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Interviewee: Katherine "Tobie" Weist
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Hannah Soukup: Today is September 18, 2020. This is Hannah Soukup, the Archives and Special Collections Oral History Curator, and I'm here with Tobie Weist for part two of our interview about her career and her work at UM [University of Montana].

Tobie, thanks for being here.

Tobie Weist: Oh, you're welcome. My pleasure.

HS: Just very briefly I just wanted to say that we are moving…in the first part of the interview we talked more about your early life, your education, and then your work on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in Lame Deer. Today, we're going to be talking more about your teaching career at UM because you started there—kind of transitioned there right after you got your Ph.D., and you were doing your Ph.D.

TW: Didn't have it yet.

HS: Right, yeah, so it was kind of all this. You're getting your Ph.D.—

TW: Baby.

HS: You're at UM, you've got a baby, you're working on the Northern Cheyenne reservation to get your Ph.D., or that's what your Ph.D. was about. So, all of this, you just ended up in Montana.

But before we go into that, the last thing that we really talked about during the first part of the interview was how you were sexually assaulted when you were a young girl. I just wanted to circle back around to that and ask you why you felt that you wanted to talk about that so many years later.

TW: Well, it was something that actually I've carried for many years that it had happened, but you really feel demeaned by it and it's hard to get a sense of well-being because you're carrying this with you. It wasn't so much that the assault itself, which I protected myself because I used to fight with my brothers all the time and I knew how to fight. [laughs] I had gone through a trauma, and none of my family…I had no consoling by my family, and I think they were horrified that this had occurred. My mother did get her—did I mention her horse, her big horse and she was gonna go out and kill the guy? No, no, you don't kill him for my virginity. Please. [laughs] Anyway, I carried a lot, and I never really talked about it. But then as women more and more

are coming out that this has happened to them, I realized what a common experience we show with and how you can carry that even though I was successful, I mean, in protecting myself it still is with you. So, that's why. It has something to do with a sense of self-esteem, the sense that people care about you, so I think particularly my mother…my father was kind of left out, I think. I don't know. She was a dominant woman, and she was a prude. I wasn't even allowed to talk about birth control with her. Like, 'what is birth control?' 'We can't talk about that.' I used the term queer once, and she got real upset like 'I don't know what this means.' It was just so strange. I mean, she had hang-ups. My particular one was when I was at college down in Oxford at Miami U, and she was driving me home. She turned her, and she said, "Your brothers can do it, but not you." Like, whoa, okay!

HS: Referring to sex?

TW: Yeah. I did have a doctor look at me before I got married to make sure I was still a virgin.

HS: Oh, by her request, or you just felt it with something you should do?

TW: She said, "I think you should do this to make sure you're okay."

I said, "Okay." Hey, I don't know anything. [laughs] And I proved to her I was. [laughs] A little prudish there.

HS: So, the hashtag metoo movement is kind of—

TW: It really means something to me. I mean, I can really…I sympathize, I feel I know where they are, where they come from. You'd think it would, at my age in my 80s, I'd leave it behind, but it sticks with you. But as I've talked about it, I've left it behind. Feels good.

HS: That's good.

TW: So, anything else?

HS: About that?

TW: No, about anything that you—

HS: If there's anything else you want to share about that or that time period about being a woman and the differences between your mother and you.

TW: Yeah, we had a lot of differences, and I always had the sense that she really didn't like me very much. [laughs] But I think that's not unusual between mothers and daughters. I don't know that mothers know that, but daughters usually do. Really tough time. We're just very different people, and I was more like my father than I was and I think I was closer to my father

than I was to my mother. Then I had brothers. It was actually a family as one…it wasn't a well-functioning family in many ways, but that's not unusual for people. I'd gone off to college and I'd thought about this a lot, and I realized that my mother had been a very unhappy person. She really wasn't able to fulfill her talents, her abilities, and she became a much happier person after she was able to become an LPN, licensed nurse, and got a job, and she loved that. She became a really different kind of person, but I moved on by that time. It also taught me that you have some of those same qualities. You would never make it as just a housewife and a mother. It would never work with me so that was one of the motivations I think in getting a Ph.D., because that was the direction I was going, and teaching. It's kind of a backhanded influence, but it was still a strong influence. Hey, I don't want to be unhappy like she is.

So, yeah. Wasn't a very good mother as it turned out. [laughs]

HS: You weren't, or she wasn't?

TW: I wasn't. She wasn't that great either [laughs] but for different reasons. No, that's part of teaching, the teaching career, and the heavy load you carry as a woman: wife, mother, and a major teaching responsibilities. Which you always feel as a woman like, you're kind of…you have to work harder,

HS: Is that something that you feel or something that is actually—

TW: You feel it, and it must be actual because you don't have quite the time that men have if they're married and their wife's taking care of the kids or doesn't have such a demanding career. And I'll talk about this because teaching is extremely demanding in many ways, and there are some people excel and others just struggle along. [laughs] Have a little perk here and there. There's a lot of tension there.

HS: Were the women professors at UM who you worked with, did they feel similarly? Did you ever talk about this?

TW: Not really. The women, from my point of view, and I think when you're in a department, you become somewhat isolated from the rest of them because the department becomes kind of like your family and it's your environment, that's the people that you see every day. Most of the departments, especially…let's see, we usually had one other woman besides me, but that doesn't mean that that they're going to be friends with me and we would share our problems and the difficulties that we had so that. I can talk about that in a little bit.

What I want to talk about now is how I got there. Because this comes out of the reservation, the field work that I've been doing in eastern Montana, and Tom and I, my husband, we fell in love with Montana. Coming out of northern California should have been great, but it wasn't. When we went back there, it was all freeways and high rises and people go…California had a lot of good things about it: the climate and just the whole atmosphere. But we just loved Montana

even though we were in eastern Montana, and there was always this conflict between eastern Montana and western Montana. I wanted to get a job really at Bozeman because it was closer to the reservation, and I could continue my contact with them. But when I was in the last couple of months, it was a November…we left, I left in December-January. My research was over. As we usually do, the Anthropological Association had a meeting, their big annual meeting was in Seattle, which was relatively easy for me to fly from Montana to Seattle, and there was a job at the University of Montana. It was for the chairman of the department of which I had no desire in, but I did meet with…I put my name in. I wanted to meet with the people who were representing and interviewing for the job, and so met with Floyd Sharrock. He was chairman at that time, and there's somebody from social work, sociology. My undergraduate degree's in social work. So, we met. I told him my background, and we had a good talk. I said I was really interested in Montana and working. Sometime after that, maybe January, something like, I can't remember the dates, I got a call, and they were interested in having me come. They had a new position in the department because they'd separated off from sociology, social work, so they were going to be a separate department and they were given a position as a social anthropologist and was I interested in applying. Which, of course, I was because there wasn't anything available at Bozeman. They didn't have a position that I could fill.

I should say I was seven months pregnant at the time, and I wrote to the chair, Floyd Sharrock, and said, "Listen, I'm pregnant, and if you're not interested in me, just let me know and I will understand." Little…what do we call that. Oh, not chauvinism, demeaning, I think that you wouldn't hire her. He wrote back and said, "Oh, please, that's not a problem. Come on." So, I went. The interview went well. The Bessacs [Frank and Susanne Leppmann] had a dinner for me with K. Ross Toole was there—handsome man and such an interesting individual. I was in my maternity outfit. I roomed at The Palace, which is no longer a hotel, but it was then, and things went well. Malouf took me around town, showed me, and hey, it's Missoula with the forests and the mountains. Who could go wrong? [laughs] When I went back…They offered me the job, and I said, "yes!" In September of that year, I had my oldest son was five…five? Or would he have been six? Six, because he was in first grade. He and Tom drove with the dog. It was actually a reservation dog who farted all the way through. [laughs] Said it was terrible. In the U-Haul. I was driving with the cat and the baby and so we came. Through connections that Floyd Sharrock had, we got to rent a house that's a block from campus on McLeod Avenue. It was great. We eventually bought it.

So, I hadn't finished writing my dissertation at that time so I got a letter from my department University of California-Berkeley saying, if you don't finish, we're going to drop you from the program. Well, that really set me up because I had sent in beginning drafts, and they weren't quite right so through my reading materials on Native communities and anthropology, I realized the focus of my dissertation. So, I'd stay up—I'm teaching new classes, baby, I'm busy there. My husband was a writer so what I would do at night, I'd work until maybe 1:00 writing, give him my—everything was typewritten then, we typed—and give it to Tom. He would edit it the next day, look through that, and continue on. I mean, I had a structure. I think I handed the dissertation, finished dissertation, in May or June. Went well. It just went really well once I

figured out this is where we go and handed it in. I had a very well-known, extremely well-known professor—my major professor—who accepted it with the first draft. A couple changes here, which was no problem and got a Ph.D. Yeah, it was pretty wild.

The classes I would teach—I'm a social anthropologist, and at that time we had archaeologists. There was a physical anthropologist, maybe the next year, my second year, that came. We were associated with linguistics. So, the four areas of anthropology: social anthropology, physical anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics. We had somebody representing all those areas. Here in Montana, archaeology certainly was prominent because of all the work that archaeologists do here so. The next major change, because I was interested in contemporary Native and what we call ethno-history—that is, we're looking at kind of the history of earlier historical, it's combination of anthropology and history—and so I was getting interested in that because really there was very little written at my time, at that time. This is the, 1969 was the year I came. In a couple years, I put in for a grant to the National Endowment for Humanities [NEH] and got it. So, we went to Washington D.C. for a year, well, nine months. I was working with…it was through the Smithsonian Institution, which is a wonderful place to work. I mean, this was like pretty close to heaven. Instead of struggling all the time to make a lecture for the next day and the grade term papers and exams, this is just like heaven, and it's a fascinating place.

I had a roommate whose area was northwest coast art, and so she got access to all the museum holdings in that particular area. Sometimes she'd take me up and let me look at things and there was one—it's real famous—it's a carved pipe. You'd think that it was—because the pictures it looks quite large—when you see it it's a tiny little thing. Wow! Then, let's see…what was her name? Oh, god, her name. The Kellogg? No, it wasn't Kellogg. It's a famous woman who was involved in, quite well-to-do. Oh, I'll think of it sometime. Anyway, she had died and she had collections of Native American collections. I think she had Russian collections. She had a house for each one of these, of her collections. I should do that. Get another house for all my junk. Anyway. So, they had all this Indian materials that she donated in through her will—everything from her collections. They had all the Indian things on the floor were my office was, and they were preparing them, cleaning them up, and what have you. There were beautiful moccasins and all beadwork and everything, but one of the things that was really fascinating they had a whole set of tarot cards. I think it came out of the Southwest. I'm not certain just which tribe it was, but they were from human skin. You could hold it up to the light. I didn't touch it, but you could hold it up and you could see kind of where the veins had been. [laughs] I said, "Whoa, this is really weird." But she'd bought it from somebody on the Blackfoot Reservation. Don't ask me how they got it, but there's probably a provenance on this.

That was a wonderful, wonderful year, and what I got interested in was the archival material on the Northern Plains. My area really is…I know nothing about the Southern Plains or the Southwest. But on the history of Native life and the changes, particularly as the military and settlers and other people were coming through. I found a huge collection of materials that were the accounts of the…particularly in the 1850s, '60s, there were a lot of army surveys going

through and they had to make an account So, there would be like a Lewis and Clark journal and with maps and everything. Because I was supported by the NEH grant, I would get everything xeroxed off, and I was bringing boxes of this stuff back, which I'd hoped to work into publications and what have you. But it was a great year. During that year the women on campus protested their low salary, because they were getting paid less than the men were getting, and so they won that. So, a little boost in salary.

When I started, it was terrible. I was making $9,000 a year for nine months. We didn't get paid in the summer, so you're struggling using this little bit of money to survive in the winter, and in the summer, you didn't have anything. It was terrible. [laughs] My husband wasn't working because he was writing. He was working with the tribe. They got money for a…oh, had a name. I forget the names of all these things. What they were doing was going through all of this material—he'd spent a lot of time on the reservation, collecting the oral histories. I mean, not the oral histories but the tales—the oral tales. He had recorded those and had been…they had been translated. The tapes had been translated. Then there was a project to develop a set of books for the children in the schools, so that they were illustrated by Native people in the tribe, and Tom was working with an elder in writing it correctly, whatever way, making sure that it was good. So, he was involved in that, which was great. It was tough.

HS: Didn't pay.

TW: Yeah, no pay. In the summers, I always had to do something, either get a grant to do research or…because we usually had no money. It was the credit union kind of supported us. [laughs] You're always getting a loan from the credit union to get by, then you had to pay it off of course. Questions?

HS: Well, I think you've already talked about…Let's talk about some of your colleagues. What were your first impressions of Carling Malouf when you met him?

TW: He's a ding…He was a ding bat. He was just…In a way, I was hired to replace him because my area as a social anthropologist and working with Native—the history of Native peoples in the plains, but also teaching Indians of Montana and then also teaching Indians of North America in general. Then helping students who are doing, maybe, their M.A. in that area and what have you. Carling had a lot of contact with the Salish and Kootenai peoples for many years, and he was a caring person—deep inside of him, he was really a caring person. When he and his wife, whose name I've forgot.

HS: Arline.

TW: Arline. They stayed out at the fort [Fort Missoula]. There's the army house—that's where a lot of the new faculty were placed in housing. [laughs] We used to have parties every so often in somebody's house, and I was talking to Arline, who was the sweetest woman ever, and she said…She was kind of bitter about her marriage because she said one time they got a washing

machine. She didn't have a washing machine. She was probably washing by hand, and she said Carling gave it to this Indian family. [laughs] He would do that. I mean he just was massively generous with money and, well, helping people out. I could see she was bitter, and I thought, 'well, that figures,' because he was that way.

He tended to be repetitious. We always said he had a loop tape that kept going around and around, same tape, which got a little old. A lot of people came and talked to him because he had knowledge that that nobody else had. He was a real sweetie, but I'd get kind of pissed at him. I think that was my young, sometimes not as always caring as I should be. He was a funny guy, and I didn't replace him. Greg Campbell really replaced him when he was hired because Carling was retiring then. He lasted a long time after I was here. Then Dee Taylor was a remarkable teacher, the kids loved him. His classes were always quite full. He was really a chauvinistic person, who be showing these slideshows on some…there'd be a picture of this nude girl. He'd say, "How did that get in there?" Or Marilyn Monroe. He'd say, "How did that get in there?" Everybody'd laugh and think it's really funny; I'm thinking, 'are you kidding me?'

Let's see…I can't think. I don't think he was ever a chair. Carling was a chair, and that was kind of a disaster because he couldn't keep track of the books and the money and that this was happening. The poor secretary had to do so much work to…No, Taylor was chair for a while, and he was a good chair. Then Bessac [Frank Bessac], Asian [studies]. He was pretty blind by the time I…he was hired about three or four years before I came, and he had gotten glaucoma when he was in China and it was really pretty bad by the time I got here. But he got along and just a totally different kind of personality than Taylor or Malouf. Very philosophical, very introspective. Not always up on the latest because he couldn't read very well. So, yeah.

Then there were other people that drifted through. Another person that I want to talk about Charlene Smith, Sandy Smith. She was a physical anthropologist, who had actually been a nurse at one time and got her Ph.D. in anthropology, University of Utah, as I remember. Anyway, she did her field work on diabetes among the Southwest Indian…I can't remember what group it was. Havasupai, I think, which she was able to show how traditionally they didn't have diabetes, and if you compared it to a group that's living in Mexico—same genetic group—they didn't have any diabetes, but the American had a lot. That was really due to the very poor diet that they had because they were dependent upon government rations, which were a lot of flour and butter and just things that…cheese. Lots of cheese. Just diet, which that their systems had never dealt with. She got lots—she came the year after I was there—and she was a good teacher. How can I say? Students really liked her. But she wasn't…she was kind of, how could I say? Conservative. That's the word I want. So, we weren't close. I think we respected each other, and I liked being around her. I did. I don't know how she felt, but she's a tough…she's really tough. She was there for a long time, retired, when she was probably in her 60s. Went retirement [unintelligible]

She didn't do much research. She wasn't a researcher. Didn't do much publications whereas I was struggling with that and trying to do everything because I felt I had to do all of this.

Particularly as a woman, when you have to not only teach and be superior in that, because you get evaluated every time you're turning around—the students are evaluating, your colleagues evaluate, the dean evaluates. God! It goes on and on. Then you have to do research, which I love. I'm a researcher. Then you had organizations on campus that you are part of: committees, faculty senate, things. Then you're supposed to be involved in the community as well. Plus, publishing. It's a lot.

HS: Then you're also a mother and a wife.

TW: Kind of. [laughs] Not really. I said to my kids, "Hey, you know, I was a rotten mother. I'm sorry."

They say, "Yeah, you were." They all acknowledge that…I mean, I'd come home and hopefully Tom had dinner or something, and then I'd work until late on the next day's lecture. Even if it was one you did before, you changed it. You're always changing things. We never got a vacation. We couldn't afford a vacation. We were always just here, and the boys were busy in activities. Neither one of them were much interested in athletics. Fortunately, we had a very…McLeod, particularly our section, had a whole bunch of kids about the same age and so they were busy with friends and busy that way. In the summer, they'd go to camp or do something like that. In fact, that came up…maybe I shouldn't say this, but my oldest son is gay, and I remember when he told me that when he was 16. I immediately—the researcher in me—goes to the library to look up this. What is this? It said it's because of an overprotective mother, and I said…we're talking, and I said, "You know, it said that it's due to an overprotective mother."

He said, "That's not…that was not you."

I said, "I know." It was not me. I thought 'boy, this is all bullshit.' [laughs] So, that solved that one.

One of the things that I think I'm noted for. I went away frequently because things like, I got to get out of here; this is just too much. Not only did we go to the Smithsonian, which was great. I mean, I'm dragging these kids all over the world. The next one, I got a Fulbright to South Korea. Let's see, [unintelligible] That's 1979, '80. I was teaching at the Seoul National University, which is the major, the major university in Korea. This was really a big honor to get that. So, I had a seminar and a class on change, and theoretically, the students were all supposed to be able to know English and they didn't know it at all. It was kind of a disaster. Then, also, this really a really significant part of my life, while I was there…let's see…when did it start? Before we even came, the workers—so-called workers—were protesting in the streets. When I got there, the students were protesting. Because Korea was, South Korea was so poor, and that what was happening was that Japan was making all of these things—cars and electronics and watches—but the Koreans were putting them together cheap. They couldn't buy a TV because for them, because all the TVs were sent to America, and if they wanted it, they were so expensive, they

couldn't afford it. They were really struggling. So, there was a lot of conflict that was happening in the country at that particular time. It was around Christmas time, the Koreans killed their president. They assassinated him. Fortunately I knew a woman, an anthropologist—she was an anthropologist. What was she doing there? I think she's doing research, but she'd been a Peace Corps volunteer. They'd had Peace Corps volunteers in Korea before I came, and so she knew Korean. Being an anthropologist, we got to know each other. I forget her name, but anyway, so we had scheduled this before this assassination occurred, and the embassy said, 'Americans stay home. Do not go out.' Of course, we went out. [laughs] Of course. Anthropologists have to see what's happening.

She took me to a…let's see, how would I call it? It wasn't a prayer session. It was like a seance because in Korea, a very important role for some women who can do this who are shaman, and they have the ability to go into trance and to visit other places, other times, to help. This was a seance that was put on for a woman who was going on 40, and she'd never had children. She wanted to have kids. So, what was wrong with her. My anthropology friend knew these people and could translate to me what was happening. Well, what happened was that she went into a trance and visited North Korea, and there were part of the family—because they got divided after the Korean War—who had anger against this woman and they were preventing her getting pregnant. Wow! That's really interesting.

Things became very chaotic at that time in Seoul because after the president got killed, actually, they were just supposed to take him away and put him. He was our puppet, America's puppet. Anyway, here was fighting in the streets. It was really scared to go downtown. There was a big tank there, and on every corner, there was a guy with an AK-47 with a military gun. You're going, 'whoa,' and they were actually fighting because the generals, there was a general here and they were fighting as to who was going to get control of the government. It was a military coup is in the process. The Fulbright office asked me to stay on another year, and I would have but my marriage was breaking up. I said, "I got to take my kids home," so I brought them home.

HS: Did the woman ever have a child then? Did you ever find out if she had a child?

TW: No, I never did. No. The ritual was fascinating. Of course, trance is not unusual with Native Americans, and so this was…actually trance is found everywhere in the world. It's just something that we as humans have the ability to do. Not all of us. It was long—hours. We left before they were finished because we had to get back because it was getting darker and we had to take the bus and things were a little bit scary, so yeah.

HS: Going back to what you were saying about the difficulty of being both a professor and a researcher and then a mother and a wife, what do you think would have helped you feel more like you could sort of balance those roles?

TW: I think it would have been better if I didn't feel so much pressure from the university because those are the things that they expect and that you get evaluated every year. You've got

both for your teaching and for your research. Some professors, who are great teachers, don't do that much in research. I don't think I was a very good teacher, great teacher, but I got through.

HS: Why do you say that?

TW: Oh, I just always felt that way. But it's interesting the other day, I was in Albertson's in Eastgate and there's a mean, I think he's retired now. All my old students are retired now. He said, “Oh, Tobie, you were a great teacher, but you were tough.” And I was tough. I expected the students to do well. Some did, and some didn't. I liked the students, and I’m always proud. Some of them have done really wonderful things. Like the woman who is a doctor at St. Pats. I think she’s…no, I think she quit doing that, but she was in child psychology. She went on for her med degree at University of Washington, went on for to be a psychiatrist. It's really nice when you have your students doing good things because they're very bright.

HS: Do you think those expectations eased up as you continued? I mean, because you taught for 20, 30 years.

TW: Thirty years.

HS: Did you find that they started to ease up, or were they still—

TW: I don't think so. There were a number of things. As my kids were getting older and then I went to Botswana in ’89, ‘90 with another Fulbright to teach at the University of Botswana. Well, no, I’m wrong. No, that's right. [laughs] After Korea, I went to Nigeria and taught—that was on an exchange program with the University of Montana and University Calabar in Nigeria. That was set up by Peter Koehn who was head of international studies in the foreign program. He had been teaching in Nigeria for, I think, a year, two years. Effie Koehn, they were married. He was the one that had set up. Since I inherited the peoples of Africa, which, from Malouf, who really wasn't that…he was really an American Indianist. But many of my major professors in grad school, both at Ohio State and in Berkeley were Africanists, so I had done quite a bit of research for my term papers on things in Africa. So, I inherited the Peoples of Africa class. I’m thinking, ‘here I’m teaching this class, and I’ve never been to Africa. I gotta to Africa.’ When this exchange program came on, and my kids were…let's see, I think, Jeff was home. What happened to Matt? Matt had a girlfriend. He dropped out of school at 16, and a very lovely young woman took him over. Thank you, thank you. He needed that. I couldn't. So, they were taken care of. Oh, I Matt with…oh, what am I saying! I took Matt with me. There was another time—it was in Botswana that the woman took care of him. No, he was with me which was a great experience for him. He didn't make it through that, what, his junior year, I think, in high school because he spent most of his time back at the boys’ quarter with the people. Yeah. He loved them; they loved him. When it was ready for us to go, he started crying. He didn't want to go. I said, “I didn't know you cared that much.” They loved it.

So, we did that. Then Botswana came a couple years later. After Botswana, came Tanzania and so I've been going away. I just needed to get away because…and I needed different…As an anthropologist, I needed to see what's happening there, get to know people, live there, work there. That's one of the things that being on the reservation taught me. You just can't go in as an anthropologist and just go around and talk to people. You got to do something. You have to do something that they can see that you're working along with them. So, that's one of the things I did in Africa, which I feel good about. All of the students they loved Peoples of Africa. They said I was great because I had so much—having been there and I had slides and, oh, all kinds of things. Yeah, it was good.

HS: Why did you feel you needed to get away? I mean, other than—

TW: Just the pressure. Just the pressure of having to do so many things. I'm a teacher and a writer and a researcher and I'm on committee, and then I was chairman of the department for a couple of years and that's when we had this provost that was going to—not get rid of anthropology—but meld us with sociology. Which I said, "That will never work." Oh, and then, in 1973, '74, they had a big recession, and they were going to—we lost a position. We'd hired Sally Slocum as a physical anthropologist. Sandy was more interested in the older, oh, was she? Maybe not so much. But Sally was interested in more contemporary physical anthropology, so she was a good addition to the department, but we lost her. She didn't have tenure. She was still on her first couple years teaching here, and so that was sad. Yeah. So, when you go away, well, I love to travel and I like being in different countries. I'm not a tourist, and I want to work there and so yeah. Then when I would come back, I'd be all enthusiastic, but also I had material that I could teach from. So, everything had a great value, I think.

HS: Did you feel like you had people in the department who you could talk to, especially because you were one of the few women in the department and it was mostly men?

TW: I liked my department, and I think they liked me. I hope they liked me. No, I don't think they would have really… [laughs] I find the secretaries more understanding. No, I don't think so.

HS: Because at UM, it was mainly a male dominated field.

TW: Yeah, pretty male dominated, which is interesting because anthropology is really a woman's field. It's mainly women who may be following Margaret Mead or something like that. They were involved in their own lives, in their own work and studies. I think I'm more of a listener than a talker. Bessac needed somebody to talk to. Malouf would talk anyway because he was a talker. [laughs] Dee Taylor, I wasn't very close with him. He was kind of conservative. Here I'm a woman with a couple kids. I think he thought more that women should be in the home or doing some other activity, yeah. We had young people come in Jim Schaffer and others would be there for a couple of years, and then they'd go off on their career. There was some fluctuation in the department. It actually is a pretty stable place. And we had geography. We're on the second floor of the social science building, well I guess…and geography was

around the corner, so we knew some of those people. Sociology was upstairs. We tended to be more separate than…I mean, of course, everybody was friends. We didn't know that that much about—there was a division between the biological, the physical sciences, and the social sciences on the other side of campus. So, we'd see each other in meetings and things like that, but we really didn't do that much with them.

Then we had these whole series of presidents that we went through actually a really difficult time. I never can remember the name of the president when I came [Harry K. Newburn]. He was a lawyer. He was very well respected, and then he retired. Then did Bowers replace him? Probably. [Robert Johns came after Newburn] Then they went through this period of, what's it called—

HS: Retrenchment.

TW: Retrenchment, in which the retrenchment was really coming from the Montana state legis…not the legislature but the—

HS: Board of Regents?

TW: —system, yeah, the Board of Regents and Bowers [UM President Richard C. Bowers] was not standing…Actually, we were a good university and it probably is too [now] but I can't speak for what's happening now. But there was a real commitment to teaching, and we had well-known professors at that [time]. Well, they do now too. But Bowers was just not standing up for us. I was a member of the faculty senate at that time. Me and my big mouth—I got up in faculty senate and said, “Listen our president is not standing up for us. We need to do something about that.”

And Jim Todd got up, and he said, “Yes, well, we're going to…” We didn't strike, but it was—

HS: Protested.

TW: We protested and developed this union. So, I was on the first union board, and I thought ‘god!’ I took a chance because I didn’t know what anybody thought, but they were saying ‘yes!’ Because I was right, he wasn't, and that's his job was to stand up for us and to fight for what the faculty were doing. The retrenchment, I wasn't…Was I chair then? I think Malouf was chair, but he just couldn't really handle conflict. I don't blame him for that, but boy, I could. Because we lost Sally Slocum's position—the physical position. Could have been worse than it was, but we had lots of statistics on how well we were doing: our student body was good, our majors were good. So, we really didn’t—the problem was she was just vulnerable. She'd only been there a couple of years, and the kids loved her, but—

HS: And if you don't have tenure.

TW: No, you're really vulnerable, and she had come so recently. That was difficult. She took my place when I went to Korea. They hired her to replace me for that year, and in the meantime, she was studying for the federal exam, which she passed, and she spent her life in the Secretary of State. She became a diplomat to, I think was…not Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast. Then she went to Malaysia, and then she came back to a country called the Congo [Republic of the Congo] but it's not the Democratic Republic. So, she spent a lot of years. Then she came back to the State Department in Washington. I don't know if she was working with the African desk at the Department of State.

HS: So, she did all right.

TW: She actually did all right. Yeah, she did. Then she came back and retired in Montana, but then she eventually left. This can be a lonely place for a single woman. I think it was that for her, yeah.

HS: What was it like for you after you got a divorce?

TW: I was working just as hard as I always did. Then writing grants for my next trip or whatever. [laughs] Doing some publishing. In terms of my research, the focus was not so much on contemporary. I combined ethno-history with women's studies, and so most of my publications have been on looking at the history of Plains Indian women with contact and with the diseases. Just looking at a role—the important role that Native women had in their society. A lot of them hunted buffalo. Some of them went to war. I mean, they were a very integral part of—not the lowly women that they that the whites, particularly the military even Lewis and Clark, always kind of looked down on the women to some degree. So, a lot of my work was on that. Then I did some work on Africa, but I didn't do any real publishing there. I gave talks at conventions and things like that.

HS: Well, the late ‘70s and early ‘80s was a time at UM when the Women’s Studies Program and women's studies as a study was really getting going.

TW: Yeah. Well, you asked about…I didn't have anything to do with the Black Studies Program at that time. That was, like, ‘why are we doing that when we have Native people here?’ But the Indian studies, I was involved in that to some degree. Not as much as Carling. Carling was really much more instrumental in that particular program and the development of that program because he’d spent his life with, particularly, Native peoples in this area, which was an important component. But I knew Henrietta Whiteman, who was a funny lady. I mean, she's really a dynamic person, and then Bonnie HeavyRunner. Changed her name [Bonnie HeavyRunner Craig]. Forget the last name. Anyway, she was a wonderful person.

HS: You had mentioned to me once that they were both very amazing women but both very different. Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

TW: Well, Henrietta was nationally known, and she was a dominant figure as she should have been. We got along well. I don't know that everybody got along well because she was pretty outspoken, and that's okay. Do it! We actually liked to be with each other. Bonnie—she changed her name—but HeavyRunner. Anyway, she was a more thoughtful, a little more academic. Not that Henrietta wasn't. She was probably more policy-oriented. I mean, forming the structure of Native American studies. It came on my Facebook, a recognition of her, and of course, they call that building—

HS: Oh, the rotunda in the new Native American Studies building is named after her.

TW: Yeah, the rotunda is, but the building itself is after the people who put up the money. I don't remember their name.

HS: Oh, right. The Payne family.

TW: Yeah, Payne. Which is important that they had that because they'd just been kicked around campus from here to this building to that building. It was just—

HS: Native American Studies?

TW: Yeah, so it was really…and the building that they have is, it's bigger than I—you don't realize how big it actually is.

HS: What was your role in kind of helping that get started? Were you just supportive of it?

TW: Yeah, just supportive. I wasn't that much involved. As it should be. Me, I step back from all those things. You do it. I really support people being able to stand up and do it and work for it and organize it. It's there—Malouf would be more like, become more involved in what they would do, and if they didn't do it his way, he'd complain. But me, I'm just do it.

HS: What do you need from me?

TW: Yeah. They need support on campus. They need recognition that this is something that the university should have, of course. We'd go around to reservations sometimes to support the student enrollment. Any new enrollment here. Do things like that. I didn't have that much to do with the development of that program.

HS: What about Kyiyo? Do you remember the first Kyiyo Powwow or any of them?

TW: I'm certain that I went to that one, but I used to go to all of them because I really like a powwow. I like the dancing and the music. But a lot of that comes from when I was on the reservation. It was the time of the Vietnam War, and so many of the young men were going off—as they did in the Second World War—off to fight in Vietnam. Then they they would have a

celebration when they left to tell them how important it was. Then they'd have a celebration, if they were state [side], they came back to visit. They certainly had a big celebration when they returned. And they might have a name change because they have been a warrior. So, we went to powwows like almost every weekend. Yeah, yeah. It was an important event.

HS: Contrast that with what a lot of other veterans were experiencing when they came back from Vietnam.

TW: True. They would never have been demeaned in any way. I think that those other veterans that came back they hit the anger that having a bad war. I don't think—it may look personal. We sometimes would have problems in class with some veterans that had come back who thought we were demeaning them, but I never would have done that. I just felt sorry that they went.

Then we had the protests on campus which the president at that time, what's his name?

HS: Pantzer [Robert Pantzer].

TW: Pantzer. He was very good. He was very open to suggestions and to mediation and talk about. He really got the university through a difficult time. And coming out of Berkeley, of course. [laughs]

HS: Did you participate in the protests here on campus?

TW: Yes, yes. It wasn't that significant, but of course, it was a time of conflict. Like my family was pro-war, and my father had been the Second World War. It took him a long time before he realized this is a bad war. There was anger. At this time, I think, there was conflict between the city and the university. The university was growing. The university was becoming as a more significant factor in the life of the city, but yet they kept a distance from the rest of the city. They could have been more involved—politically and socially, economically—and they were to some degree but not as overtly as they could have been, I think. So, there was some conflict there during that time of protests. I can't remember whether we quit teaching. Maybe we…I don't know. I can't remember. Long time ago. [laughs]

I know we were all shocked when Kent State took place. I mean, there's something of sacredness about a university or college that you don't—you can protest, but you recognize peaceful protests as an important factor of saying something. We're going through that now, but things sometimes go around and around. I think compared to now what's happening, to the '60s—the '60s is more much more focused, as I think, on that war. That was a relatively narrow focus, but yet it had ramifications outside of the conflict itself. Then there was Martin Luther King and the marches there, so there were a lot of things going on. Development of women's studies; women are becoming more vocal. I think, changes in just gender. Those things were

beginning to be verbalized and working through acceptance at that time. Those, to some degree, have continued on. We have a long history.

HS: Do you think that it helped in the '60s that people could, despite all of these various things—like the AIM movement and African-American rights and women's rights and all of this—they could coalesce around this one larger thing like the war in Vietnam? Where today it seems like there's so many disparate things going on politically and then COVID and then Black Lives Matter and the hashtag me [metoo] movement, where they seem kind of splintered and they don't seem to come quite, come together neatly because there's no one central thing?

TW: The war really wasn't I don't think that's centralize. But the those other changes in person…other cultural events such as AIM and the Native American, if you were non-Native, you might support Native American but you probably wouldn't join in with them. So, that they were just growing; they were just beginning. People were beginning to verbalize and to write about and to make recognition that these groups had not gotten recognition, or there had been…What's the word I want? Sometimes I have trouble—

HS: Marginalized?

TW: Marginalized, yeah. So, they were just beginning and important. And beginning to flow into the university's teaching, so we had women's studies or Native American studies, and classes that dealt with those particular issues. But I don't think that…well, politically—

What time is it? Am I going over? Oh, it's only 3:00.

HS: You're fine.

TW: No, I'm trying to think of the politics of it. I remember when we were in Washington D.C., and all the Nixon things were coming. That was becoming like, whoa, and we're reading every day in the newspaper. This is a weirder time, I think. I think with the disease, I think that with the political system, and then all the groups as well—they're taking stances here and there. I think it's just much more complex, much more extensive. Of course, the media is so dominant in its daily broadcast of this or that, that you can't run away from it. And there's so many different things between the COVID, I mean, the disease. It's like what a weird time this is. I keep thinking, 'hey, guys, this is one of the most significant times in American history.' It really is. Who knows? I'd like to see it. I hope I do get to see at least some of it because there are things happening now that—I mean, we've never had a pandemic come through like this that's been so devastating. We've never had a president like the one we have now [Donald J. Trump], so that's interesting too. Then there's all the groups fighting for recognition and for a place of stability or importance within the society.

I guess I find when I was teaching—and I taught classes kind of on globalization, which was such an important feature of, of course, my work and my interests because of my work in Africa and

what have you, and that one's gone. It's still kind of there, but it's so off on the periphery that we might hear a little bit here about, maybe Russia here or something there, but I don't feel that it's as…We're cutting our ties with a lot of the other countries to some degree, not completely, so that's a big change. Let's see…

HS: I should say that we are doing this interview in the middle of the COVID pandemic, which that is part of the reason we did an interview in March and it's just now September that we're getting back to being able to do the second of three interviews. We thought it was going to be, oh, we'll do one this week and one next week, and literally—

TW: It's changed.

HS: Yeah, everything has changed so.

TW: And not all for the best. [laughs] Of course, but my current concern—and I don't know what to do with it, but I'm really worried—I'm worried about the old people. Not the ones that are in the institutions or the homes or the care facilities, but the ones that are sitting at home doing nothing. I'm hearing more and more—I was one of them there for a while, and I said, "No, I gotta get out of here. I've got to start moving," because it's deadly. I hear more and more of these people that, particularly women, but I don't think it need be that, but we're just sitting. Maybe watching television all day. But I don't watch television. [laughs] So, there's ramifications. Some of them are subtle; some are right there overtly. It's having a major, major change. We're all wearing masks. We talk about the good mask and the bad mask, [laughs] the colorful mask, the weird mask. I said masks are going to be a new fashion statement, a new accessory. It's not going to be purses or I don't know. Here it's gonna be masks.

Then the whole school system, whether it's a university, and a lot of the recent COVID—it's really increasing, and a lot of that's because of the universities. I mean, a major segment because the flow of a university is not six feet apart. They might wear a mask, but they're not six feet apart. And you can't drink beer with a mask on, [laughs] unless there's a little hole, a straw and hole you can put in your mask. It's difficult, yeah. I'm not certain I'd really want to teach at this particular time.

Are you working in office are you doing work from home?

HS: I do both. We're on a staggered schedule here, and so we work—we stagger and work a couple of days on-site, and then the rest of the time we work at home.

TW: Yeah, so it's a change in how the workforce is organized, and that might stay that way. I don't know if the archives or any other position on campus, whether it's…I don't know. Well, grad school or whatever, if they're all going to just stay that way. I know you have needs to meet with the public and the students, and so I don't know. We'll have to wait and see what

happens, if we ever get—and we will get through this. But we have no idea when. I mean, you could go on for so long, anyway.

HS: but I just had a couple more questions.

TW: Let me see if there's anything…

HS: The department, the anthropology department eventually began offering a master's in anthropology and then later a Ph.D.

TW: They were offering a master's when I came. I don't know if that just started when it broke off from the social work and sociology or whether—I don't know when the master's started. But I'm pretty sure it was there when I when I came. We had a fairly good undergraduate enrollment, and the master's—I think over time particularly as the apartment got a little larger—I think was fairly solid. I think it was a solid master's program. The last couple years before I left, under the leadership of Greg Campbell, he wanted to have a Ph.D. program. I was not in favor of it because we were doing so well with our master's, I thought it might demean the master's. Putting the emphasis of Ph.D.—a different faculty involvement, and that is what happened. So, that when I was teaching, you could walk down the hall, and many of the doors would be open. You were in class, you were maybe advising, or you were in your office. Now, you walk down, and they're all closed. They're just not there. It's a whole different. So, the emphasis becomes much more upon that Ph.D. student instead of, some of the students—I had one that I knew her and she was working on her Ph.D. She was getting no help by her committee chair. They just, they get so involved in their own research and their own work and maybe one or two students. That unity, I felt, that openness to the students, the importance of advising all the way along would be diminished, and I think it has been. But, hey, I'm not there.

I ask other people that have retired, "Do you come to see your department?" Most of us don't. We just kind of move on, and I myself become involved in volunteer work, which I like and I feel comfortable. I don't feel any pressure on me. I don't have to do some fantastic thing. I can just do little things. I like little things. This has been upsetting to me because I can't tutor in the schools anymore. I guess I could come and work in the archives, and I do work for the blood bank. I work as a recorder. I mean, I check people in and make sure everything's okay, yeah. And I did work for the Red Cross—well, the blood bank is with the Red Cross—but the disaster. I worked in shelters. I went to Katrina and worked for about three weeks down in Katrina. I really like doing that. That's tough. It's real tough, but I like working with people.

HS: So, what about some of the newer faculty who you worked with before you retired? I think probably Greg Campbell is someone you worked with before you retired and G.G. Weix.

TW: Yeah, yeah. They're committed to teaching. I guess there's some research that's being carried out, but G.G. likes to organize. And she likes to kind of run things. I don't know how she does it; she's really over-committed. I mean, she's doing everything, all kinds of things, and

that's good for the department, I think, and for her because that's what she does. Greg is much more centered within the department, and he does Indian projects as a consultant and things like that. Then there's Randy Skelton—he's with the physical anthropology and great guy, good teacher, yeah, quiet. He is there. I can't think of anybody else. Anybody else?

HS: Was Kelly Dixon teaching when you were there?

TW: No, she wasn't. Fun lady, but yeah. Then there's always Gary Kerr—our ever-present Gary Kerr who's been teaching forever. He was a student there when I was there and is a renowned teacher to large audiences. I have no idea when he's going to retire, or if he still is. I know that Dick Sattler, who wasn't there when I was there, but I know him since and he's retired yeah. It's just a different department, and it's like I don't know this place. I think that's happened all over campus—changes are taken. Our old camaraderie isn't quite the same as it was before. I have no idea how they get along. I assume they're just doing fine. I have no idea.

HS: Who did you work with in women's studies? Did you work with Diane Sands at all or Maxine Van de Wetering?

TW: [laughs] Oh, okay, I'll take up Diane. Diane was one of my first students, and she actually grew up close to the Fort Peck Reservation. Is one of my students that I always cherish. She's so active politically, and she uses her anthropology, I think, continuously. She's the one that helped me with a research project that I—interesting research project I carried out in Circle, Montana. In which I spent a week, sometime there, I got a small grant from the university and went out to talk to the women farmers because I grew up on a farm and my mother drove the tractor because my father couldn't drive a straight line because he was a drifter. [laughs] So, the field would be like [waves her hand]. No, no, that wouldn't work. So, she did a lot of the farm work, of course. I was wondering how are the women doing on the farms—not the ranches. I was interested in the farms, and because Diane was from that area and her aunt lived in Circle, Montana, through that contact I was able to meet other women farmers. It was fascinating. I really enjoyed this piece of—little piece of research.

What I found was that the older women had farms like the one I grew up in. You have chickens, you have a garden, you are preserving food, and you're supporting the work on the farm. They might be doing some work on the actual farming, but probably not that much. As opposed to the younger generation, in which they're working in town. There's no chickens anymore; there's no garden. But what really interested me, they're all studying and learning about how to work computers because the farming is now becoming computerized: so how big is your field, how many acres are there; how many bushels do you get; how many head of cattle; you know, blah, blah, blah. It's the women who are running because the men are out there on the tractor, and they don't know anything about computers. Actually, the women are beginning to make the decisions about how to run the farm. I thought it was really interesting. The whole the whole relationship.

Then another thing I was looking at, which I know nothing about—make certain I get all my terms right here—the farms are becoming…not consolidated. What is it? There's a term for it. [laughs] They're no longer under individual ownership. They're cooperatives now because individually, you can't afford to inherit a ranch or a farm. You can't do it. So, what's happening there it's—I asked the question, who inherits the farming, who runs the farm? Actually, it's the youngest son. The oldest sons are going to college. They're becoming lawyers or this or that. Who knows what? The younger sons are at home, and they're the ones who are taking the responsibility for the farm. I thought that was really interesting. I really got interested in this whole cooperative, but I didn't follow up on it. I thought that was an interesting change coming from a farm. My father, well, my grandfather bought the farm—my mother's father bought the farm—because he was going to become a gentleman farmer. He had money. He did horrible. He couldn't do it no more. He was also a bad alcoholic, and so my father took over the farm well, my family did. So, he and Mom worked the farm, but it actually wasn't there's. My grandfather's farm, so that some time along—and I have no idea when this happened—the ownership went from my grandfather to my father. I have no idea when that was, but we thought of our farms as individually, I mean…And my brothers—I had three brothers—they hated the farm. They would no more be farmers than to fly to the moon. That's the worst thing. So, it was really different. It would not have worked. So, I thought that was a real interesting change, which had been taking place yeah. Anyway, I got that piece written up in a magazine of anthropology called *Applied Anthropology*, so that was good. It was a fun little piece of research that Diane helped me. I see Diane once in a while. She contacts me for this or that, not much, but she's done well with her life. I'm really happy to be able to say I was one of her teachers.

Then…

HS: Maxine.

TW: Maxine! Maxine was a dynamo. We would share—be on committees together. She's so bright. So…how can I say? Insightful. Maybe it came from her philosophy way of looking at the world. So, when we were on committees, I usually didn't hardly say anything because she was so—and she was always good, great, you know. The only thing I remember once was we did a lot of things for the humanities. They'd have, oh, talks or things like that. I remember when it was something about childrearing, and I did some research. It was really interesting. I can't remember anything about it. Maxine was there. I always, I thought she was kind of like walked on clouds or close to god. Well, not really. Anyway, she was so interested in my research that I'd done on this, [laughs] I was really amazed because I always thought she was…She did so much for the Rhodes scholarships. I mean, we were getting Rhodes Scholars, and it was all her. She was prepping them all in a good way. Yeah, I was kind of sad when she left town because she's really a dynamic, wonderful person. Nice to be around because I could just be quiet. [laughs] Her son's still in town. He's a lawyer. I think my kids, one of them, went to school with him, but I can't remember. I don't know which one.

HS: Well, do you have any other thoughts about this part of your career. I think we've gotten through most of the discussion about your teaching career at UM, but if you have other things to say…

TW: One of the reasons that I retired when I did, and G.G. was hired to take Frank's [Frank Bessac] position although she was not a Chinese [scholar], and they really wanted somebody in the area of Chinese studies—but that's what we advertise for, well, Asian studies more broadly. But we didn't have any applications for that, and G.G. was the strongest one we had, and her area was Indonesia. So, that's a contribution to the university and into the department. She came well recommended with a finished Ph.D. That's very important. We wouldn't take anybody who hadn't finished a Ph.D. because it's really hard to finish it, and it's really easy to slough it off while you're teaching. Anyway, so she was there a number of years before I…Let's see, where was I going with that?

HS: When you retired.

TW: Oh, yeah. One of her areas—I had been teaching classes in women's studies, anthropology of gender, and that was okay. I liked the class there's a lot of nice material, good material to draw upon, but the whole area was becoming much more fluid and much more theoretical and just a lot more material coming out in that area. I couldn't keep up with it. There were changes in anthropology that were taking place that I was kind of an old-fashioned anthropologist in a way. Although I was reading the contemporary works that were coming out, I really couldn't teach it very well; although, I did teach advanced classes in social. I tried to use some of it there, but it was getting much more philosophical than I was used to. G.G. was younger and more acquainted that with that material, better able to articulate. I said, "This discipline's changing. I think it's time for me to do something else." I retired. Before that, had applied for the Peace Corps which is something I always wanted to do because I was committed to change and to helping solve problems in the world. So, I was teaching the class in December, and January, I was in South Africa. So, okay. That's okay.

I just thought it was time for me to leave. You're always what you are—an anthropologist. But I don't even read it anymore. I just don't…it just seems so far distant, and I got rid of most of my library—60 boxes of books. But I still have a lot. I went through and I said "Yeah, I want to read this. I want this." But I have no idea what the current ideas are. I get the sense that the department, or the discipline I should say, has become narrower. So, if you're a social anthropologist that the area of studies is delimited, or physical or whatever it is. That these broad kind of generalizations, which I grew up out of those in my graduate, undergraduate graduate career, which was much more extensive. Maybe not so much in depth, but more at least, in the surface. I just thought she where she should be, and I wasn't. So, I was out to do things, which I like to do. It gets kind of lonely when you're just teaching all the time. You're not really doing the research or the contact as you…so I could carry, when I went to the Peace Corps South Africa I was working with the teachers in the schools—the rural schools—on teaching methodology.

I wasn’t doing the teaching; they were doing the teaching, which was quite different from what they’d been doing before. It wasn't easy. It was actually really difficult. I think I didn't do a good job. I’ve always felt—because the teachers really rebelled against change, and I understand that. I was trying to…The teachers, particularly throughout Africa, elsewhere too, they use discipline to control. Discipline is corporal punishment is what they use. I was trying to change that and give them other ways to control. They like control—control the children. The children are so well behaved, compared to American children who [unintelligible]. But they sit there and they just—they probably sleep a little bit and maybe they're daydreaming off to some place. The school systems were horrible. I think you see the sticks disappear, and towards the end you see them sit on the desk more often. If you ask a student to draw a picture of their teacher, they’re always carrying a stick. So, you carry your anthropology with you wherever you go.

Let’s see, I’m moving into post-retirement.

HS: Well, we can talk about that, or we can take a break if you'd like, and we can do that next week.

TW: Yeah, it's almost 4:00. I think two hours is fine.

HS: There's a lot to cover in post-retirement.

Well, then let's go ahead and conclude this interview, and thank you, Tobie. It was a pleasure to talk to you as always.

TW: Thank you.

[End of Interview]