Teresa Hamann: I'm Teresa Hamann. It is October 15, 2009. I'm at the University of Montana interviewing Charles Nelson Leach. Charles, if you would introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about where you were born and your family connection?

Charles Nelson Leach: Sure. Is the mic picking up alright?

TH: The mic is extremely strong and picking up beautifully. You could actually back into the corner, and it would hear you.

CL: Great, okay. I'm Charles Nelson Leach, Jr. My parents are Charles Nelson Leach, Sr., a physician, and Florence Worden Dixon Leach, who was the daughter of Joseph Moore Dixon and Carolyn Melissa Worden. I am the son of a public health doctor who traveled the world. My parents had two other children; my siblings are two sisters, Nancy and Carolyn. Carolyn is ten years older and Nancy is nine years older, I think, than I am, and I'm now seventy-four. I was born in Beijing, China, or Peking as it was known then, in 1935. My father was on assignment there as visiting professor of public health at the Peking Union Medical College. He was on loan from the Rockefeller Foundation. My mother was in one of her foreign phases and in this time she was the expatriate lady in Beijing getting to know the expatriate community and socializing extensively with them. My sisters were in the American school in Beijing, which they hated, and we had with us, my grandmother, Carolyn Worden. Joe Dixon had died the year before I was born in '34 so Grandmother was a new widow at that time, and she came to help out. I was welcomed, my sisters say, like the Messiah because they had really hoped for a boy and they'd gotten two girls. There was a good deal of sibling rivalry built in right from the beginning. The time in China ended because the Japanese invaded through Manchuria and were coming down
toward Beijing, and we had to fly out of Beijing to Shanghai. My first air flight was in a
(Douglas) DC-2, and then we went over to Japan and got the Empress of Canada back to Seattle.
I, of course, don't remember any of that, but I've got a baby book that shows the pictures taken
by my father, the adoring photographer and kept in a time capsule by my mother in a brocade-
covered book with imperial dragons on the cover. So that was the beginning. I don't know if this
is exactly what was of interest, but our life sort of reads like a mixture of a newsreel and a
science fiction fantasy. Shall I go ahead with biography?

TH: A bit more biography, especially talk about your education and how you came to be where
you are.

CL: We went from China to Alabama where my dad was on assignment working on rabies,
which was then epidemic... endemic in Alabama. He was on loan from the Rockefeller
Foundation to the Alabama State Board of Public Health so my early years were experienced as a
Southerner in Montgomery. Then the war started and Montgomery filled up with troops and
Maxwell Field was full of soldiers and airmen. My dad was sent, ostensibly to the Burma Road,
but he got to the Philippines just as Pearl Harbor occurred, and he stayed there as a guest of the
Japanese in a concentration camp for two years when he was finally repatriated.

My mother moved the family to Vermont to what had been intended to be their retirement home.
My own persona morphed from a Southerner into a country Vermont kid, and I lost my Alabama
accent and turned into a Yankee and went to a two-room school in Vermont. Then this gets kind
of lengthy but it's a little complex I'm afraid. From Vermont, Dad was given six months off
when he finally was repatriated. He was in horrible shape, having nightmares and lost eighty
pounds so he put some weight back on and they sent him over to England in time for the V-
bombings in London to start the Rockefeller offices again in Europe after the war. My mother
and I, meanwhile, spent the winter with Aunt Virginia in New Haven, that was Aunt Dick. We
lived with her, and then went over to London and then Paris and returned in 1947. The
Communists were very threatening in France. My dad thought there was going to be civil war so
he didn't want to take the family back in '47.
We stayed in New York, went to Collegiate School and then I went to a boarding school in Tennessee, the Webb School. Then Dad retired after working for the TVA for a while in malaria control. I then finished up high school at a boarding school in Lake Placid, Northwood then went on to Amherst College. Majored in biology and graduated 1956, went on to Columbia Medical School, interned and residency at Bellevue Hospital and Cornell Memorial hospital in New York. (pauses) You want more? That's too much already, run you out of tape.

TH: (laughs) That's the beauty of digital. There is no tape involved.

CL: From there my wife was a young nurse at Bellevue. She was from Brooklyn, and she was nice, very sophisticated young nurse who showed me around my first day as an intern at Bellevue. A couple of year later, we got married. We have four children. I got drafted. We were in the army in Germany. Since then, finished training in cardiology at Cornell, and I have been around the Connecticut area since. I'm on faculty at the University of Connecticut. We’ve got four kids, eight grandchildren.

TH: That sounds perfect. What a wonderful biography.

CL: That's enough for now.

TH: What a good life. Let's travel back in time a little bit, and talk about your family connection to Montana and probably visits that you made with your family and to your family in Montana. I believe your cousin, Dorothy Penrose, "Poo" Penrose, mentioned visiting your grandmother, Carolyn Dixon, in the Florence Hotel. Is that before your time, or do you recall that?

CL: She must have been living in the Florence Hotel when I first met her out here because Joe Dixon had died and I imagine they had sold the family house, which was a big place on Pine St. She lived her remaining years in the Florence Hotel and died there. Had a stroke, found her in the bathroom. (19)’46 I think. Our visits to Montana occurred over a period of years. I don’t remember them all individually, but on our return from China we visited in Montana. We were out of doors a great deal here, and we went on hikes, we visited ranger stations and fire spotting
towers. I loved that. We were with a guy named Andrew Erickson, who had a fishing camp up the Lochsa River. We would go up with Andrew Erickson fishing. The Allen family was there also in the late thirties, "Poo's" mother died in '43, Dorothy. We were together there and my grandmother was out there with us also. Montana always meant interesting family history and stories and an out-of-door experience. My first camping and horse backpack trip experience was when I was four or five years old in Montana so it always meant a lot to me that way. We used to drive out here from Alabama, and it was awful—my two sisters and I in the back seat and Mother and Dad in the front. They would drive endlessly. We had a trailer on the back, the tires kept blowing out, and Dad was smoking cigars which made us nauseated in the back. It was...these were not comfortable trips in the heat. I used to count the dead jackrabbits on the road, thought they looked like poached eggs. (laughs) The family was here, I think several time in the 1920s. They always gravitated toward either Montana or eventually Vermont, which was my dad's home state and the Worden family's home state. So Vermont was a magnet place also. But Montana...I remember encountering Uncle Horace Worden, my great-uncle, Carolyn's brother who lived in the Elks Club. He was an old bachelor, and we suspected he was a bit of a drinker too. But Horace, like many of us in the family, was really hooked on family history and legend and things. I think I had that history gene also. My mother didn't get to come here when my grandmother died. Grandmother was found after a stroke on the floor in the Florence Hotel and died during the night. Dick was with her. I have a very touching letter from Dick to the rest of the family about my grandmother's death. I'll get that out to you.

TH: Dick's full name is?

CL: Virginia. (laughs) Yes, Virginia Dixon Dean. She was the first of the Dixon daughters. She was a wonderful aunt, and she was a couple of years older than my mother. Mother was born in '99 and Dick must have been born in '97 or something like that.

TH: And your mother was Florence Dixon?

CL: My mother was Florence Worden Dixon Leach, right. Dick was Virginia Dixon Dean, and I don't know if she had a middle name. My mother didn't have a name until she was almost a year
old. In one of the census records she's referred to as Montana Dixon. (laughs) I don't know what in the world this literate family was doing. They didn't christen her because my grandfather was a Quaker and my grandmother was... I don't know what she was. Her father must have been a Congregationalist from Vermont, I mean her grandfather. Anyhow, mother didn't get christened ever. Didn't seem to hurt her. (laughs)

Anyhow. What was I saying about Dick? Oh, Dick was out here when Grandmother died, and Dick was literate, she was a wonderful, funny, charming lady who drank a little too much, I think—not seriously but in my young opinion significantly—and had horrible allergies. Died of the only case of Wegener's granulomatosis that I have ever run across, and that sort of tied in with allergy and autoimmune problems, it's a granulomatosis.

Anyway, Dick was a widow lady from the time her husband, Alexander Dean, died in 1943 I think. I have her very touching diary from that year. He died out at Cohasset where they ran a summer theater. He was a very prominent, young stage director. He wrote the book that is still used widely in drama teaching on stage directing. In fact the royalties from that book are coming to the University of Montana because he studied here. He's not on the wall at the theater but they ought to have him up there somewhere. He studied a summer or a year or something out here. Something to look into. He died of hypertension in a year when it really could not be treated except by rice diet and other things that didn't work very well. He died just awfully, and she was a widow for, gosh, forty years after that living in the same house they had bought as a young couple on Edgehill Road in Hamden. She was a wonderful aunt. She was one of these older women particularly who were very understanding of young boys, and the year my mother and I lived there, my mother fell down the stairs and broke her back. Dick said it was like "The Man Who Came to Dinner." She went to bed, they wouldn't let her out of bed, and my aunt who was really almost like a maiden aunt was stuck with a nine-year old boy, didn't know what to do about that. (laughs) We had a great quasi-antagonistic relationship, but Dick was wonderful. Where was I? Bring me back to .(laughs)

TH: Am I correct in that one of your cousin, again "Poo" Penrose, mentioned was the relationship between the sisters which you also mentioned before we turned on the microphone.
Despite the fact that as you said, they exploded out of Missoula and Montana, they maintained a close connection. Would you talk about the sisters maybe a bit and their relationship?

CL: The sisters were close and their husbands were close. They were known in the family as the Dixon boys. (laughs) Virginia was the senior member of the tribe. She had gone East early to study at Columbia and then taught at Holyoke and was in the East forever after that. But they were always in touch with Virginia. When we would go to New York on a train from Vermont, Dick would get on the train in New Haven, ride down to Greenwich I think, and then she would visit with us on the train and then she'd get on the train and ride back to New Haven. So we would have had a nice visit, and she'd be home again. She and my mother were always close, and Mother and Aunt Peggy, the last of the sisters. Peggy's name was (pauses) Carolyn. Yeah, Peggy was Carolyn. My mother and Peggy helped clear out Dick's house after she died. So they were very close. The girls, the Dixon girls.I will never forget when my sister got married, all the sisters were together, and they all got pretty high. We had this little farmhouse in Vermont where we lived, and they were doing what they called Indian war dance in the living room in their slips. Chicken high-kicking and whooping and yelling and having just a great time. The next morning. I have pictures of Mother and I guess, Mary Joe out on the porch in their slips looking slightly hungover. They were very close, and they knew how to party together. These were very smart women and had a very deep understanding of each other. They didn't disagree about things that I can remember. Mother and Dick were close. Dick served as almost a surrogate parent to Toni, who had a difficult relationship with her parents. I'll come back to that later.

TH: Okay, but briefly, what was Toni’s given name and who were her parents?

CL: Toni is Elizabeth Sterns and her father was Marshall Sterns, and Betty and Marshall were husband and wife until their divorce.

So Dick was sort of a surrogate parent to some degree to both Toni and me and probably to my sisters because we were in Europe and they were in college. So she served as a center for the family, a network. Mary Joe was always available, gregarious, funny. My God she could imitate a monkey unbelievably and amused me. She was sort of redhead. Not quite as copper red as
my mother, but she was a redhead, a Scottish redhead. She was always enormously funny. Her husband, Ralph Hills, was just a great, model general practitioner internist. He taught at Hopkins also, a clinical teacher. They lived in Baltimore, and we used to visit them from Alabama, and the others would visit them. People would come into Baltimore and visit. Mary Joe, always gregarious always funny. I think humor was a major, kind of unifying characteristic in this family. Mary Joe had almost a wild sense of humor. She was interested in art. I think she was an art docent, and she and Ralph were diehard Princeton fans and diehard Baltimore Colt fans. They also (pauses) I must say I think they put away a little more alcohol than the national average also, but we'll come back to that. (coughs) Their children are Dixon and Warren, who are very likeable cousins. They don't have children. They're married to women we all like very much, and they're almost a little distant, a little reclusive. My sister Carolyn lives in Baltimore, and they don't see that much of each other but they're awfully nice guys. And their wives we all like.

So I started down this long pathway of... there's my mother and Virginia. Mary Joe who had two boys, and she had that... Women who had only sons acquire a certain sort of breezy athletic style. Mary Joe had that to some degree, and I inherited the boys’ clothing. It would come down to me in tatters sometimes in Alabama, but I loved it because it was broken in and real boy clothing, my size and a little too big. We didn't have much money. My dad was a public health doc so he didn’t make much, so we were glad to get second-hand clothes. Betty, they always worried about terribly, because she had a manic-depressive psychosis. Probably first evidenced as I have interpreted as a child, the sisters would sometimes pick on Betty and in my mother's diaries, I don't think she achieves the presence that the others do. It's almost as though my mother wasn't writing about her. We could count the number of mentions maybe as a scientific study. But Betty went on to Radcliffe. The first daughters went on to the University of Montana, Mother, Dick, Dorothy. I think Mary Joe went here, I'm not sure. Then Betty went to Radcliffe, and she became an artist and a pretty good one. But then as her mental state deteriorated, her art became almost scary in the. The images are disturbing. I'm an art docent and I know something about these things, and this isn't art that you'd want hanging over your couch.

Toni has a painting of her, Toni, that her mother did that's absolutely lovely hanging on her wall in New York. Toni lends us her apartment. Toni is Elizabeth, Liz. Betty they always worried
about. She and Marshall... Marshall was brilliant. He taught English at Cornell and then he stopped teaching there and became a jazz expert, and he is still a recognized jazz expert. He taught in New York at one of the New York... the New School or one of those schools in New York, and his archives are, I think at Rutgers for some reason. He's one of these eminences in the world of jazz. In the 1930s people were really beginning to appreciate jazz as an American original music form, but Marshall was a problem. We were out here hiking with Marshall, and the woods were dry. There was no smoking in the woods; Marshall was smoking, flipped a cigarette, they think, and a forest fire was there not too much later. There was concern about Marshall's behavior sometimes. He and Betty divorced. Marshall didn't interact with the family much after that to my knowledge, but Toni, Liz, was in touch with him I believe. I think they had an affectionate relationship.

Betty was always a worry. She eventually lived in Florence, Italy, and was hospitalized there. I was delegated to go over and try to help, and she was manic-depressive, would go off her meds, had several suicide attempts. Finally came back to the states and impulsively married a guy from Bristol, Connecticut who we think. My mother always thought he was plotting to kill her and take her money. This, I don't think, was a paranoid fantasy. My brother-in-law, the lawyer, got that separation, a divorce, for them. It was clearly the wrong thing. She was hospitalized repeatedly, and eventually died, I don't know how long ago, maybe 1990—something like that—living in New Jersey. She was a sweet-tempered, very smart, talented woman who just had a disease, and I think this was not the only depressive disorder in the family, so we can come back to that. I'll get out the family laundry for you in a while. So Betty was the worry... Do you want more of this? I'm coming to Peggy.

TH: I think we should definitely talk about Peggy or we'd be leaving her out. That wouldn't be good.

CL: Peggy was born in the nineteen-teens, sixteen maybe, fourteen, I don't know. She always referred to herself as being different from the others. I thought Peggy was kind of neat; I really kind of had a crush on Peggy. She was a nice young woman when I was a little boy. I thought of her as my cowgirl aunt. She was breezy and funny and told dirty jokes, and was married to
Marshall...or to John Dorsey, a lawyer. She went to Radcliffe. I don't know if she had graduate training; she was an art docent. In her later years she studied art and was pretty good at it. She went to live with my parents in Vienna. There's a funny family story about going over the Great [Glockner] Pass with Peggy’s cello strapped to the front fender of their car. (laughs) These incredible things you can visualize. Peggy lived with them in Vienna, and we suspect she may have had a crush on my dad. (laughs) But Peggy was a really great person. She eventually. John was a lawyer; he was with a good firm in Minneapolis, Oliver Cromwell. Eventually he didn't pay his income tax for four or five years, and he got on a plane once with a hand-gun in his pocket, drove out in the desert and shot himself. And that ended that. He was a very bright, competent guy. Drank quite a bit. Chief Justice Brennan, who was from the same town, they had been in the same firm I think...who was the chief justice from Minnesota? (pauses) Anyhow, [Brennan] commented about him that he couldn’t figure out what had happened to John Dorsey. He had such potential. But Peggy had a second marriage to Race Crane who was a sailor and a man of wealth. They had a very happy older life in California, and had a place on Flathead Lake.

Peggy was in and out of our lives. She was funny. My sister Carolyn and I visited her out in California, and she welcomed us. We had a really great visit. Then she became demented and died, and it was just really sad.

Then there was a little boy who died at birth, and that just never went anywhere. He had a congenital...My mother said he was a blue baby, so he had a congenital heart. That's the whole lot isn't it?

TH: That is the whole lot.

CL: They all cared for each other and were in touch. I have letters. It's a geometric multiple of some kind. I have letters between all these siblings, and you're gonna get them so be ready.

TH: We will look forward to it.

CL: If you want.
TH: Absolutely.

CL: I think it's interesting.

TH: Yes, yes. The interactions in a family of that size and that prominence in Montana would be a great addition to the Archives. So the older sisters were in Montana around the time that women gained suffrage in 1914. Your mother would have been about fifteen, I think. I wondered if there were any stories. You had mentioned Jeanette Rankin was a revered person in family memory. Can you speak to any of their political. . .Any political stories related to family or women's rights, women's suffrage, that the sisters might have been involved in either in Montana or maybe later?

CL: I don't know of any direct involvement with the women's suffrage movement. I do know that my mother admired Jeanette Rankin, and that she told pioneer woman stories so she had the feeling and the attitude. But I was struck in reading her diaries that the war was going on for part of the time, very little. . .There's mention of the troops and the guys who were going off from Missoula, but no comments about the war. The flu pandemic occurred, and people got sick in Missoula, but she didn't appear frightened. Apparently one or two of the sisters were very sick, but there's no mention of the threat of death. The University was closed, and this has been presented to our generation and yours, I assume it's perhaps a different generation, as having been a very frightening time. It's as if they weren't frightened in Missoula, and that seems odd. The diaries do not include the peak of the women's suffrage movement, I believe. When did women get the vote, 1914?

TH: In Montana in 1914. We were early.

CL: Yeah, I know that. Right.

TH: I'm so bad at dates; I want to say early 1920?
CL: I thought it was early 1920s something like that. I don't recall any mention of that in the diaries so a similar thing occurs as they lived overseas. It's almost as though they had moved away from the important political and contextual problems in the United States into these fantasy lives that they lived in different foreign capitals—Vienna, Peking—adopting the life of each place but not really being concerned. The Great Depression got almost no mention, and we were in the country for part of it, and we were sort of unaware of it. Life went on. I wish I could provide women's suffrage stories. I just haven't...

TH: It was a question worth asking.

The next question may fall into the same category. I happened to read a story as I was doing a bit of background research about Joseph Dixon, his wife Carolyn, and three of their daughters visiting Yellowstone National Park in 1924. It was to celebrate the day that trains first began full passenger service to the Park's gateways. The story made a brief mention of one of the daughters going missing, some ensuing concern, and frantic searching. And she was found helping a friend, possibly a college beau, wash the Park's busses. If that had happened today, it would be all over People magazine and all those, but there must have been some...Well, I guess I would wonder, were there any stories about life in the public view or any indication that the prominence of the family?

CL: Yeah. There's a sense of drama that runs through the family, sometimes even a little corny quality to it. The little girls. Joe Dixon, like any politician, put his cute family out front. On the 4th of July we have photographs of them in the pony cart with the bunting on the wheels and stuff all dressed up. The little girls got a heavy dose of being the very presentable, cute children of a politician. In Washington she participated with Quentin Roosevelt in the Easter egg roll on the White House lawn. When the great magician—whose name I forget—came to Washington, she and Quentin did the trick where the magician produces too many eggs and they can't put them all in the hat. They did that together so there were stories about encounters with famous people. She once told me that she met President Taft, and she encountered him on a stairway, and as a little girl she looked up the stairs and there was the bulkiest, fattest man she had ever seen in her life standing at the top of the stair. That was President Taft.
TH: Now is this your mother Florence?

CL: Right. Her stories of politics and being a political family in Montana, only things which are probably in the public domain. I know it was a big story in our family that my grandfather opposed the Anaconda Copper Company because they were doing extraction of ores and not paying taxes. He went to bat against them by trying to get them to pay taxes to the state of Montana, and they beat up on him horribly. I think that may have led to one of his political defeats. I think somehow there was some skullduggery about who owned the newspaper, and I think they gained control of the press and their press beat up on him. That may have been the Missoulian, I don't know, but he was the owner and editor for a long time then he sold it. So there was that, the Anaconda stories.

TH: Do you recall any of those stories? That was a significant point about your grandfather was his opposition to the Anaconda Company.

CL: It was a source of pride in the family. I'm an environmentalist, and I've just come back from the Land Trust Alliance meeting in Oregon and that's very important to us. A lot of my interest traces back through my mother who studied biology to my grandfather who in his own way as best an American could at the turn of the century unless he was John Muir maybe... As best he could, he supported the environmental movement, and that involved being in an alliance with Theodore Roosevelt, being his western liberal Republican guy out here. It was very important for my mother that Grandfather had helped found Glacier Park, and very important to her that his footprints are in the memorial bronze at the Blackfoot Museum at East Park entrance in Browning. So those sort of political involvements were important to her. (pauses) I can't think of specific stories; I wish I could. She admired his public speaking enormously. There is a sort of verbal gene in the family as you may have noticed, and my grandfather was a very excellent public speaker she told me proudly. This is a little girl admiring her father, so that's a lot of what we get. I learned that when he gave a speech, if there was a group in the room who disagreed with him, he would look the person who disagreed with him most in the eye and speak to that person so that he could convert them. This was 19th century rhetoric that he was using learned in a Quaker college in North Carolyn. So there was admiration of the way he did those things. She
helped him a little with one of the campaigns; it's mentioned in the dairy. In Washington she
liked hobnobbing with the famous and sometimes with the wealthy, so people they knew along
the line like John Gunther and I think they met Teilhard de Chardin in China. I'm not sure but
these names keep cropping up. The family thought she was a terrible name dropper; she probably
was. But they were also part of her life experience that just kept occurring to her.

There were political... I can't remember the stories, but there were stories of encounters with
political personages.

TH: Teddy Roosevelt.

CL: I wish I could say yes. Grandfather would go off to Chicago. He went there for the
Convention, and he was all over the... I guess working for Roosevelt's election or attempted
election, and it's as though he were away, working with somebody who was employing him
from a distance and the family didn't seem to be involved with that. I think their political
appearances were more local, Montana things. In Washington they went to the public school and
Miss Madeira's (?) School, and yet they lived on 18th or 19th Street—1818 19th Street comes to
mind—near Dupont Circle. She always told me that she had a rather... a lot of fun, a lot of
meeting interesting folk but also kind of a neighborhood gang experience where they would get
out in the alley and play soldiers with garbage can lids and things like that. I think that's all I
could say about that.

TH: A point that we talked about very briefly before we turned the recorder on was that Joseph
Dixon was raised a Quaker. I wondered about any later connections or interest any family may
have had in that part of his life.

CL: My mother was very proud of her Quaker roots, her Quaker ancestry. A lot of her attitudes
were Quaker attitudes, and I think she got those from Joseph Dixon who although he was not a
believer in religious things. Although that was his attitude, he did have very strong Quaker
values. His father had...Actually his father, Hugh Dixon, had been voted out of the Quaker
meeting because he had married a Baptist. But she later converted and he came back in and was
a big cheese in the Quakers in North Carolina, locally, big cheese in a small pond, small cheese shop. (laughs) Anyway the Quaker values were there, and public service was really important and volunteerism, egalitarianism, I think women's rights were part of the Quaker attitude and the family as well. The attitude toward education was there, and a certain kindness was there. On the other hand my grandfather was a great admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte, and one of the heirlooms that came to us at my mother's death was a little portrait of Napoleon that he had specially framed for his office. Quaker politician in Montana who loved, who was infatuated with Napoleon. What!? I don't think she ever could figure that out.

He was the Quaker from North Carolina. He always looked kind of soft to me in his pictures, like he didn't exercise. I don't think he had six-pack abs, but the girls, Grandmother, was a crack shot. I have her medal that she won in summer camp. I also have a coin with a hole in it that she shot, and of course "Poo" has the painting that she shot out in the backyard. The women...there was a sort of woman, marksman warrior in the family that was very funny. So you have Joe Dixon from a pacifist background in the South marrying the daughter of a Yankee adventurer from Vermont who's a bit of a hardcore, hardcase character from Montana. (laughs) It must have been an interesting family.

She apparently was rather tiny, and Mother used to tell the story of how he picked her up and dropped her in a wastebasket once as a joke...or a washtub, I forget. She was also fiery; she had a temper. But the Quaker business...They related back to North Carolina. Stop me if I'm running on too much. They related back intensely to North Carolina. Joe Dixon was a hero in Snow Camp, North Carolina. To this day we went back there and a couple of people picked up my wife and me and drove us around and told us Joe Dixon stories and showed us Hugh Dixon's house and it just went on and on. So the Dixon's are big news still or were in Snow Camp. But that was social prominence thing; they were also very active in the Quaker meeting. They had been birthright Quakers who came over at William Penn's behest in the early 1700s to Pennsylvania. One of the family was a member of Penn's council. They were active in the management of the Penn colony, and then they migrated down the migration route along the face of the Appalachian's to North Carolyn, and they settled in Snow Camp. Some of the family went on further to Georgia. My grandfather took notes as an eleven-year-old boy. See, he loved family
history, and he sat at his mother's knee and wrote down notes. Next to some of the names he says, "Moved on to Georgy," so I know just how he pronounced it. (laughs) So he was Quaker. He wasn't Quakerish in his behavior. I don't know if he drank. I don't think he smoked. His mother was a Scottish Baptist, and he had a Scottish strain as well. He sang Scottish songs. He or his father played the violin, but he had to play it up behind the barn because the Quakers didn't want music. There was a Scottishness. I have some books of Scottish family history that he assembled, and he was interested in the Murchisons, that was his mother's family. So there was some of that too. This guy was a Quaker, but he was a sort of hybrid Quaker also.

My grandmother when she died said she didn't want any ceremony, she just wanted to be planted in the ground and that would be it. The family insisted that there be a little ceremony so they buried her in better style, and they're out in the cemetery in Missoula. My mother was never baptized. I don't know if the other girls got baptized or not. Nobody became a practicing Quaker.

When Betty was having such terrible problems with her mental state, she would talk about Quakerism as though maybe this was what would help her. It was almost as though she thought if she returned to the Quaker roots it would give her peace, and that was rather touching. She never followed through on it. I personally am interested in Quakerism. I don't practice any religion. I'm married to a nice Jewish girl from Brooklyn, but I very much am a sympathizer with Quaker tradition. I could never do it. That's the other thing. We were, in my family, a gun culture. My grandmother was a good shot, and my mother was a good shot. I was given a shotgun at age ten. It was this comfort with conflict, war, arms. My great-grandfather, Frank Worden, actually fought...I guess you'd have to fight Native Americans these days, but he fought Indian in Oregon in the 1850s before he came into Montana. That interested my mother. I think she kind of liked conflict. She would tell conflict stories.

The Scottish stuff, the interest in Tartans, she would refer...Mice in Vermont would live in our cabin and defecate in our coffee and tea cups, little mouse droppings, and she would always say, "Oh mousie has been here." I know that's Scottish, the mousie. She had taught me Robert Burns as well so that's some of the family attitudes.
TH: While you were talking about that, you mentioned some Scottish books that it sounded like had originally been Joseph Dixon's.

CL: Yes.

TH: One of the stories I ran across was that Joseph Dixon was a voracious reader and collected what for that time was a very large private collection of books.

CL: Yes. When my mother died, his books were in her estate. They were terribly deteriorated. I have his Kipling. I have his Theodore Roosevelt writings, all with his stamp imprimatur of his signature on them. I have his James Whitcomb Riley. I think he used those as sources of literary references in his speaking, I suspect. He was friends with William Allen White. William Allen White stayed with him in Missoula—my mother admired him very much—so he related to writing. He was in the debate society at college. I think he wrote well. We had a set of Dickens, but gentlemen for their libraries, particularly gentlemen with any kind of, enough money to do it, would have what they called backs, sets of books by famous authors. This was partly to read, but partly also, I think, to let folks know that they read. There's a little display always going on, and the daughters. Mary Joe was a bit theatrical. I have in the scrapbooks I sent you, there are pictures of Aunt Virginia acting a Knight of the Roundtable at Miss Madeira's School. And there's this little theatricality. Our cousin Toni, Liz Stearns, is a theater... She's writing a play now; she's a director and works in theater in New York. There's this sort of theatrical stuff, and that goes back, partly, to Joe Dixon I think as well. He was performing a lot of the time I believe. I think he also had six admiring audience members in his daughters. (laughs)

TH: Yes, it does sound as though he did. (laughs)

We've talked quite a bit about the Dixon side of the family, and there isn't as much available for research for me on the Worden side. Is there anything you can tell me about or can you tell me about Carolyn Worden and her background? I know you've mentioned that her mother married very young.
CL: Yeah, in your records here in Montana in a historical publication is a record of someone meeting the Miller family when they came in by ox cart from Denver. She was seven months pregnant. Do you know this story?

TH: No.

CL: She was seven months pregnant. They arrive in Frenchtown by ox cart. They were headed for Walla Walla, but they had to detour because there were hostile Indians. They got to Frenchtown, and they said, "How much further is it to Walla Walla?" They were told, whatever, two-hundred miles, and she said, "I'm staying right here," and they stayed in Frenchtown. The little girl was born. They had a girl... I think Aunt Lindy was one of their daughters. I'm not sure. I know they didn't like her very much I gather from her diary. But Carolyn and Henry Miller settled in Frenchtown, and they had at least two and I think three kids. Lucretia was one of them, and Francis Lyman Worden, who changed his name to Frank when he moved west—he masculinized his name—he fell in love, I guess, with Lucretia who was fourteen. They got married. He was thirty or so, and I understood her parents weren't too much in favor. But apparently they had a perfectly happy marriage and had a lot of children, and life went on.

Henry Miller died... This is a little mystery that I'd love to solve. Henry Miller died just a few years after they arrived. He apparently had a major nose-bleed, so I wondered if he had a blood dyscrasia. She remarried, Carolyn, remarried someone named Kline, K-L-I-N-E, but they're buried together out in the cemetery. I know nothing more about the Klines, and I will find out someday. But they were German Baptist Brethren from near Somerset, Pennsylvania. I visited their town, Meyersdale and seen the family graves down there. It's beautiful country. They, apparently, did the ox cart trip all the way in the early 1860s, and it must have been hell. I have the gun that they carried with them. I have her little candlestick. I'll send you a picture of them. Anyway, that's the Millers. I have a lot of Miller family history if anybody's interested. So Frank Worden... That family... Stop me if I'm going too far off the track you want to be on.

TH: No, the Wordens are a good track.
CL: Francis Lyman Worden was the son of Rufus Worden, and they lived, by God, in back country Vermont. They probably farmed rocks and tapped maple trees and had a few goats. I don't know what they did, but I don't know if the family had any prominence or interesting famous people but there were quite a few of them. There are still some of them there. Rufus married a Powers. I forget his wife's first name. (pauses) Susan Powers. She had depressive psychosis, or had depression so I think. Manic depression is a genetically traceable disorder unlike many other psychiatric disorders. I think that may be where it came from, but Worden and Powers were the Vermont names. Ezekiel Powers had been kind of an entrepreneur. He did some development work in Vermont in the late seventeen hundreds, early eighteen hundreds. They were early settlers of Marlboro. My mother was thrilled to go back to Vermont for their retirement, and they lived just a few miles up the road from where this family lived in the Marlboro area. She was also tickled to death that the Marlboro College was there so it has a sort of distinguished later history. Worden must have been a pretty bold guy. I don't know what happened with all his brothers and sisters.

One of the collateral descendants was Frank Howe who edited the Bennington Banner in Vermont. Frank was a wonderful guy. I'll tell you about him sometime; he was a good friend to our family when we moved there. But Francis Lyman Worden went over to clerk for his Powers relatives in Troy, New York, in a dry goods store. Must be where he learned dry goods. I have a lot of little letters back and forth with him and his friends there and some other stuff that I'll send out. Uncle Horace collected this stuff and it's all in a box. In 1850 right after the gold rush started, he decided to go; and so he sailed out of New York, around the Horn, up to San Francisco where he clerked in a hotel. Then he was in Washington state for a while, that's where he was involved in Indian wars. (phone rings) That's probably "Poo" calling. (speaks to someone else) You want to turn that off for a minute?

TH: We're continuing the interview.

CL: We left Frank Worden fighting Native Americans in Oregon Territory. He then went on. He was postmaster in Walla Walla for a while. How he got that job I have no idea, but
probably political so he must have been politically competent. Then he got. My mother always said he got seventy mules and went over the Mullan Road to Missoula or to where Missoula was about to happen, and he and Captain Higgins were partners in a dry goods business. They did about everything; they had a safe where the miners stored their gold. They had a little log store that was out on the back of the trailer park somewhere to the west. I don't know if it's still there or not. I'd love it if somebody could save it, but they had a trading post basically. My mother always said they were founders of Missoula. I guess, but where they settled was called Frenchtown and so I've got a feeling there are some French trappers in Missoula first. Anyway, he must have been a very competent guy, highly motivated, into all sorts of things. He did the waterworks, the dry goods business. He was involved in various civic improvements I gather. He was active at a low level, I believe, in politics, county official or something like that. I don't think it ever went beyond that. How he earned his living I don't know. In the dry goods business, I guess, which became Missoula Mercantile eventually and they sold it. As I understand it. All that is in the history books. I just know that that was the name that was in the family as though it really were part of our patrimony although it really wasn't because somebody had bought it. (laughs)

Being a Yankee from Vermont, he wanted to feel at home here so he brought trees out from Vermont or had them brought out. They were planted out on Pine Street. I believe he had elms, like a lot of other pioneers, and maples. He built a house that looks just like a fragment of a Vermont house. It's a little house that could have been Newfane, Vermont, or Marlboro in the 1860s, on East Pine Street. That's where Horace lived for a long time with one of the aunts. I think Aunt Ruth lived there; the maiden aunt and the bachelor lived there.

Then Dixon built his North Carolyn-style mansion next door with the columns on the front, the big white house.

Worden had this family, and there was Horace and Ruth and Carolyn, Melissa and Henry O. Worden, who I think he was known as Bill. His son Bill was Tommy Lou Worden husband. I think that's the relationship so we still have cousins out here, Austin and Tommy Lou. I'm going to look her up during my stay. I know that he traded up and down... He didn't trade there but he
had goods coming in by boat on the Missouri. One of the boats that his stuff was on sank. It blew up or something and sank, and they've excavated it. It was in the National Geographic. They got all this stuff out of it, some of which is Worden artifact material. I have his lap-desk, a little, very highly polished nice formal little desk like guys carried. I also have his trunk. It's a leather trunk, a beautiful little piece, and my mother told me that was his trunk and I don't know what the heck to do with it. That'll probably stay in the family as a family artifact. But I'm taking pictures of these things so that even if the thing is gone there'll be a pictorial record.

I don't know anything about him as a person except that apparently he was a through-and-through Vermonter. I don't think he ever got back to Vermont. I don't know. We have letters back and forth; letters exist. One of them indicates that there had been a long lapse in his correspondence as I remember. There may have been at least one other Worden out here, I'm not sure.

TH: I'm not sure, but Worden and Higgins are big names in the establishment of Missoula, the early settlement.

CL: Yeah, I know.

TH: Do you have any stories or were there any stories handed down about how Carolyn and Joe Dixon met? "Poo" told a wonderful story about Carolyn and her gun and the painting.

CL: Yes. (laughs) I don't know how they met, but their courtship was, I would say... I have letters, back and forth, between them. Some of them copies, a few originals I remember. They're typical 19th century love letters, very affectionate and very... Courting was rather formal, 19th century courting. Apparently the family had serious doubts about Joe Dixon. He must have looked pretty odd to them. He arrived out here to work with Frank Woody and get his law training. But the family finally accepted him, and their letters from the old aunt, from Aunt Lindy, about what they think is going. Finally she developed her doubts, and she got cold feet. Do you know this story?
TH: (unintelligible)

CL: Carolyn Melissa Worden took off for Denver by train, and she went down and stayed with her Aunt Louie, Louise Worden, who as known as Aunt Louie, this androgynous (unintelligible) under confusion that apparently occurs in Montana. (laughs) So she went down to stay with Aunt Louie, and Joe Dixon chased her down in Denver and they got married in Denver. (laughs) I have a photograph of what must have been the hotel where they spent their honeymoon. There's some kind little doo-dad from the hotel. I'll have to get it out to you as well. It was on the railroad. Louie is interesting. I've tried to trace her. She killed herself, I believe, and her husband was the editor or manager of the Denver Post. Then he worked in San Francisco in newspapers and finally in St. Louis. He remarried at a certain time, and I've traced some of the history on that. But they lived in Denver at a very early time, in Denver. Why they went there particularly I don't know, but they were a sort of refuge for this young woman who wanted some time to think it over. All of us who have kids who've fled to other members of the family. Ours fled to Nancy and "Poo" out in Seattle at one point. Theirs stayed in the East with us a little bit in college. This network has stayed strong. But that's an interesting story.

Their relationship apparently was very affectionate, and I don't think this was pretense. I think they really did love each other, and I don't know how his death affected her. She affected a certain toughness, and probably wouldn't admit, I guess, being affected. What else? I have... Little fragments of stories or attitudes turn up in these letters. I have letters mainly between her and the daughters that sometimes are little clues that turn up. There's so much of it that I have other things in life besides be the family archivist; I'm sure you do too. (laughs)

TH: (laughs) You'll have to pass some along to an archives.

CL: I need professional help. Actually, when my mother died, a friend of ours... She and I do historic interpretation together. She runs a house museum, and she was our archivist and helped put this stuff in order. It's covered with hideous mold so I have Lysol sprayings and turn the sun lamp on it periodically. Anyway, you asked me about Frank Worden.
TH: And about Carolyn and (unintelligible).

CL: She was close, as far as I know, to my knowledge, she was impartially close to all of the daughters and their families, and she was a good grandmother to us. My sisters, if you were to interview them, would be able to tell you much more because they knew these folks better.

TH: Is there. Can you recall any other particular maybe Missoula, Montana-related. "Poo" mentioned visits to somewhere near Flathead quite a bit. I know that... Anything about that? Maybe we could make that an end point for this interview.

CL: Flathead was very important to them. At the University my mother was very close to Professor Elrod, and she really just loved him. She was a very good student in some course, not in all, but she spent summers up at the Yellow Bay Biological Station. In fact, I have a splinter from the Yellow Bay woodwork, which I will also send out to you, that I don't want in my cellar anymore. So she was close to Flathead that way. In her diaries there's extensive mention of trips to Flathead. She and Aunt Virginia would ride horseback from Missoula to Polson. Joe Dixon when he was unsuccessful politically had a ranch on Flathead Lake at the south end near Polson, and it's still there. The lake level has risen so it's inundated the point that they talk about.

They were back and forth all the time. Horace Worden bought a store or business in Ravalli, south of Polson, and Henry O. Worden had land and ranch or something up there. So they loved Flathead Lake; they played at Flathead Lake. Grandfather had sort of a gentleman's farm, nice big barn, good herd of Holsteins, I don't know. He was thought to be a progressive farmer, a progressive dairy man that kind of thing. The family still played at Flathead, and Peggy—that is Carolyn—the youngest of the sisters and Race Crane had a cabin at Flathead. My mother's dear friend, Tubbs Donahue, had a place up there I think. We visited with them. The Wordens, Tommy Lou's family, still have a place in Polson I believe. They may have sold it but I think they still have it. So Flathead played an important role. I have countless pictures of Flathead. Uncle Horace had a cabin there, and he used to drive the girls up there and their friends in his car. Horace's car figured prominently in the family stories so they would drive to his cabin at Flathead and have cabin parties. They did that right up until her graduation from college and I
think afterwards. The Mission Range she loved. Holland Lake was very important to them. Ruth had a cabin. She and her partner had a cabin on what they called Virgin Island, and "Poo" and her husband transported that cabin intact on a flatbed truck—do you know this story—to the Seattle area so it's still there.

But my mother never used an anesthetic at the dentist. She would simply sit in the chair and envision the mountains that they could see at the end of Holland Lake. She would use visual imaging to suppress pain in the dentist's chair; Montana was that important to her. Visually as she got very old—she was not demented, she died at ninety-one—as she got very old she told me she would sit and people from her past would appear to her almost as if they were there in the flesh. Not speaking to her, but just there, and she would remember them, and this meant a great deal to her. It was like, I guess, watching a silent picture show of her past, and a lot of that was Montana stuff. She almost married a guy named Andy Boyd. He was her beau at the University. He was a really good guy that Joe Dixon didn't really approve of. He wasn't... I guess he wasn't a scholar to that extent so she left Andy behind in Missoula when she went to Hopkins on her scholarship and met my dad there. Andy. These connections continue. When Andy Boyd died his widow wrote my mother to tell her that her old beau had died. He'd become a banker up in Minnesota or somewhere, North Dakota, I don't know. It's like these old connections were very powerful.

TH: It sounds like they're very powerful. That is wonderful considering the impact that the Dixon family had, the Dixon and the Worden families, had on Montana and positive change. Is there anything you'd like to say to end the interview beyond the wonderful stories you've offered?

CL: There's more where this came from if you've got another tape. I think we covered some of the attitudes and relationships in the family that were very important. The style, the importance of the Montana style to all of us in succeeding generations that we may not be native Montanans but neither are we entirely composed of the other parts of the country we came from. I think we've covered a lot.
TH: I think we have.

CL: I can send you materials that will cover a lot of other stuff, and there’s some material that I could cover for you that probably ought to be deep-sixed for another few years and then emerge later.

TH: Maybe at this point we’ll turn off the recorder, and I want to thank you for your time, Charles.

CL: My pleasure.