You mentioned that it was a funny story when Reid White went off to the war. Tell me that.

Munger: Oh, yes. The last day, which was New Year's Eve, and he was leaving the next morning to go to Philadelphia to join the unit, ended up sitting three years in New Guinea somewhere with a big hospital. They bypassed it. Anyway, he kissed all the nurses goodbye, and much hugging and kissing in sending him off to war, and a little bit later the phone rang and it was Tom Riegel, and told Reid that Jane was having pains, and Reid said, "Gosh, well, take a couple of aspirin and talk to me in the morning," and he hung up. [Laughter] He called back and said, "Oh, my God, get her over to the hospital," so he unkissed all the nurses and delivered Dean Riegel, and then went off to war in the morning. And we always thought that was – Reid, the war did him in. He came back really rough, and died in 1950 of cancer of the lungs.

Warren: I remember your telling me stories about what Lexington and Washington and Lee were like during the war, and the people who came here.

Munger: Oh, yes. Special Service School.

Warren: When did that start and what happened?

Munger: I don't know dates. Probably within a year after Pearl Harbor. It was an ideal from the Army's point of view and certainly from Lexington's point of view. We just fell on our feet. It was unbelievable, the life we led during the war. Some of the most brilliant performers in the musical world, in the theater world, were sent here. They were only officers, and about fifteen hundred a month came in, and they'd stay a month and get trained on how to entertain the troops, a hundred games to play on shipboard,

that kind of thing. And also information and education – why were we fighting, that kind of thing, was taught to them. And the faculty was brilliant.

Warren: Who were the faculty? Were they Washington and Lee faculty or people brought in from elsewhere?

Munger: People brought in.

Warren: What kind of people?

Munger: Musicians. B____ Rubenstein, who was conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, I think it was the Cleveland, anyway, somewhere out there in Ohio. Eugene Liszt, Gene was here for two years, a year and a half. I know he had Christmas dinner with us two years, and everything was rationed, of course, and I found a duck, so we had a duck one year. He was a private, a private first class, I guess, and they sent him to Europe after he'd been here teaching how to entertain the troops. He went; he was called over, and he went from camp to camp with an upright piano.

One day he sat on the terrace here and told us about it later on. It made quite a lot of attention. His officers said, "Have you got a clean uniform?" And Gene allowed as how he did, I guess, and they gave him a ticket on the train and told him to get on the train that day and that at the end to get off and that he would be picked up, and he was to play for a group of men. So off he goes, and when he gets there, it's Potsdam, and he played for Truman, Stalin, and Atlee for two or three days while they conferred. It was at Stalin's request that they have somebody playing. Truman asked for "The Missouri Waltz," and Gene said, "I never dug as hard for anything in my life as that." [Laughter] And they kept the door open, halfway open into the room where they were conferring, and he said he could hear the rumble of their voices and the translators and things while he played.

We kept in touch with him. We'd see him when we'd go to New York, and later on he came and gave a concert for free at the Concert Theater Series, which was kind of nice.

Then there was – gad, now it gets complicated, because I can't remember. George Sander, Maurice Evans, Melvin Douglas, all these people. Our house, before we bought it, on East Washington Street, a woman there rented out rooms, and one of the rooms was to Gladys Swartout [phonetic] while her husband was here during that month before he was going overseas. Every month they put on a show, because that was part of their training, and so we had these marvelous performances, ballet. There were dancers. Oh, I'll have to ask Jen Drake what the name of that guy was.

For instance, George Sander and Gene, here they were, privates, not even officers, they were teaching here, and if we'd get a bottle of rum, even, we'd have a party, and they would be there. I can hear Sander saying to Gene, "Well, this is the way I do the theme by Couperin," and they'd swap back and forth on the Drakes' beautiful Steinway. You just felt like you were in seventh heaven. This was unbelievable, the people that we got to know, whom we wouldn't have ever seen otherwise.

Warren: Tell me, physically, how did they use the campus of Washington and Lee?

Munger: As classrooms, and they were in the dorms. I was trying to think what the fraternity houses were used for. I remember one woman came here with her husband, and their home was in Greenwich, Connecticut, I think, she had five kids and she rented a fraternity house, one of the fraternity houses on East Washington Street, and my kids were the same age as some of hers, so the governess would bring them up and they'd play up on Morningside Heights where we lived then.

There were officers, of course, all over the place, and there were black officers, which was interesting, and there was a rumor, at least I never heard it directly, but there was a rumor that the VMI cadets – VMI, of course, was full. If you were going to VMI, you were exempt. Then you became an officer and went to war. They had been ordered to salute every officer, and they objected to saluting the black officers. General Kilburn handled that beautifully. He just issued an order that of course it was understood that you saluted the rank and not the person. So he got around that one. It

was very interesting to see General Kilburn going down the street, saluting, saluting, saluting, because there were so many of them. [Laughter]

It was just as well maintained during the war.

Warren: The campus.

Munger: The campus. There weren't any tourists, of course, because nobody had any gas. You got a certain amount of ration points for meats and then there was another ration book – I've still got them – for the canned goods. Those were the two things. And this was difficult for us, because patients paid with produce a great deal, and they would pay with a ham, what we called a "baby ham," because it was usually done in payment for a delivery. But the ham weighed forty pounds. We went to the ration board and asked if we could take them, because it helped the people pay their bills, without any ration points, and they said no. And a lot of people resented the fact that we wouldn't take them because it was on the black market, of course, if you did that.

What else happened during the war? It was a very busy little hive where we all talked to each other for four years.

Warren: I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Munger: ... all the gas he could use, but we never took the car out Rockbridge County for four years. We never went anywhere by car, except once every six months we would go to the Roanoke Hotel for dinner, six people, we would go, and you'd think we were going to Europe. We would discuss what we were going to wear by the hour.

[Laughter] And those champagne cocktails in that beautiful dining room at the Roanoke Hotel, it was the event that got us through for the next six months.

Oh, we did go to New York once a year. We went on the train from Buena Vista, sitting up all night, because if you did that, you were only allowed five days in a hotel in New York, and so if you went one night on the train going and one night sitting up coming back, you could get one more day in there. We wrote for theater tickets and we

went every single night, to say nothing of a couple of matinees, and roamed New York in a way that it just seems unbelievable that we could do this. There were special places. We always stayed at the same hotel, the Seymour Hotel, where the *Saturday Review of Literature* met every Monday luncheon for their editorial luncheon, and we'd look in and try to pick out which one was which. It was next door to the Algonquin, and so we would go in there and watch the Algonquin Roundtable.

Warren: Oh, that must have been special.

Munger: It was kind of fun.

Warren: I've picked up tidbits here and there, but I don't know, I haven't done enough research to really know, I've heard something about that there were some women who went through Washington and Lee during World War II.

Munger: Yes.

Warren: Tell me about that.

Munger: In fact, one of them is still here, Alta Fowler.

Warren: Oh, really?

Munger: Yeah. They had summer school and they took women during the summer school.

Warren: Were they on a degree program?

Munger: I think so, but after the first year, the board of trustees voted never to do that again. [Laughter] I wonder if W_____ White is still alive. Alta would know about that. She's an alumna before there were any women admitted. She would tell how many there were. There were only four or five, and there were certain courses.

Somewhere along the line, the United States Army decided that they were not going to make the mistake which Britain had made in World War I by sending the cream of its youth to war, you know, in the "Guns of August." The loss was – and England, I don't think has ever recovered completely from it. So the very smart boys

were sent to college instead, which there were nine hundred of them, ASTP kids, and they came to Washington and Lee and took courses.

Warren: What did ASTP stand for, do you know?

Munger: Army Student something. I don't know. I don't think I ever heard.

Warren: So nine hundred of these people came to Washington and Lee at one time?

Munger: Yeah, to go to college. They sent them to college instead of to war.

Warren: So along with the Special Services Program, there was a regular college program going on at the same time?

Munger: Uh-huh.

Warren: I didn't understand that.

Munger: Well, they were draftees. They didn't apply to Washington and Lee. The Army sent them here.

Warren: Would they have been wearing uniforms, attending class?

Munger: Yes.

Warren: So your image of Lexington, it was full of uniforms.

Munger: We didn't see very much of them. They were kept pretty well shut up somewhere. I don't remember them. Bob saw them, because he was the doctor for them, and he had to set up a whole pharmacy because the Army, of course, bought and sold its own drugs, and so down in that funny little office building he had a whole pharmacy.

Warren: Which funny little office building?

Munger: It's near where Frank's office – where is Frank's office now?

Warren: Where the "overnight guests" sign is.

Munger: Yes.

Warren: It was right by that?

Munger: Right by that. Well, it was one of those houses along there, which was the doctor's office.

Warren: That's what someone told me.

Munger: Yes, that's where Bob practiced all during the war, as well as there were times when VMI didn't have a doctor, and he ended up being both the VMI and Washington and Lee doctor, plus an enormous practice all over the county, fifteen hundred miles a month and he never let on. [Laughter] Yeah, it was a strange world, but we were incredibly lucky to have had this kind of Army installation, the cream of the crop. No, those boys – this probably should be off the record, but one of the things that Bob had to do as part of being the doctor for these very healthy boys was a short-arm examination, which kind of tickled him because it was so – and he had to do it at VMI, too. Do you suppose they still do it?

Warren: I would assume so. My husband talks about how he had to go through it when he was in the Army.

Munger: Really? I'd never heard of it. I was a total innocent. In fact, it wasn't until I went to Washington, was at the bookstore that I got a good broad range in sex education from all those students who were totally uninhibited about talking.

Warren: Shall we make that leap? Shall we talk about the bookstore?

Munger: Have I told you what you want to hear?

Warren: You've given me a real good picture of that time period, but I'd love to hear more if you want to talk about more.

Munger: I don't know. I had two children during that time.

Warren: There's one thing before we go on. You mentioned someone named John Graham being important. I've never heard that name. Who's John Graham?

Munger: He's a longtime descendant of the Grahams, who were among the founders of Washington and Lee, and he went to Princeton after Washington and Lee, in graduate school, and he taught at Washington and Lee, he grew up in Washington and Lee, he was Mary Monroe's closest friend. He was extremely obese. He was in World War I and he used to do his fatness exercises in the privy. He was on General Pershing's staff

doing something. He used to make General Pershing so mad because he would get in there and do his sitting-up exercises, and Pershing couldn't get in. I remember him telling that story.

Warren: Why was he so important to Washington and Lee, other than being a descendant of William Graham's?

Munger: At that time, before World War II, there was no art, no music, no drama, at all. It took two hundred years before they had any. John, on his own, he taught Spanish and French, but on his own, he contributed what music there was. He contributed paintings. For instance, I remember him going around asking for signatures on a petition to buy a painting to go in the music room. He set up a music room upstairs in the library where he supplied records. Now, whether he got any money – and I rather doubt it – from Washington and Lee to buy records to go in this music room, I don't know. He was a composer. He did a lot of music for Mary Monroe in the Presbyterian Church Choir, and that was something that I was surprised at at Mary Monroe's funeral, that they didn't play any of John's music. One of the ones I remember the best was called "[Unclear] Upon the Death of a Beautiful Friendship."

He did very interesting things. He was a marvelous raconteur. He was at the core of our social group, and it was he – him, it was he – who suggested that Dr. [James G.] Leyburn to come here as dean of the university, which turned Washington and Lee around, there's no doubt about it. Washington and Lee had never named a building for a person who contributed themselves to a place; it had to be money. That's the only building on campus that's named for – I guess [Francis Pendleton] Gaines Hall.

Warren: Let's talk about Dean Leyburn. What was your experience of him?

Munger: I knew him very, very well. I have a folder of letters like this. Through John – John died in 1946, just before Jimmy came. I spoke at the dedication of Leyburn Library, as a friend. When he came, because we had loved John, Jimmy came into the group, and he was incredibly shy, I think, but the letters he would write were just wonderful. This

was the way he communicated. He had a hard time, and there were people – [Laughter] I remember Ollie Crenshaw at a dinner party once saying to me that the worst thing that had happened to Washington and Lee since Lee's surrender was Dr. Leyburn coming to Washington and Lee. I guess he wasn't head of the history department then, but he became later. I'm sure there were other people who felt that strongly; in fact, I know there were.

Warren: Why do you think they felt that way?

Munger: Because he didn't have – [Phone rings.] You'd better unhitch me. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Warren: Let's get back to Jim Leyburn. You were talking about Ollie Crenshaw thinking he was the worst thing that ever happened. I'm fascinated by that. Tell me about that.

Munger: Well, Ollie was a great talker, for one thing, and the students adored Leyburn. In fact, he never married, and his whole emotional life was wrapped up in his students. He'd been head of Sterling College at Yale and head of the sociology department there. We had him to dinner, to Sunday night supper, even before he'd unpacked all his books, and he had many, many books. That night he told us – it was before school started that first fall – he told us, Bob and me, sitting out in the August dusk, that when the invitation had come, he had walked the floor all night with excitement, dreaming about what he could do, and his goal, which he was clear about, was to make Washington and Lee the preeminent academic university in the South. And he did a pretty good job.

He came at a time, or he got the blame for the abolition of subsidized athletics at Washington and Lee, football particularly. We were playing Army up there and trying to make money, and it was the most painful thing that Dr. Gaines ever had to do, I think, was to make athletics non-subsidized. They didn't buy players anymore. And the Lynchburg Alumni Association was livid, and they blamed it all on Jimmy Leyburn,

that he came along and was going to make an egghead school out of it. That was the feeling. He took some very, very rough name-calling, all sorts of things during that time.

He was a superb musician, and I can see him now, when those marvelous concerts that Mary Monroe would give, I remember "For a Requiem," which they did for John, after John Graham died, and Jimmy played the piano accompaniment. He practiced every day at 5:30 in the morning. When he corrected exams, he corrected the spelling along the side. I mean, he did it instinctively. And I can't think and spell at the same time. He insisted, at the beginning, that any auditors take the exams, and I gave that up, but I went on and audited, I think, just about everything. We saw each other socially a great deal, all of us in the John Graham circle, although John was dead. He was dead before Jimmy came.

Warren: So why do you think Crenshaw had such a negative feeling about him?

Munger: I don't know. I don't know. Bill [William] Pusey felt that way. I used to go over and have lunch with Bill when he moved to the Colonnade, because he was trying to transport Lexington to Charlottesville, he was so lonely, he missed Lexington so. So I'd go over about every two months. After we talked about Jimmy once or twice, it was sort of tacitly agreed that we wouldn't talk about it anymore.

Warren: So you think that Leyburn did make a huge difference?

Munger: Yes.

Warren: Tell me exactly what you mean by that.

Munger: Well, he was dean of the university, which they've never had since. It's dean of the college and dean of the commerce school and dean of the law school now. Well, he was dean of the whole thing. I don't know the actual technical innovative things that happened, except the kind of faculty he brought in was very interesting. Marion Junkin, for instance, who, incidentally, was Jimmy Leyburn's first cousin, and then on the other side, Charlie [Charles Porterfield] Light, who was dean of the law school, was Jimmy

Leyburn's first cousin. These things go in and out. My little New England, I learned to keep my head down, because John Graham used to say, "You are speaking of my cousin," about everybody in Rockbridge County. [Laughter]

Warren: So Charlie Light came after Leyburn?

Munger: Oh, no, he came before Leyburn, but he wasn't dean of the law school then. He was just on the faculty before Leyburn. I think he was probably already dean of the faculty when Leyburn came. It's just coincidence, really, that their mothers were sisters or something.

Academia is so squabbly. They thrive on it, you know. There's always academic ruckuses, one kind or another, I think, and I don't know what precipitated all of them. I do know that he never entertained the faculty. He never entered into bull sessions with the faculty. He was totally emotionally involved with the students, teaching, and he stayed on as dean until the middle fifties, I guess, and then he went back to being head of the sociology department. Then he retired and moved up. His family – it's a long, intricate family – owned a whole watercress farm up in – oh, gosh, Williamsburg. No, not Williamsburg. McKeesport? Something straight up 81, you go right through it.

He did a lot of things. He wrote the definitive book, up until recently, on Haiti. That was his field. He wrote the best book that could possibly be on the Scotch Irish, wonderful. And then he did one about growing up in Durham, North Carolina, after he retired. I didn't ever see that. But it was this "one step removed" relationships. For instance, in the campus mail I would get a note saying, "I was going by your office today and I just thought how lucky we were to have you," this kind of thing.

Warren: In note form, rather than stopping in to tell you.

Munger: Not one on one, until way into – no, it was before Bob died. He seemed awfully glad to see me. [Laughter] One time he – it was the last time I saw him, as a matter of fact, it was some big thing at Lenfest, and then everybody was milling around afterwards, and I looked up and standing smack dab in the middle of the stage was

Jimmy. I didn't even know he was here. So, me, I go up, and he turned around and looked at me, and he was frail then, I thought, but he picked me up and spun me around twice. It was just such fun to talk to him. I had gone with Connie Feddeman, my next-door neighbor. When she got back there, she said, "Who was that glamorous man who was whirling you around in the center of the stage?" [Laughter]

We wrote a lot after he moved up there, and once I got a postcard from him from Oacha [phonetic] and Monte Arban [phonetic], and when I went to Oacha I went and I was just bowled over by it, and he had said in the postcard that this was one of the most extraordinary places he'd ever seen, or something like that, and I've always sort of thanked him for Monte Arban.

Warren: I don't know where Oacha is.

Munger: Mexico. It's fairly far south. It's on the border of the Chiapas area which is having such trouble.

Warren: So he wrote to tell you how happy he was that you were there. Let's make that leap to the bookstore. How did that come to be?

Munger: Before I had anything to do with it, it was the result of a part of the self-study of 1966, and it was the primary need of the university, according to the self-study, was an honest-to-God bookstore, not textbooks, but real books, as it were. So they built this wing on the coop building and stocked it, and they hired Jane Rushing to set it up, pick the books, set the whole thing up, which she did for nine months – yes, from December to July. Then her husband got a job for a year as a visiting lecturer in Illinois.

So I was sitting in a League of Women Voters luncheon one day and she said they were going, and I said, "Could I mind the store?" And she said, "Well, I'll tell the committee," and they had a huge Bookstore Committee, great big. So here I trotted over to be interviewed by all these people I had known all my life, and there must have been eight or nine people in Mr. Whitehead's office. And I got hired. This was an interim thing for one year, and I loved it. It was a round peg in a round hole.

Jane had done a beautiful job of setting up the policies, the standards, and, importantly, the university was willing to underwrite a loss on it. It was considered part of the academic program, which was very wise, because you have to sell much larger volume to make any money on a bookstore, trade bookstore. It was a fun year. It was an exciting year in that I figuratively jumped up and down and screamed and did anything that I could think of to attract attention to stop them as they came through, to make them look around.

I participated as well, and all these were things that Jane Rushing had taught me. I was there for a month before she left in June of '67. I participated in whatever was going on in the university community, from lacrosse to having coffee and conversation with Betty Friedan, anything that happened. Any lecturer I would snag and have coffee and conversation. There are some people who came who I would have sadly missed, like Arthur Ash, who came and talked. He tried to talk about South Africa, and all they wanted to know was Borg going to beat Connors. [Laughter] So I enjoyed him and many, many of them.

At the end of the year, the last day, everything – in fact, Jane had come back for a few days to look over everything and pick up the reins, and then the last day, everything was in perfect order and my secretary and I were waxing the desk and making everything all right, when the phone rang and it was Jane from Maine, where her family had a summer place, and she was crying, and she said that she and Bob were getting a divorce and she wasn't coming back.

Warren: Oh, my. That's pretty definitive, isn't it?

Munger: This was the thirtieth of June, and my contract ran out that day. [Laughter] And she said, "I'm calling you so you'll have time to think whether you want to do it anymore." She said, "I'll call Mr. Whitehead and tell him." And I was there for sixteen years. It was wonderful. It was the most exciting thing I ever did in my life. I loved it. I got involved in the things like American Booksellers Association on the national level,

being on committees with Maya Angelou and people. That was always fun. And the National College Stores Association, although I had nothing to do with anything, for the first seven years, anything but the trade books, the general books, and then changes came along. It had been obvious to me from the beginning that to run the textbooks and the general books, to buy textbooks from MacMillan and general books from MacMillan and have two accounts, it was a mess. So it was changed. I did the textbooks and the — but I never did mugs and teeshirts and stuff like that.

Warren: Did you have any training for this at all, or were you just thrown into it and started to swim?

Munger: Well, Jane was good training, because she had learned from scratch. She was teaching at the high school, so she took the job at \$5,500, which is what I was paid. No, I learned by going to state meetings, for one thing, and after two years I felt I was ready to go to booksellers school. I knew enough to go, so I went to Oberlin for two weeks. Washington and Lee paid for me to go to Oberlin for two weeks and take the whole booksellers course. There again I got to know more people in the whole business of bookselling and books, and wrote in the *Manual of Bookselling*, which the American Booksellers Association published 35,000 copies, I wrote the chapter on selling trade books in college bookstores and university college bookstores.

I don't know how, but I was a judge of the National Book Award in [unclear].

Warren: Really? What an honor.

Munger: Well, it was incredible. I wrote it down, and they were deciding that they would include that year booksellers, so members of the ABA got a chance to write down what they would be interested in, and I wrote down two things. One was history, because a very close friend, an old beau of mine, had had an impressive book published, and I wanted to see that it got the National Book Award. [Laughter] It didn't; it got the Pulitzer later. The other reason was I liked poetry and had always read

a great deal of poetry and still do. So I put down poetry, and I got picked, with no qualifications at all. Never had a poem published in my life.

Warren: Isn't that interesting. Tell me about a day in the bookstore.

Munger: There was no day like any other day. I could hardly wait to get there, because things would happen. There would be some kind of ruckus or some kind of excitement or things that had to be planned. There were things that we did every day. I had anywhere from eight to twelve student work-study boys – there were only boys while I was there. It went coed the year I – I was called "Betty the Red," not because I voted for McGovern or anything like that, but because I was in favor of coeducation. All of the boys who worked had certain jobs that they did. They kept the inventory, what was called reading yellow cards, and you'd write down how many were on the shelf, and any that had one or none were put in a box, and I would go through and decide whether to reorder, depending on how many had been sold. Of course there would be a particular book that would be the rage, and you'd have to keep ahead of that or you'd lose out.

Every few days, every week, certainly every week, I changed the table and what was on it. When Tolkien died, for instance, I went out and stole some of the Atwood's' flowers that were on – clematis, and put it in a circle around the obituary on the table. Just a single thing to attract attention was the way I did it. Now Sue does it just the opposite, and I think it's equally – I mean, she's got her table loaded with books, the display table.

Then there'd be somebody, particularly Monday morning, if I didn't read the *New York Times* books section on Sunday, there would be a faculty member by nine o'clock in the morning who was in there, who was saying, "There's a book reviewed in the *New York Times* book section. I've forgotten the name and the author. It's about –" That's about all they would give you. I wanted to be able to call that book, and I usually did, for special order, and that was a great deal. And running books down to see

whether they were in print, that kind of thing, which should be done right away. We prided ourselves on the fact that we could get books in five days.

Brenda really did the work, my secretary, did the work in the bookstore, the scut work, the endless scut work, while I talked, and talked to students all the time, as much as I could. I was like Jimmy Leyburn. But I certainly got to know the faculty, too, and that was interesting, because I hadn't realized that in the League of Women Voters and the library and all those things that I had worked on, I had known wives, and now I was getting to know their husbands. We had a wonderful time.

I hung paintings by local people up above the bookcases, shelves, so there was all those kind of things that I did. After I got into doing textbooks, that was the impossible, but one aimed at it, task of having every faculty member's books on the shelf in the number, and I changed it from what it had been before. Before, they had ordered the number that the faculty member wrote down, and as one of the standard stories that the UVA bookseller guy came in and wrote down the number of textbooks he wanted ordered, and it was the number of seats there were in the room. [Laughter] And those are the kind of things you had to watch very carefully, because you only got a 20 percent discount on textbooks. You probably know all this. And you had to pay shipping coming and going. You could return them for credit, but by the time you had done all that, you had to cut very carefully the number.

Warren: Did you then work with the registrar to make sure how many people?

Munger: Yes, yes. In fact, I took the privilege, if you want to call it that, away from the faculty of picking the numbers, and we kept a track record of the number and we would go by the registration. Then that last night or two nights before classes start in the fall, they print out the registration, the final registration. There's a week of drop/adds, so you have to play with that, too, after classes have started, but I and all the faculty were over there about 7:30 at night getting the printout of how many there were, and what you would do would be to go down in a hurry and find out where you

were short, and hit the phones before the faculty came along and breathed down your neck. You could just say, "Yeah, we called that in this morning. We picked it up right away."

Warren: So how much time would you have between when they registered for the classes and when they came in to buy the textbooks?

Munger: Four or five days.

Warren: It's tight.

Munger: Yes, it's tight, and every college in the country is calling in to the publisher at the same time. So you walked a tight rope all the time. The faculty couldn't understand why you couldn't just order five, ten over. Well, when you're cutting it at a margin so thin, and after I did pick up the textbooks, add the textbooks to it, the advantage of buying back books second-hand and reselling them, you buy them back at half price and resell them at a quarter, and so you make that little margin, which makes all the difference.

The staff that was there before weren't administrative people. The gal had done it for time immemorial and she didn't understand any possible changes, so I made a profit. Mr. Whitehead, I don't think quite really believed it. [Laughter] With the exception of two or three people, faculty, it was a very, very pleasant relationship.

Warren: We need to switch tapes.

Munger: This is enough, isn't it?

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

Warren: This is Mame Warren. It's February 21, 1996. This is tape two with Betty Munger in Lexington, Virginia.

Munger: The Vietnam War. I was in favor of coeducation, and I laughed a lot and we had a good time, and I wanted it that kind of place, and it was. Now, because of the women, it's much more – they were shoppers. They need a new bookstore. They need a whole new building, as a matter of fact. But it got scratched.

Warren: You brought up another subject. You were there during the protests against the war. What are your memories of that?

Munger: The most vivid, they were the most beautiful spring days, May, and coming to work at 8:30 in the morning and seeing two hundred students milling around in front of Lee Chapel, shouting and carrying on, and this went on. They talked all the time. Everybody had this sensation, I think, of being alive in a way that hadn't happened before. I remember one kid coming in and saying, "Washington and Lee has joined the twentieth century!" [Laughter] There were plenty of people – they didn't come to the bookstore, I'm sure, but ROTC kids, fraternity types or the big-shot fraternity types, big men on campus, although some of the big men on campus were the most wonderful people in participating in this thing, that kept it within limits, although kids would come and tell me where UVA had hidden dynamite, this kind of thing.

Whether it was true or not, or rumors, I don't know, but there was a group of the students themselves, the protesting students, the anti-Vietnam War, who formed a guard and patrolled the buildings all night as a protection. I remember Jimmy Leyburn calling me and saying, "When I got up to practice at 5:30 this morning, there they were with blankets around them, walking the buildings. What are they doing?" They were protecting Lee Chapel, protecting – the ROTC building was under threat. All of the porcelain was in the ROTC building, so Washington and Lee was scared to death that something might go off.

Warren: Who was doing the guarding?

Munger: The protestors themselves set up a group. They also sent a group to Washington to be trained as marshals for the big march of 500,000 people.

Warren: Who were they afraid might do damage?

Munger: The extremists, as was happening, and threatening to blow up Lee Chapel.

Warren: Extremists within the community?

Munger: I don't think so. I don't know. UVA was much more – again this is hearsay – UVA had sent over a couple of people to teach people in the dorms how to make Molotov cocktails, this kind of thing. It was in the air. So these boys who had been part – and this was very, very clear to me that the people who had been part of the anti-war movement for a long time were much more sane, more stable, but the kids who hopped on the bandwagon at the time of Cambodia, Kent State, were all revved up.

There was no counseling services or anything. There was David Sprunt, who was the chaplain. They didn't have anybody. And I got a lot of it. They'd sit on the floor, not just at the time, but always. There were always two or three kids that I was just being there for. But during that time there were several. I'm wondering – this is the twenty-fifth year, I think, '67, '68 – I'm wondering whether some of those boys will come back this year. I know one's coming, because he's coming with his three kids to stay here.

But they were so hyped up that they were spinning, almost. There was a sensation. And I would say, "Come back and talk to me in an hour."

Warren: Trying to settle them down?

Munger: Yeah, trying to talk them down. I got done with them at one point, because they were so busy fighting the faculty decisions. The faculty met practically every day, if not more than once a day, practically every day. Fighting them, that they forgot about Vietnam, and it was at the time of the invasion of Cambodia, which [President Richard M.] Nixon said didn't exist. I got some newsprint, it was regular rolled newspaper stuff, and got the students to write "Remember Cambodia" and I put it up on the wall, because it seemed to me that they were getting off the track. It was just something to add to it.

I was asked by many kids to write a notice to their draft board, and I always had one question that I asked, "What would you have done about Hitler?" And then we'd talk for a while. What they wanted was a statement that they were caring people, not that they were for or against the war or anything like that. It was just that they were to

be honored in their opinions. I gladly did that. I would write a statement about them. I have letters, I have a folder of letters like this, correspondence. I wrote a lot of letters during that time to the kids who graduated and who had gone to Vietnam. I kept letters going to them. Many, many of the kids I have kept in touch with over the years. Gosh, a lot of them turn up and say, "Is Mrs. Munger still alive?" [Laughter]

Warren: I'll get back now and let you free. That last question that I have, it seems to me that you are in a tradition of a number of very important women at Washington and Lee, and yet it's supposed to be this male bastion.

Munger: Well, look who they got to give money: Letitia Paige Evans, Jessie Ball duPont, Miss Parmly. Those buildings.

Warren: Tell me about these women who have made such a difference to Washington and Lee.

Munger: It's been financial. They never had a faculty member until Pamela Simpson. Never had a woman faculty member. Mrs. Evans had two children or one son who was killed in the war. I've forgotten what it was. But they were obviously unfulfilled women, and they liked the idea, I'm sure, of supporting these attractive young men. I only saw Miss Parmly once, but I knew Letitia Paige Evans because my mother-in-law came from Dallas to visit once and she stayed over in Hot Springs with a friend from Dallas for a week or ten days, and then she came up over here. We went up to have a drink with Dr. and Mrs. Gaines, who lived in Lee House. Bob's mother said to Frank, "Frank, there's somebody you ought to meet that I've met over at the Homestead."

So a week later we got invited to a dinner out at Penn Robin, where the Gaineses had their summer home, and it was no-holes-barred, it was all the stocks: Mr. [Earl Stansbury] Mattingly, Jimmy Leyburn, Captain Dick Smith. I've forgotten; there was a whole batch of them. And Mrs. Evans and Bob's mother. We were invited because of Bob's mother. Sure enough, got the dining hall. Bob's mother was a smart cookie. She knew how to play the game.

Warren: Did Mrs. Evans have no connection with Washington and Lee before that?

Munger: No. Bob's mother told Frank Gaines about her.

Warren: Isn't that fascinating. Was Dr. Gaines – he must have been incredibly charming to talk these women into doing all this.

Munger: Oh, gosh, yes. He was a charmer. He was the youngest college president in the United States at the time, I think. Now, Frank may correct me on that. But he was certainly – yes, he was in his early thirties when he became president of Washington and Lee, and he was president for – good Lord, nearly thirty years, I guess.

Warren: I know it was a long time.

Munger: But Mrs. duPont, I think, came looking as much as after he husband died, she was the richest woman in the United States by a long shot, and she had very good intentions and she set them in motion at Hollins. Dr. Gaines – I don't know whether it was true or not, but the story was that Dr. Gaines and the president of Hollins, on New Year's Eve, would call each other up and see how much stock they'd gotten that day from Mrs. duPont. [Laughter] We got to know Mrs. duPont through Tom Riegel, of the duPont Awards. He was the executor of the duPont Awards for a good many years, and we would be in that when she'd come.

Miss Parmly was just somebody that a grad met in an elevator in their apartment building in New York.

Warren: Really? Isn't that interesting.

Munger: Or he carried her groceries. I've forgotten. But an elevator figured in there.

Warren: I just know that there are these women, but there are also women like you who worked there, who did administrative things. Was it a circle of women when you were there?

Munger: I don't think so.

Warren: Were there other women doing the level of important work?

Munger: I was the only woman administrator at the time until Pam was made – she served three years as an assistant dean. But I was the first – Jane Rushing was the first administrator.

Warren: You were there when Pam came onto the faculty?

Munger: Yes.

Warren: What was that like to have a woman arrive on faculty?

Munger: Well, I just heaved a sigh of relief, and she was tough enough to take it. I always got a feeling, a very strong feeling, that the bosses who would be in Washington Hall really didn't – secretaries, yes. You could be a secretary. But a woman administrator, no go. For instance, the way I learned it, it was quite obvious. All the college store managers that I knew would be talking about budget-making, and I said, "Well, I don't have to make a budget." And they'd say, "Well, don't you have a budget?" And I said, "I don't know." And then I began to ask. "Oh, we just make it for you," they said.

And there was one man who I adored, I used to call him the only sane man in Washington Hall, who would come over almost every day and we would have coffee together, and once a month he would slip his hand into his coat pocket and pull out the statement for the past month, so I had some idea about what I was doing. But I never was invited to a budget meeting until Stewart Epley came on, took Mr. Whitehead's place as treasurer. I understand he got fired, too, but I don't know. [Laughter]

Warren: Isn't that interesting.

Munger: There was a definite feeling that I probably should be home arranging flowers on the center of the dining room table, and if they'd ever seen the flowers I arranged, they wouldn't say so.

And another experience which still rankles, I must say. There was a big safe up in this supply store area where Mr. Toll [phonetic] was, and at the time we were selling the textbooks, for two or three days we were doing three or four – [Brief interruption.]

And there were days when we would have seventy and eighty thousand dollars, having taken it in that day. This bothered me, because they were locking the safe upstairs before we finished. We'd always have to clear the registers and finish the totals and be sure it comes out somewhere even. So I asked Mr. — oh, Jerry Darrell was running it, and I asked him if I could have the combination — I never had been allowed the combination of the safe — if I could have it, have the combination of the safe, and he said, "Well, I'll work something out."

So nothing happened. So I went to Mr. Whitehead and asked him. It's the only time I ever went over Jerry Darrell's head, but since we were sharing a building and I considered myself an equal participant in the building, and Jim Whitehead said, "Sure, sure. I'll speak to Jerry. Don't worry about it. You can get the combination." Because we would have to put in this money.

Well, then he called back and he said, "Betty, I want you to know that anytime you want to get into the big safe over here, you just bring the money on over." He backed Jerry instead of me.

So then came the winter book sales, and I had about seventy thousand dollars in a cardboard box. So he had said, "Just bring it on over. We'll put it in the big safe in the Washington Hall." So I get over there when we had finished, and I banged my nose on the locked door, because it was an early leaving because Mr. Whitehead and the rest of them had gone to a faculty meeting, and I brought that money back. I had the flu, I had a temperature of 101, I was not going to run the risk of taking it home, and I went back and I hid it in that building. You know, what it was was that, "Even though she's listed in the catalog as an administrator, women don't know how to handle money," or something or other.

But when Stewart Epley came, he treated me like a partner in the business of running the bookstore.

Warren: Well, that's a really interesting story.

Munger: Yep.

Warren: That's a very interesting story.

Munger: I'm afraid Mr. Whitehead and I never got along very well. For one thing, I don't like bosses; I like partners, you know. And he didn't like – we just didn't get along. One time I spoke up for the little people on campus. [Laughter] I'll never forget it. I couldn't believe my ears. It was like talking into a velvet cushion. It was just hopeless, to make him understand what I meant, and he said, "Betty, I agree with you absolutely. That's why I make it a point of always speaking to the grounds crew." It was elitist. It was "we happy few." I suggested – oh, yeah, that was the time I thought that the trustees might like to know who ran their textbook when I wasn't running it. And she was lousy. I said, "You know, I would think the trustees would like to see the little people who do the work." And goodness knows, it's perfectly obvious that every department's secretary, every secretary runs the business, whatever business it is. And I said something to Jim. Particularly I thought – oh, that lovely Poindexter gal, black gal.

Warren: I didn't know her.

Munger: She was Jim Whitehead's secretary for a while. Then she moved somewhere else and she died. She was young. I thought, "Wouldn't they like to know her?" I didn't really – it was conversation. And Bob knew so much more about art than Jim Whitehead did. It was ridiculous.

Warren: I have taken up lots of your time. I am really grateful.

Munger: Well, goodness. I don't know whether I've told you what you want to hear.

Warren: I'm really, really pleased with our interview.

Munger: Good.

Warren: I think it's been just fine. Thank you.

Munger: Good. My mother always –

[End of interview]

