Interviewee: Hilde Hein
Interviewer: Laura Cass
Date of Interview: October 6, 2009
Location: Home of Interviewee, Auburndale, MA
Transcriber: Laura Cass

ABSTRACT: Hilde Hein was born in 1932 in Cologne, Germany, and was the first tenured female faculty member at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, serving as professor of philosophy from 1970 until 1999. She was also part owner of Annapurna, an Indian restaurant in Worcester. Hein's academic focus is the philosophy of museums and the philosophy of women, and one of her main achievements at Holy Cross was to teach a groundbreaking course on the philosophy of women. In this interview, Hein discusses her early life in Berkeley, CA, as a member of a Jewish immigrant family, closely related to Robert Oppenheimer; her part-ownership of Annapurna restaurant; her tenure at Holy Cross during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, with particular emphasis on Holy Cross's transition to coeducational school; and her research on the philosophy of museums. The interview also includes interesting observations about Berkeley, CA, Reed College, and Cornell University, and the Exploratorium museum.

LC: I am Laura Cass interviewing Hilde Hein in her home on October 6, 2009, for the WWHP [Worcester Women's History Project]. Do I have your permission to do this interview and record it?

HH: Yes, you have my permission.

[For the first part of the interview, all questions are directly from the WWOHP Bio Sheet.]

LC: Thanks. Can you tell me what your date of birth is?

HH: April 24, 1932.

LC: And where you were you born?

HH: In Cologne, Germany.

LC: Do you have any children?

HH: Yes.

LC: How many do you have?

HH: Three – three children.

LC: Are they girls? Boys?

HH: Two girls and a boy.

LC: Do you have grandchildren?

HH: Yes, five grandchildren.

LC: Do they live around here, your children and grandchildren?

HH: Well, I have one daughter who lives in Northampton [Massachusetts], one in Chicago, and my son is in California.

LC: Where in California?

HH: Nevada City - Grass Valley.

LC: I don't know where that is.

HH: That's northeast of Sacramento.

LC: Oh okay – I'm from San Diego…

HH: Oh are you really?

LC: … so I never know where other cities are. Are you married right now?

HH: No.

LC: Divorced?

HH: Divorced.

LC: Is Hein the only name you've gone by?

HH: Yes, it's my former husband's name, but I kept it because that was pretty much how I had grown up as an adult and lived my adult life, so I thought there was no point in changing it.

LC: What other names have you gone…?

HH: Stern was my name before I was married.

LC: So what was your mother's name?

HH: Her first name was Lieselotte, but everybody called her Lotte.

LC: And was her maiden name – what was her maiden name?

HH: Wallerstein.

LC: I might want to write that one down. *[laughter]*

HH: *[laughter]*

LC: Can you spell that for me?

HH: It's W-A-L-L-E-R-S-T-E-I-N.

LC: I think I'm going to fill the rest of this [WWHP Biography Sheet] out later from the tape recorder, but I should write that one. Is it, just like, "Lisa"….

HH: Lotte – L-O-T-T-E

LC: And where was she born?

HH: She was born in Germany, too.

LC: Germany, too. In Cologne? Or somewhere else?

HH: Cologne, also. Uh huh.

LC: How *do* you spell Cologne, Germany?

HH: C-O- - well, if you spell it the American way, it's C-O-L-O-G-N-E.

LC: Okay. How would you spell it the German way?

HH: In Germany, it would be K-Ö-*umlaut*-L-N.

LC: Okay.

HH: *Koln.*

LC: And what was your father's name?

HH: Alfred Stern.

LC: Okay, that's a little bit easier, I guess. Is it just S-T-E-R-N?

HH: Yea.

LC: And where was he born?

HH: He was also born in Cologne.

LC: Okay, so everyone from…. Did they spend – did they ever come to the US or did they move to any other cities or….

HH: Well we all came in 1937.

LC: Oh okay, right….. For the obvious reasons?

HH: Yes, for the obvious reasons. *[laughter]*

LC: How many siblings do you have?

HH: One brother.

LC: One brother? And are you older than him?

HH: No, he's older than I am.

LC: He's older. And is he – did he come with you guys?

HH: Yea, we all came together, yea.

LC: Is he alive now?

HH: Yes, he is. He's about to turn 80.

LC: Okay. Does he live around here?

HH: He lives in Santa Rosa, California. I'm going to go out for the event [birthday celebration].

LC: That is very nice. I know where Santa Rosa is! *[laughter]*

HH: Okay, yea. *[laughter]*

LC: So, there's a question [on WWOHP Bio Sheet] – racial and ethnic background?

HH: Jewish.

LC: You're Jewish. And I guess - are you just 100% German? Your family's German?

HH: As far as I know, back to the 18th century, it's all Germany.

LC: What is your current employer and position?

HH: Well, I'm at Brandeis [University] at the Women's Studies Research Center, and I'm actually going to be teaching a course there in the Spring, so I guess that makes them my employer. Although what I have at the Women's Studies Center is a research position, which is not an employee relationship, exactly.

LC: I'll ask you more about that. What is your – so there's a list of things to choose from for "What is your connection to Worcester," and I guess it is – it's a work connection, right? Is that why you…?

HH: It's a work connection, yea.

LC: Because you worked at Holy Cross [College of the Holy Cross]?

HH: Yes. And the other thing that I did for a few years is I was part owner of Annapurna. Do you know that restaurant?

LC: No.

HH: Well, you're not from Worcester. It's – it *was* – it no longer exists – an Indian restaurant…

LC: Okay!

HH: … I started together with some other people from Holy Cross and Clark [Clark University] and people who lived in Worcester.

LC: While you were at….

HH: While I was at Holy Cross.

LC: That seems like a lot of work.

HH: It was more work for them than it was for me, but it was being – it was fun being involved with the early stages of it, especially trying out the recipes. *[laughter]*

LC: That *would* be fun. Why did you decide to start an Indian restaurant?

HH: Well, it actually started when I was selling not this house, but the house that I was living in before, and these friends of mine, who were both biologists - Indians, who…. He was teaching at Holy Cross - called me up and asked me if I would be interested in joining this venture, and I said, "Yes!" I had always had a fantasy of running a restaurant. I don't know that I would've thought of an Indian one, but that was the option, and I said, "Yes!" So, I did. And we owned it for 17 years, but, in the end, it wasn't really running anymore, and it was time to sell it, so we did.

LC: So did you mostly do like, management, sort of, like financial and…. What did you do there?

HH: Well, I wasn't there on the day-to-day operational basis, but we would get together once or twice a year after it got started - I mean while it was still getting started it took more time – but we would discuss policy and problems and things like that, so I was involved with it. And getting it started meant really going out and buying things like high chairs for kids and table cloths and restaurant equipment and so on. That was fun.

LC: Did you already have – I guess you must have had an interest in Indian food before that, or had you…?

HH: Actually, not a lot….

LC: You didn't? No?

HH: … but they did. They were Indian and, they brought over the cook from India. He was a brother of… I think it was her brother, and he had been a hotel chef before, so he knew something about it. So between us we sort of concocted *[laughter]* what was, you know, when you consider it - that very few restaurants have a very long lifespan…. We did pretty well.

LC: What were their names?

HH: Lingappa [Bandakoppa T. Lingappa and Yamuna L. Achar Lingappa] – and actually, they still live in Worcester. Maybe you should be interviewing them.

LC: Possibly! They [WWHP] do want me to ask [about] any more people – let me write that down actually on the back of here – what's their name?

HH: Lingappa – L-I-N-G-A-double P-A. And he [Bandakoppa] taught biology at Holy Cross. Actually they would be very interesting people to interview, because he started a methane project, and now everybody's doing it, but at that point no one was interested in, you know, using cow dung for energy sources, and that's what he taught his students to do. And she was also interesting. She was a biologist. She taught at Worcester State for awhile, and she actually sued Worcester State, for – I don't remember if it was just general gender issues or exactly what it was, but that is an interesting….

LC: So she doesn't work there anymore?

HH: Well, no. They actually spend half the year in India now.

LC: And so the restaurant – how long was the restaurant's lifespan?

HH: Seventeen years.

LC: Seventeen… that *is* a long lifespan.

HH: It is, yea. And [it] was vegetarian, so it's very current in that sense, yea.

LC: Clearly I wanted to hear about the Indian restaurant. *[laughter]* I'm hungry – but, okay, well let me go back a little. I might return to that, but let me sort of start at the beginning again. So you were born in Cologne to a Jewish family. So, what did your parents do there for a living?

HH: My father was a doctor.

LC: And your mother was a homemaker, I guess?

HH: She was – after she married, she was, but before that she had been – she used to say architecture but what she designed was really more what people here, I think, would call interior design. She designed tablecloths and curtains, a little bit of furniture, but not houses.

LC: So then she married your dad, and I guess you and your brother were pretty young – is your brother a lot older than you?

HH: No, he's just a couple years older.

LC: So I guess you guys got wind that it wasn't a good time to be there?

HH: Yea, we were lucky. We had relatives in America, so they sponsored us.

LC: So where did you come to here, first?

HH: Well, we arrived in New York, and my grandmother who came with us had a brother - two brothers - who were living in New York, and I think the original plan was that she was going to live with one of her brothers who was widowed by then, and so was she, and he died as we were en route to America. So that kind of changed the plans and my parents decided that they would take a trip across the country and decide where we would live. So they did; they left us in New York, and we had relatives in California, and that's where we ended up.

LC: Oh okay, where in California?

HH: Berkeley. So I grew up in Berkeley.

LC: Did your dad return to being a doctor there?

HH: He did, but he had to essentially start all over again. He had to take his internship again, his residency, his special boards. So the first few years, he was busy doing that.

LC: Did you guys grow up being religiously observant?

HH: No, not at all.

LC: Are you still – has that ever been a part of your life, or is it not really?

HH: Well, it – it's interesting because as a friend of mine from Holy Cross pointed out, that when Catholics leave the church they become lapsed Catholics, but when Jews don't practice, they just become non-practicing Jews.

LC: That is interesting.

HH: And that is true. I mean, I am Jewish, but I never pay any attention to it.

LC: Did you and your family think of yourselves as sort of culturally Jewish or more just Germans who'd come here or how did you…?

HH: That's an interesting question because German Jews are a class apart – literally, a class apart – from most of the Jews who came to America, and so I can't even say that I'm culturally Jewish because I really don't practice and never have. I don't even pay attention to the holidays unless somebody invites me *[laughter]*, so I don't really know how to classify myself in that respect. You know, I'm Jewish, but I don't practice it, and that seems fine.

LC: Was it important in your family to follow like, what was going on with the war?

HH: Oh absolutely, absolutely, yea, that was - I can still remember my father with a map at the breakfast table every morning you know, following where the advancing armies were. So yes, that was a very important part of our lives.

LC: Did you still have relatives in…?

HH: We did, and gradually – well, not so many in Germany – but pretty much all over the world, so…. What I've noticed, a cousin who does genealogies and sent them to me – because I have a very small family, independently of the Holocaust. I have one brother; my father had one brother; my mother had one sister. We didn't have a lot of aunts and uncles. But my grandmother, the one who came with us, was one of six children, and that was an important family. She was an Oppenheimer.

LC: Really? That *is* an important family!

HH: So the Oppenheimers were the ones who brought us here, and that's been an important part of my life.

LC: Wow! So besides them sponsoring you, did you have contact with them regularly?

HH: Oh absolutely. Robert [J. Robert Oppenheimer] was an important part of our lives, 'til he went off to Los Alamos, and Frank [Frank Friedman Oppenheimer], his brother, started the Exploratorium [San Francisco, CA], and I spent time there, wrote a book about it. So yea, that was an important element of my life.

LC: Oh! I wish I knew more – I took a Cold War culture history class…

HH: Oh really?

LC: … just recently, but we didn't – it was more a Cold War culture class. I don't actually know that much about Robert Oppenheimer or – I mean, did he tell you things he was doing while you…?

HH: Oh, absolutely not! He disappeared off the face of the earth. We had no – we really kept all of the [publicly accessible] things that emerged from the story. And my grandmother especially was close to Robert, they talked a lot. So she knew – I didn't know E.O. Lawrence, but she did – and so, of course I read all of the books on the subject. It's interesting because I just sat in on a Cold War history course at Brandeis, and it was not about the Oppenheimers, although that is included in the syllabus, but it was about George F. Kennan's foreign policy and Walter Lippman's opposition to it, so I read the material and I went to the class, and I talked to the professor afterward, and so he asked me where I was born and I told him, and he said "Oh, we just talked about Cologne because of Konrad Adenhauer," and I said, "Oh, my father voted for him." *[laughter]* And I'm thinking about this afterward and why did he include Konrad Adenhauer in this particular class, which seemed to be mostly about America, but I haven't had a chance to ask him that question.

LC: So how old were you when Robert kind of disappeared from your life?

HH: Well, let's see. That would've been in the early 40s, so I would've been nine, ten maybe, at the time.

LC: Is there any kind of influence he had on your life or anything he talked to you about that you remember?

HH: You know, thinking about this - and I have been thinking about it a lot recently, partly because a new book about the Exploratorium came out, which I just read, so I was thinking a lot about Frank - and I think Frank had an important influence on me because I have been writing about museums for the past thirty years or so, and it was the Exploratorium that had an enormous impact on me, certainly about the way I think about museums, and the way I think about science. I think that he more than Robert had an influence on me.

LC: So what kind of things about him most influenced you?

HH: Well, the – science being part of everyday life; science being everywhere; science being accessible, not some arcane subject that's off in the world. But not in the sense of the applicability of it - I mean, not that people are doing cancer research. I was thinking about it because they announced the three Americans who won the Nobel Prize - it was in the Times today - and when you read about science in the newspaper it's always, "Well, this is important *because* it has an influence on studying aging or studying cancer research or something like that." And I think that what I got from the Exploratorium was that you see reflections everywhere; you see evaporation of liquids everywhere; that, you know, you're standing in a bus trying not to fall over: that's resonance. So just, thinking about the way science is part of the way we understand the world, as literature is, as art is, as everything else is. I think I owe a lot of that to Frank.

LC: Was he pretty constant in your life?

HH: When we lived near each other, yes. But we didn't always live near each other. I mean, when we were in California, they were in California. So when I was growing up, both Robert and Frank were a part of my life.

LC: Is that mostly the kind of museums you write…. I know you write books about museums. Is it mostly science museums or museums in general?

HH: No, it isn't mostly about science museums. But the first one was the Exploratorium, and that made me think more about what I called "The Philosophy of Museums" or what…. I mean, Shula Reinhart, the director of the Women's Studies Center, refers to me as a museum theorist, and um – at…. You know, my background is in philosophy, and so I think like a philosopher. And so I find when I talk to museum people, who are much more practical than I am, they think I'm theoretical, and the philosophers, to my chagrin, think I've defected from philosophy, and I think that's a mistake. I've been active for many years in the American Society for aesthetics. I want them to pay attention to museums! And they're beginning to, but for a long time, they didn't. And I finally persuaded the journal to cover books about museums, but they still don't deal with exhibitions, which I think is crazy because I think a lot more people go to museums than read philosophical books on art.

LC: That's probably true. *[laughter]*

HH: And so I think we should be talking about museums, and gradually it's beginning to happen, but not as quickly as I think it should.

LC: I want to return to that, but let me back up, and let me ask about your education and early career. So you grew up in Berkeley, and then did you go to high school there and everything?

HH: I went to Berkeley High School. I just went to my 60th reunion, which was an amazing experience because it has changed so much.

LC: Berkeley has?

HH: Well you know, when we went to high school they said – you went off in the morning, you went to high school, nobody paid any attention to what you did, and we just did what we did. Now, there is an office for this, an office for that. I mean, they are hand holding all the time, and that's got its good and its bad aspects. I mean, one of the things that was just staggering was that they now have a nursery for the children of students.

LC: They have a nursery?

HH: They require the mothers to spend, I've forgotten, 10 hours, 20 hours, whatever it is, at the nursery so that they will bond with their children, and…. It makes you think. And when we asked questions – there weren't too many of us there – but when we asked questions, somebody who was leading us around pointed out that they have children of Nobel Prize winners there, and they have children who live in crates on the street, because there's *one* public high school in Berkeley, so they've got everybody. That was true when I was in high school, too, but they didn't pay a lot of attention to the class differences. I mean, we all knew it, because Berkeley was a very stratified city, but they didn't make any provisions for the different needs that people had, and now they do. So it was - it was very interesting to go back after 60 years and see what that was like.

LC: Did you think you would spend the rest of your life in Berkeley and California when you were there, or did you hope to move other places?

HH: I don't think so. I think that my family certainly encouraged going off somewhere else to college, and I don't think I thought about where I would end up, but I don't think I thought I would spend my whole life there necessarily.

LC: So where did you go to college?

HH: I went to Reed College.

LC: In Portland [Oregon]?

HH: Yea. And then I left – in fact, just last night I was at a Reed event in Cambridge – but I left, not because I didn't like it, but because I felt that everybody there was like me, and that I really would like to see if that was what I wanted to be. So then I went off to Cornell [Cornell University, Ithaca, New York], and graduated from there.

LC: How did you decide to go to Cornell?

HH: I wanted to go to the East Coast. I wanted to go to a co-education school….

LC: Reed was coeducational at the time, right?

HH: Yes, it was. And I wanted to go to a larger school where there would be more options. And a *good* school. So those were, I think, my primary considerations.

LC: So were the people at Cornell different enough for you?

HH: Well, I ended up with the same bunch, but I felt it was my choice. But I tried; I shopped around a little bit. I did sorority rushing a little bit, which wouldn't have been an option at Reed. But you know, I ended up with the same people that I would've found at Reed, I think.

LC: I think Reed today has sort of the reputation of being countercultural with lots of drugs and everything.

HH: The drugs were not an issue when I was there - they are an issue now – but the countercultural part definitely was. It was politically and culturally not exactly following the beaten track.

LC: And that was pretty much how you were too?

HH: Yea, yea. Certainly politically. I don't think I was quite as liberated culturally as some of the people there were, but I was okay with that. *[laughter]* That was their business, not mine. That in itself is culturally off beat: I didn't really care what other people did.

LC: So was Cornell a little more – did they have some more conservative people there?

HH: Yea definitely.

LC: Did you enjoy being around them when you did?

HH: Well that's why I say, I think I ended up finding the same people that I would've known at Reed, and…. Yea, I think it was – I don't regret having done it. I think it was more than that, and I'm glad I did it. I think it exposed me to more of the world, and that was good.

LC: Were you a philosophy major?

HH: I became a philosophy major at Cornell.

LC: Did you go into college, like did you go into Reed thinking you would be a different major?

HH: I had never heard of philosophy. *[laughter]*

LC: Oh!

HH: I had no idea. And it was a distribution requirement. And as a result of that, I'm very much in favor of distribution requirements because I think that if people simply do what they want to do, they won't get the exposure to things that they've never heard of. And so, I took philosophy at Reed, and I loved it, and it was an easy choice for me; there was just no doubt. I fell in love with it, and that was it.

LC: Did you start getting interested in museums then, or did that come later?

HH: No. I think that came about when I was teaching aesthetics, and I just began thinking about museums as not just places that are depositories of things, but rather instruments that shape the way we think about things and see things. So even that was pretty philosophical, I guess, from the beginning.

LC: Did you go immediately from Cornell to a doctoral program?

HH: Well, I went to France, and while I was in France, I joined the Middlebury Program study abroad, so I got a master's in French, and then I got married. And so we both applied to graduate schools, and…. So I went on in philosophy, and just kind of one thing led to another and eventually *[laughter]* I ended up with a PhD in philosophy.

LC: Did you both end up at the same program, or did you go to different…?

HH: No, my husband was a chemist. So we were both in graduate school….

LC: At the same…?

HH: … at the same place. We were both at Michigan, which is why we were both at Michigan because we were both accepted there. And then he got a post-doc at CalTech, so back to California, and I finished up. And then we came here, and I decided – and by that time I had just had my third child, and I didn't - I thought I would stay home, but after three weeks of that, *[laughter]* I decided "I don't think I want to stay home." So, I called up Tufts, and asked them if they needed anybody, which is an insane way of getting a job…

LC: *[laughter]*

HH: … but it worked. They hired me as a teaching assistant, and then gradually I sort of started teaching more courses. And so I taught at Tufts for awhile, but that didn't lead to a full time job. And so then I went to Holy Cross, which is how I ended up in Worcester.

LC: So your field was – was your emphasis on aesthetics?

HH: Yes.

LC: And is that the kind of courses you TA'd at Tufts? Or just general…?

HH: No, I taught general philosophy, and…. Tufts started a master's program while I was there, but it was essentially an undergraduate institution, which was also true of Holy Cross, and that has its advantages and disadvantages. If you're – if you're working with graduate students, you can go into

something more deeply, and if you're doing just undergraduate courses, you get scope. So I actually covered a fairly broad terrain of courses in philosophy, but most of the writing that I've done – not all of it, but most of it – has been in aesthetics. But I did get interested in other things, like philosophy of biology and philosophy of law and a number of other things.

LC: So someone told me that you were the first female professor at Holy Cross or among the first. Is that…?

HH: I was the first one to get tenured.

LC: The first one to get tenured, okay.

HH: I was the first full-time [female] professor there. But there were some other women. There was a – – what's her name? – in the psychology department – it was very – I don't know if she's still alive or not, but if she is, that would be someone you'd want to interview also. She was in psychology – a black woman.

LC: Oh! Okay.

HH: Odetta! Odetta McNeil – no, Ogretta. Ogretta McNeil. And she and I used to sort of joke that they had managed to solve two of their problems with both of us. *[laughter]*

LC: *[laughter]* Right. Do you mean – because Jewish, and…?

HH: She was black and a woman, and I was Jewish and a woman.

LC: Right, right.

HH: So you know they – the minority problems were being solved.

LC: I'm sorry, so what year was that that you started at Holy Cross?

HH: I started there during – I've forgotten if it was 1969 or 70 – I think maybe it was 70. And she was already there.

LC: Did she – so you were the first full-time. Was she part-time?

HH: You know, I don't know. And I don't know why I got tenure before she did…. I think I do know. I think it was because she was getting a PhD at Clark at the time, so maybe she didn't have a tenure track appointment or something.

LC: Was the male faculty very diverse?

HH: It was mostly Catholic – mostly Irish Catholic. I think there were four Jews at the time that I came. And no other blacks, I think. There were beginning to be black students, and just before I came, there was a strike at Holy Cross, which was initiated by the black students. And it was apropos of – there had been an anti-war demonstration – this was the Vietnam War – and students were arrested. And of the

very few black students that were at Holy Cross, they were disproportionately arrested. And so the black students protested, and it was a big issue, you know, that people still remember. Interestingly enough, I don't think Clarence Thomas was involved, but Ted [Ted Wells] – what's his last name – who was Scooter Libby's [Lewis "Scooter" Libby] lawyer – um – Scooter Libby is the…

LC: Yea.

HH: …assistant to…

LC: One of them, I can't remember. *[laughter]*

HH: Our previous vice president. So it was interesting, here are these two black men – young men – each of them went to law school. Clarence Thomas turns out to be a conservative on the supreme court, and Ted – whatever his last name was – *[laughter]* - who was much more radical than Clarence Thomas was, but how he turned out to be the attorney for Scooter Libby is a mystery to me. So there was beginning to be a black presence at Holy Cross at that time, and they made a difference; they were interesting. They were there before the women were.

LC: What year did Holy Cross go coed?

HH: 1972. Which is the same year that Yale went coed. And it was a very exciting prospect. It didn't – just slowly it began to change the character of Holy Cross, but it didn't for awhile.

LC: Did you have an impact on that decision, since you were one of the only women faculty members?

HH: I don't think so. I remember being asked in an elevator by one of the priests once, "What do they eat?" *[laughter]*

LC: *[laughter]* Seriously? Or joking?

HH: Seriously! I mean people – so of course I responded, "Cottage cheese and rye crisps." There was a fear that the presence of women would mean that all sorts of unspeakable things would turn up in the plumbing system and there would be full length mirrors in the bathrooms and…. It was very strange.

LC: Did you take it upon yourself to try and counteract the rumors, or what was your reaction to those kind of ideas?

HH: I thought they were absurd, and I said so. *[laughter]* I mean, I didn't go out on a campaign to prove that women were human beings, but – essentially I did I guess, by being…. It made a difference. Because it was very much an old boy network, and it was, you know, jokes told in classrooms which were unfitted for female company and so…. I think the fear of what it would mean was real, and it turned out to only slowly become a reality because…. I think the first women by and large who were attracted to Holy Cross were the ones who would've gone to Catholic women's schools. So the ones that would've gone to Emmanuel [College] or to Mt. – what's it called? The one in New York… Mt. Something or other. It wasn't the ones who went to BC [Boston College], which already was coed. And – I mean the interesting thing, I think, was that Holy Cross really didn't know how to select the women in the

beginning, so they managed to get in a few really interesting women. But by and large, it was the counterpart to the Catholic women's schools, so it took awhile for all of that to sort of work itself out.

LC: Did you have any of them in your classes the first year?

HH: Oh yea. I taught a course on philosophers on women.

LC: Oh okay! Had you not been able to teach that class before?

HH: Nobody would've thought of it. And actually the people who objected the most were not the faculty but the students. It was a very conservative bunch of students and they thought that this would just be a frill course. So I made it tough! I had them reading real philosophers. It was a very interesting lesson for me because I wanted to have women in the class, which meant that it had to be open to freshmen, because the only women who were there were freshmen, and so it had to be open enrollment. And so I got 75 students in that class, which - the majority were women, but the women were all freshmen, and that upset the men in the class.

LC: Because they thought it wouldn't be as rigorous?

HH: No, because – the women, because of their number and because the course was relevant to women, [it] sort of gave them a position of power, which was augmented by the fact that it was such a large class that I wanted to break them down into discussion groups, and the only way I could do that because of the calendar was by making the discussion groups simultaneous with the class, so I couldn't be in all of them at the same time. So I appointed monitors to not have authoritative positions exactly, but at least to report back to me in some way. But that was perceived as a power play, and – so I made them women – I mean it was a course about women. Well the men went berserk over that. And so I was really negotiating. I mean, you have to realize that this was something that was going on all over the country at that time. People – I mean, this was late '60s, early '70s – a lot of this kind of political exploration was going on, and so I was only doing what was happening everywhere else in my own eyes, but not in the eyes of either the administration or the students at Holy Cross. And so there were a lot of very interesting struggles happening at the time, and I was at least as busy negotiating those political problems as I was teaching the course. But it was a – you know, for the time, it was a very stringently philosophical course. Because there wasn't any literature from women, so what I had done was selected material from all of the major philosophers where I could find it where they said anything relevant to the subject of women, which was mostly derogatory, you know, with a few things like John Stuart Mill who believed in the equality of women. But mostly it was critical of women, and contemptuous of women, and I wanted them to see that, "This is what the world's great literature is telling us." And so those few years at the beginning were very turbulent, you know. We were very active politically – not just on women's issues, but still the anti-war movement was going on. People were criticizing the Board of Trustees for their investments in industries that were related to the war effort. All of that was happening at Holy Cross. It was racial issues, things like the Mustard Seeds started up at that time….

LC: What were the Mustard Seeds?

HH: I think it still exists. It was a restaurant, a community-run restaurant that also served food to poor people. I mean, that's why I say there were a lot of interesting women doing things – not just women, but

women were among them. Some of them worked through the chaplain's office. The people who are the chaplains at Holy Cross right now were part of that process. So it was an exciting time in Worcester.

LC: Was there like, a Dean of Women or something? Or did they have a special sort of place where women could go to talk, and were you part of that?

HH: Informally people did come to me, but - I wasn't part of it, but they did have to have a Dean of Women, and I – there was someone, and I wish I could remember this woman's name – Ann or Anna or something – who was connected with the chaplain's office. She was one of the people I was looking for in the list of people that should've been interviewed for this. You know, I think if you spoke to the then-President, who's still at Holy Cross – he's a Jesuit, John Brooks – he would know. Ann Wolf? Something like that? He would know who those women were. And they deserve to be interviewed because they really made a big difference. So there was an anti-war movement. There was the black power, black students union. Lot of issues then because I think they did have a separate corridor, the black corridor. So there were objections from the white students, "This was segregation, reverse segregation." That all had to be worked out. There were the disinvestment issues. Lots of very interesting stuff. I mean, I think that, that period which is much maligned in my estimation as having been intellectually soft, was absolutely the most exciting intellectual time I have ever lived through – knowingly. I mean, I guess the Cold War was interesting too but I was too young to *[laughter]* really appreciate that at the time. But this was – you had to rethink everything. And we did. And you had to figure out your own values, you had to make decisions. And in my case that meant decisions about your family, too. You know, how were your children going to be raised? So I think that socially, politically, intellectually, it was just a very exciting time to be alive.

LC: Were there a lot of other faculty members who you sort of agreed with or felt that you could really communicate with, or were a lot of other faculty members conservative and you were frustrated by them. How was that balance?

HH: I would have to say that most of the people that I bonded with were here [Auburndale] rather than in Worcester. But there were some – including the Lingappa's – who were active in a lot of these movements. Some who are no longer alive. Kristen Waters, who wasn't at Holy Cross at the time but she was – she was at Clark, maybe as a student – no she wasn't a student there, she was a student at Bard – but she was in Worcester doing something or other. There were a few. I think none that come to mind that are still there now. But there were a few. I mean I did make friends there.

LC: So to clarify, were you living here [Auburndale]… or were you living in Worcester?

HH: I was living…

LC: …or were you living in Worcester?

HH: No, I was living in Newton. My kids were…

LC: Oh, in Newton.

HH: Not in this house. Well, actually we [I –HH edit] moved here in 1980. But I was living in Newton. My kids were in school, so I never moved. But I carpooled with people from Newton; there were others.

LC: Was your husband teaching somewhere?

HH: He was at - I guess he was at BU at the time.

LC: So you mentioned - you were just saying that it made you make some decisions about your family, so what do you mean when you say that?

HH: Well, in the sense that we were very much involved in the anti-Vietnam War movement, and so our kids had to be! I mean I think they knew what our values were and they were exposed through families that were broken up by the events of the time. I mean, you know, it *was* a heady time, and kids would be thrown out. I remember a lot of people staying at our house for a while because their parents had thrown them out for one thing or another. So, you did have to deal with these social issues that were no longer submerged. I mean I don't think that they were ever nonexistent, but they were inescapable at that point.

LC: Were a lot of other women you – who were in your community, I guess here – were they professionals? Did any other of them have doctorates?

HH: Actually, that's interesting because I was in a women's group, which started I guess in the '70s. I don't remember exactly when it started. At that point, there were maybe six of us to begin with and then we added more people. In the beginning, I was the only one who was working full time, but later, everybody was. What's more, I think – was I the only one who was divorced at the time? I don't remember if I even was – I maybe was – but that too increased. So, families were breaking up, and that was also an issue for everybody.

LC: What year did you get divorced?

HH: Around 1974, I think.

LC: Was that a problem at Holy Cross because they're Catholic?

HH: Interestingly enough, I know they would've never hired me if I'd been divorced, but it was after I was already there. It's pretty common, I think, now. Of course, there are a lot more women now too. But I know I wouldn't have been hired had I been divorced. I think that by the time I did get divorced I was already there, and, I mean, nobody was paying a lot of attention, I don't think. Maybe they were. *[laughter]* But it became less of an issue afterwards.

LC: So how many years were you at Holy Cross?

HH: Almost 30, yea.

LC: So until like, the late '90s, I guess?

HH: December 31, 1999 is when I officially resigned. *[laughter]*

LC: *[laughter]* Okay, and did you – are you happy about your experience at Holy Cross, or what are your sort of – I guess that's a big question….

HH: That's a hard one to answer…. It certainly had its pros and cons.

LC: Did you see, sort of – I mean just from the beginning of coeducation to the late '90s, were you happy with the progress of…. I mean, I guess by the 90s it wasn't really a big issue that it was…

HH: Coed?

LC: …coed.

HH: Well I think that it surprised everybody. I think that nobody expected women to achieve the level of representation, both on the faculty and among the students, their significance. I just don't think that anybody imagined that. I think that all of the schools that went coed at the time made that decision not motivated by human rights issues or equality issues, but largely financial issues because it increased the pool from which you could select students, and it meant that you could get better students. And I don't think that they understood how they were getting better students *[laughter]*. I think that they rightly anticipated that more people – more well qualified people – would apply, both males and females, and so they would have a larger pool of you know, highly SAT-scoring students. But I don't think they understood – I don't think anybody understood – the *qualitative* change. I mean, quantitative, okay yea, you can see that there'll be more 800s. But you know, "How is this going to impact what we actually do here?", I don't think…. I don't think they got it. And I think it has happened at Holy Cross as it happened everywhere else.

LC: So did you see your classes really change in terms of what you talked about and what your students said?

HH: I did see them change. I think that for the first few years, what people said about women was essentially true: that the A students and the F students were going to be men, and in between there would be a range of women, and that was true. I had a lot of B students – women – not a lot of A students, and I think it was largely because they were shy, they were overshadowed by the men, and it was hard work to get them to open up, raise their hand, talk, have opinions because they weren't educated to do that, and it took a long time. And it took a kind of defiance of the norms, I mean, because you sort of had to almost violate them saying, "What do you think, Susan?" or "Miss so and so" or whatever it is I called them, *[laughter]* and that gradually changed over time, and I'm constantly aware of it even now. I mean, I thought about it when you called me that women, young women now, more than older women my age, have a sense of entitlement. Of *course* the world is going to be there to provide their needs. That wasn't true then. It simply didn't enter into anyone's consciousness. And that did change over time, so….

LC: Can you pinpoint – is there like a specific sort of a year when you were like, "Oh, things have progressed"? Do you know what I mean – kind of a turning point?

HH: Yea…. I don't think it's quite as sharp as that. I think that there is a critical mass. I mean, I think we're seeing it in congress right now that – or look at the Nobel Prize. Three women! No two, two of them are women, but one of those women had been working together with another woman. They would've been totally ignored until now. So I think that – I think we have reached some kind of a turning point in the world, at least in the United States, but I wouldn't be so bold as to say there's no going back. I think that we don't know what happened in the historic past, and that for all we know there have been

periods where women were heard and that somehow that has been suppressed, and you know, I just don't think that we can relax and say, "Okay, we've done it, we're there." I mean I think that, right now, women are in a fairly good place, but I also don't want women to just become assimilated. I mean I think that we need to change the world, not become a part of it the way it is. And we're not there yet.

LC: So did you ever see that happening at Holy Cross, that kind of…?

HH: No, no. And I don't think it's there yet. I mean, changes have happened, I don't want to deny that, but I think that it's still pretty much an old-boy environment, as far as I know, but you know I'm not really close to anything that's going on there now.

LC: It kind of – that is sort of the impression I have, but only based on two students – it seems like – and they've both been boys I knew who went there, so it seems like it's not really representative, but it does seem to be kind of a "boys like it" school.

HH: Yea.

LC: Unless there's anything else you'd like to say about your time at Holy Cross, I'd like to – I know we've already been going an hour – I'd like to ask you more about your interest in museums and a little bit about your… about that. So you taught aesthetics at Holy Cross mostly, also other types of courses like the women's…. Did you continue teaching women's….?

HH: I did, but I had to change it constantly because things started happening, and they happened both in the world outside, and you know, the women's movement happened. So there was an avalanche of material that you could draw from. But one very important thing happened to me right after that first year, and that is that the young women I was teaching were angry at their mothers, and I was horrified. I mean, that was not what I had intended to do, but you know all of a sudden this revelation came to them that you know they had been badly maligned and that they correctly perceived that women had been the perpetuators of this, I mean, you know, that women had been the teachers. And, you know, here was the propagation of this myth that women were to be homemakers and weren't as good as men and this and that and the other thing and I thought, "Oh my God, I really didn't intend to do this." So I decided I couldn't teach the course that way anymore, and I had to think about how to introduce a respect for women, not a contempt. And so, I had to keep changing the course, and so every time I taught it, it was very different from every other time. And in the beginning, there was more interest among men in the course than there was later.

LC: Really?

HH: So it became a kind of a mostly women taking the course.

LC: That seems surprising. Did that surprise you? Did you think more men would be interested in it as the years went by?

HH: What I found is that it was mostly the minority students, male students, who were interested. And that wasn't just my experience; I think that that was true in other places. It's still true. I mean, women's studies programs are mostly populated by women.

LC: That's true.

HH: Which is why now, even then I did the same thing, I try to infiltrate the other courses that I'm teaching. I have never really wanted to teach in a women's studies program, although I did it at Holy Cross, because I think it is ghetto-ized. And if you want to change the world, you have to talk to the people in it, not just to the ones that are already sort of confirmed in believing. I mean, you're just going to be preaching to the choir, as they say, and I didn't want to do that. So, I think that it's important – and it's important not just to talk about women's equality and a sense of "we can do all the same things that men do," which is true, but that that's not what we want to do. *[laughter]* We want to do better things. And so, figuring out what those things are and how to do it and who to talk to is still important.

LC: So when did your interest in museum studies sort of start?

HH: Well that was, as I said, in thinking about the fact that museums – specifically art museums, in this instance – shape the way we think about art, and decide what it is, and what it isn't. And that also is – that came a little bit later than the women's issues, but – it was a politically recognition. And – and then, well another wonderful thing happened, which was sheer chance: The Worcester Art Museum, Holy Cross, Clark, and WPI [Worcester Polytechnic Institute], conjointly got a grant from the NEH to do some exhibitions at the Worcester Art Museum, and…

LC: Like, student exhibitions?

HH: No, just to mount an exhibition. And I got involved because – well, Virginia Raguin, who is as far as I know still at Holy Cross, is one of the people whose names was on that grant. So each of the colleges was supposed to be responsible for an exhibition, and WPI was supposed to do one on art, science, and engineering. They backed out at the last minute, and Virginia asked me if I would do it, and I had – at that point I had just begun thinking about museums, and had actually in the course that I was teaching included a segment that required the students to create a hypothetical museum exhibition, and so I thought, "Oh my God, this is perfect. I should do exactly what I'm asking my students to do, only I'm going to do it for real," so I did. And it was wonderful! I loved it! It was so exciting. You know, I've written papers and published things, but that's so ethereal. But to actually have the exhibition you have created on the walls of the museum was fantastic. I loved it.

LC: So what was it an exhibition of?

HH: It was art, science, and engineering, or whatever it….

LC: Oh, so it was – oh….

HH: I had to do that exhibit. Well that was a real challenge. You know, I didn't know anything about engineering, and very little about science. But I did it, and it happened that Frank Oppenheimer came to visit Boston while that exhibit was up, so of course I took him to see it, and he liked it. And we talked a lot. He was just starting the Exploratorium at the time. So he invited me to come to the Exploratorium, and I spent the Summer writing essays at the Exploratorium, where I wandered around the floor thinking about ways in which the exhibits related to one another, not in terms of, you know, the obvious categories like electricity or magnetism or something, but whatever concept I came up with, and I loved it; it was fascinating. And while I was there, I thought, "Somebody should write a longitudinal…"

because what I was doing was what I call cross-sectional. I mean, I was – I wrote one exhibit, one essay for example, on fatigue, and that meant looking at metals which fatigue, at people, at the physiological changes that happen with fatigue, at the way things wear out. So I would, you know, look at different exhibits from that perspective, but I thought, "Someone should be doing how do the exhibits get developed in the first place, in the long term – how are we thinking that through?" And everybody said, "Yea yea, that's a great idea." I ended up doing it! Which was the first book on the Exploratorium, and it wasn't exactly what I imagined it was going to be, but it really got me started thinking about museums in depth in a way that I hadn't done before and that I didn't think anybody else had. And it was also an important moment in the museum world because – partly as a result of the Exploratorium, but other places too – museums began changing from being about objects to being about experiences. And so, after I did the Exploratorium book, I had to do another book about that. And so I realized that, although it was happening, the museums weren't exactly aware of what it was that was happening and what they were doing. So that was the next book, and that is – I mean, everybody knows it now, but they didn't then, and I can't say – I can't take responsibility for that, but it helped. So, more and more I just got sucked into this and, so really, I created a whole new career for myself except that no one ever hired me. *[laughter]*

LC: Can I ask real quick, what year was it that you – when you mounted that exhibition for the science and engineering?

HH: It must've been around 1980, maybe? Then I did another one – I did another one a few years later – I think one in 1984. That one was about waves, and again it was you know very much – I remember I used the Hokusai wave, and I used an exhibit from the Exploratorium that just strung a rope across the ceiling that you pulled on and then you got waves going across the rope, and ocean waves, all kinds of waves. So that was definitely art and science and waves like, waves of fashion, so metaphorical waves, waves of wheat… all kinds of things like that. So it was, you know, it's been with me ever since.

LC: When you say that your book on the Exploratorium didn't turn out what you thought it would be, what do you mean by that?

HH: Well, one of the things that I had in mind was to take one exhibit and follow it through from beginning to end, from the conception of it to how it changes to all of the factors that get involved. It takes years. It's not something that you can follow, I mean, unless it's really a trivial thing, and actually it took me ten years to get that book published. So I could've done it, but it turned out that partly external factors – it was very hard to get that book published - and then I had to cut things, and so it wasn't the book that I started with, but at least it got published. *[laughter]* But it – it was hard to convince people that the things that I thought were important would be important from a publishing point of view. So I mean just to give you an illustration: I wanted it to be about the *museum*. Marketing issues insisted on it being about *people*. I did *not* want to write a biography of Frank Oppenheimer, which I didn't do. But I did put in a chapter about some of the people whose lives were affected by the Exploratorium, which wasn't the important issue as far as I was concerned, but I had to do it. So another thing that I'm still annoyed about is that I felt that the machine shop and the graphics art department were pivotal issues in the Exploratorium. I had a chapter on each of them. I had to combine that. So, I mean, if this – it wasn't even a first book, but it was an early book for me – if you're not a famous author, you don't have a lot of control over what you can do, and so you end up having to comply with what the publishers want, and they think it's what the public wants, which – maybe it is, maybe it isn't. But those things are terribly frustrating.

LC: So what are you working on now? Do you have any projects you're working on now?

HH: Actually, I'm going to teach a course at Brandeis, and so I've been working on that. And that sort of relates to what I tried to do 30 years ago, which was to write a philosophy from a women's perspective, and couldn't get it published. And when I went back to it now, later, I thought "Oh my God, so much has happened in the mean time, there's no way that I can just brush it up a little bit.' And so I didn't quite know how to go about it, and I thought, "Well maybe if I teach this course that'll be a way in which – in to the subject," so that's what motivated teaching the course. Whether that book will ever get written, I don't know.

LC: So it's a women's philosophy course? Or philosophy about women? Is it similar to the other Holy Cross course?

HH: No. I mean, what I've come to recognize that the things that I think are important from a feminist perspective are also important to a lot of other people who have not been acknowledged in mainstream philosophy – they're sort of off on the edges, like neocolonialism – not neocolonialism, what's the word I want?... post-colonialism, or race studies, or you know the people who have very good ideas and they've been left out of the cannon and the mainstream. And there's a lot of cross over there. I mean, what's true of women is also true for these people. So I don't want to call it just a feminist thing, because I think that, you know, we're parochializing ourselves by doing that.

LC: Well, I would love to ask you more but we've been doing this for an hour and fifteen.

HH: Yea. *[laughter]*

LC: It's so frustrating to have to ask about someone's life in a short time. Is there anything else you want to say, anything else you particularly wanted to talk about?

HH: Well I sort of feel as if Worcester has gotten short shrift in all of this.

LC: Well, we actually talked about Worcester for about half an hour, so I think that was pretty good. Is there anything else you want… no?

HH: Well, you know, I have to say….

LC: Oh my gosh, did I ask you enough about the restaurant? Did you tell me enough about the restaurant?

HH: Well I didn't have anything in particular in mind. It was a great experience, I'm glad I did it. It was fun. And it – Indian restaurants are so commonplace now, but they weren't then. And people were very nervous. I mean, we were *punctilious* in having, you know, the health inspections, because there was a lot of prejudice, you know. All these heathen Indians, you know, won't be clean, won't be healthy, won't be this, won't be that, so that was a problem. And it was vegetarian, so a lot of people didn't like that either. And it was non-smoking. Even some of the originators had a hard time with that. *[laughter]* But we were way ahead of our time in doing that.

LC: Did any of your students come to eat there?

HH: Yes, some did. Some of the employees were students, and we rented rooms upstairs from the restaurant. We had a building that was right on the corner of Southbridge and – I don't know what the name of that street – it's right across from the market was, sort of a curved building on the side there, and there were rooms upstairs, so we rented rooms to students. So there was quite a bit of interaction with a segment of the Holy Cross students, and… it was a good experience.

LC: Well, if there's nothing else we want to talk about right now, I think I'm going to turn the tape recorder off.