

# INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

LUCY SHOE MERITT

Oral History Project

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# THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

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Lucy Shoe Meritt

SIGNATURE OF NARRATOR

Patricia H. Labalone

SIGNATURE OF INTERVIEWER

Date:

CONTENTS:

Tape and transcript of interview on November 12, 1989  
Notes on a conversation held on November 11, 1989  
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# INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

## PREFACE

The following manuscript contains the edited transcript of an interview with Lucy Taxis Shoe Meritt. This interview was held over several hours and was recorded at the home of Benjamin Dean Meritt and Lucy Taxis Shoe Meritt, in Austin, Texas, on November 12, 1988. It was conducted by Patricia H. Labalme.

Lucy Taxis Shoe Meritt was born in 1906 at Camden, New Jersey. She attended Bryn Mawr College where she took her B.A. in 1927, her M.A. in 1928 and her Ph.D. in 1935 in Classical Archaeology.

She went to Athens in 1929 as a Fellow of the American School of Classical Studies where she remained for five years, measuring architectural mouldings throughout Greece, its islands, and Asia Minor.

She was a fellow of the American Academy in Rome in 1936-37, and a resident there in 1949-50. She taught at Mt. Holyoke College from 1937-1950, was at the Institute for Advanced Study as a visiting member from 1948-49, and again from 1950-73 while serving as Editor of Publications for the American School in Athens. Since 1974, she has been a Visiting Scholar at the University of Texas in Austin.

In 1976, Lucy Shoe Meritt (as she is known professionally) was awarded the Gold Medal for Distinguished Archaeological Achievement by the Archaeological Institute of America and in 1980 received an award from the American Association of University Women in the field of the Humanities.

Her principle publications are Profiles of Greek Mouldings (1936), "Architectural Mouldings of Dura-Europos" in Berytus (1948), Greek Mouldings of Kos and Rhodes (1950), Profiles of Western Greek Mouldings (1952), and Etruscan and Republican Roman Mouldings (1965). In 1984, she published a History of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens 1939-80.

Lucy Shoe Meritt is the widow of Benjamin Dean Meritt, who was Professor in the School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey. At the time of this interview, Professor Meritt was alive and invalided. He died in July, 1989. Professor Meritt was a classical archaeologist and epigrapher.

The reader should be aware that the following is a transcript of the spoken word, that it attempts to preserve the spontaneity and informality of the original tape, and that the views expressed therein are those of the narrator.

INTERVIEW WITH LUCY SHOE MERITT

Date: November 12, 1988  
Place: Austin, Texas  
Interviewer: Patricia H. Labalme

Note: This interview took place, with some interruptions, over several hours. In one part of the interview, Benjamin Meritt was present.

CASSETTE ONE, SIDE ONE:

Labalme: Now you and I can talk and talk about whatever you think would be interesting to people, giving them your views of the Institute, or, if you want, things that you've heard Ben talk about. But I'm also interested in you as a scholar and what your experience has been.

LSM: It's an especial privilege to tell you how much the years' association with the Institute did mean to me. You want, I guess, as brief a resumé of my strange career as possible. At my age of nine, my mother's youngest sister, a gifted painter already at 21, died very quickly of rampant T.B. In those days nothing could be done about it. It was particularly bitter because her father was a physician and helpless. My father, who always thought of others before himself--we were the one member of the family living away from Philadelphia--said to my mother. "You go and take Lucy for the winter and maybe that will put a little cheer in the

household." So we went, and mother of course began taking me again to many of the sites of historical and general artistic interest, as she had even earlier in Philadelphia.

**Labalme:** Your family lived where?

**LSM:** Actually, we were living at the time in New Jersey. My father was working in New York. So among the places we went was out to the old Memorial Hall, the remnant of the Centennial Exposition, the building that had been the Fine Arts building. It then housed--remember this was long before the days of the Johnson collection being anywhere but in his home down in south Philadelphia on South Broad Street--but the Wilstach collection had been given to the city and was housed there in Memorial Hall. It hadn't the distinction of the Johnson collection--it was nineteenth-century landscapes--but one of mother's best friends had been a niece of the Wilstachs and so mother had known the collection in their home. She was anxious to see it again and wanted me to begin to see nice pictures. So we went and I remember enjoying them very much. As we went to leave--I guess the Lord did endow me with curiosity--I looked down at the basement where we were not going. It was darkness chiefly, but there was a carriage and I've always loved carriages and horses. My grandfather, a physician, had given up his carriage and was depending on the Philadelphia transit system getting around to his patients, so I said to

mother, "May I go to see the carriage?" She was very tired but said, "Yes." I can't remember the carriage because, en route, my eyes saw off to the left a dark room with little spots of light. Any child would run in and see what that is. Luckily they were numbered, and I had been taught to be orderly by my parents, so I began to look in these peepholes. It was a remnant of the 1876 exhibition, stereopticon views of Pompeii. Ruins, until the last three or four, which were reconstructions. To this day, I can remember the impact of those reconstructions. And I turned to my mother and said, "How can they do this from that?" And she said, "Well, they have a lot of writings of these people, they explain things and, when they go and dig these places up, there are parts of the buildings still lying about and they learn to put them together." She said, "You know, there's that magazine in Grandpa's office--the medical office in the home in the old way--called Art and Archaeology. Go and look at that. I could hardly wait for his office hours to be over. At eight o'clock that evening, when I was allowed to go into the office, I poured over this magazine, and I vowed from that moment that I was going to find out how one could reconstruct ancient architecture.

Labalme: Isn't that wonderful!

LSM: So, it happened that fate brought me back to Philadelphia for my high school years, and I had the good fortune--mother

said I would have to learn Greek and Latin--and my grandfather, who had become a physician from being a classicist as an undergraduate in the proper way of the nineteenth-century had that very evening when I was allowed in his office--he had reached up into his big bookcase and taken down his copy of Homer that he had read in college. It had Greek on one side and Latin on the other. That was the old way, of course. I'm happy to say I own that volume now. It pleased him very much that I was interested in classical things as I had the good fortune to come back and go to the Philadelphia High School for Girls, which is the second oldest high school for women in the United States, and still then, in the early '20s, was teaching not only the four years of Latin to everybody, but three years of Greek. And along at the end of my sophomore year when I had taken the one year of Greek as well as the two years of Latin, the head of the department sent for me and said, "Your teacher tells me how interested you are in the Greek and you're doing very well, and I wondered whether you were interested in going on with it or where are you thinking of going to college." I said, that would depend upon what my parents could manage, and where I could go. I didn't know, but I wanted to study archaeology. I wanted to be an archaeologist. Her face fell. She was a wonderful, dignified woman, by this time the principal of the school as

well, and then she drew herself up and said, "I had hoped to interest you in my college. But if it's archaeology you want, there's only one place for you and that is Bryn Mawr. And so we will have to make every effort because they require rather more admission credits than we normally get here, but we will see that you get them." And those marvelous teachers did. Through the next years, the teachers met me for an hour or two after school, nearly every day of the week, one or the other of the teachers, to get me the extra credits I needed.

**Labalme:** In the ancient languages?

**LSM:** No, in physics. I needed two years of physics. I had only had one. There was no ancient history. I did the ancient history by myself. The extra work was also in mathematics and extra work in my third language, French. The teacher that I had for my second year was herself a Bryn Mawr graduate, and she was horrified by what we had not been taught the first year, and so she took me right out of the class and had me do something else, because she knew what the Bryn Mawr entrance requirements would be. Well, to make a long story short, thanks to these wonderful teachers and this woman whose hope was to send me to Wellesley--

**Labalme:** Wellesley's loss was Bryn Mawr's gain, and archeology's too, I think.

LSM: So to Bryn Mawr I went and fell into the hands of the wonderful Greek faculty, old Henry Neville Saunders, Wilmer K. Wright, who used to terrify me--it was Sandy who terrified most people with his rough, scruffish way--if you hadn't learned Greek at the age of five there was no hope for you!--but as long as I was going to be an archaeologist and not primarily a philologist, he thought there was some hope for me. My Greek was good enough to be an archaeologist at any rate, and Mrs. Wright of course with her wonderful sense of literature, of all modern tongues, would look at you and quote something from a French or German or Italian poet as she did from all the English poets, and if you didn't immediately respond she would say, "Why, but Miss X, surely you know so-and-so!" and this "surely you know so-and-so" terrified the life out of me but taught me a great deal of literature of all sorts in a wonderful way. We'd all run away from her class and go and look up what she'd quoted to us, which of course was even more so the case with the marvelous Rhys Carpenter to whom I can never pay sufficient homage.

Labalme: I had a course with him too.

LSM: Did you have that same experience? You went away from every class to the Library to find out what he had been talking about.

Labalme: Not quite. But I still remember things he said. He was memorable.

LSM: We had a feeling, and as a teacher later myself I felt that he had the consummate skill of making you reach just far enough. Not so far that you got discouraged. He didn't talk so far ahead of you that you thought, well I'll never catch up, why bother. But there was always just something out of reach, a little like Sappho's apple on the topmost bough. You had just to make a little more effort and find what he was talking about. And of course he and Mary Swindler made a magnificent combination. They complemented each other so wonderfully. Rhys much more spectacular in a way, with a magnificent handling of the king or queen's English [which] in itself was an experience--his vision, his imagination, his innate artistic sense of everything whether it was music, sculpture, architecture. Mary--a sound, somebody once called her plodding--I think that was unfair--she had much more than that, but she did have a very solid, practical point of view and her key word, if you ever had a course with her, you knew, what is significant? And if there's anything an archaeologist needs to learn, it's just that. Throw away all this nonsense, come to the point, what is significant in this?

Labalme: That's not always so easy to tell in archaeology.

LSM: No, so they taught us that very firmly, to see what you look at.

Labalme: That's a nice phrase. What courses did they teach?

LSM: Rhys taught the architecture [course] which began with Egyptian, a little bit of Mesopotamian, Greek all one semester, and then Roman for the second semester. He also taught Greek sculpture. The architecture was a three-hour course. The sculpture was two hours throughout the year. That I did not have from him for a reason I'll speak of in a moment. Mary taught the ancient painting [course], both vases and painting. Mary taught the Roman archaeology. By that was meant the topography of Rome, the sculpture, the painting, Rhys taking care of the architecture in the architecture course. Rhys also taught a one-hour course that was extremely popular called "Egypt and Crete." Now again, remember this was early '20s, how little there was known of Bronze Age Greece in those days. Well, he expanded Crete to be Mycenae too, but one was just beginning to try to sense the relation between the Egyptian and the Cretan and that was a course in which everyone sat there spellbound. You hardly heard a pin. You couldn't take notes, even. You just listened to his every word. And it was full of the vision of what was to come, in a sense, not that there was a vision of linear B in those days, but of many other things in the whole Cretan-Mycenean picture as we

see it today. I often think back to some of the hints that Rhys made in that one-hour course long ago with just the Cretan and Egyptian pictures in his hands. Well that's way off the point. It was their suggestion that I take the competitive examinations for the School in Athens. Luckily I won and went out and had a magnificent year there. There had come, meanwhile, because Rhys had gone off to Rome as Professor in charge of the Classical School of the American Academy in Rome, there had come to take over his work Edith Hall Dohan for the first year, and then Prentice Duell. Now Edith Hall Dohan was one of the early women, American women, in archaeology. She was also the person who had excavated in Crete with Harriet Boyd Hawes and Richard Seager, so she, rather than try the architecture course which she did not feel adequate for, offered to give the course on all that was known of Bronze Age by that time. And because I'd already had the architecture, I was one of the few people who was able to have more than was normally offered at Bryn Mawr because the years happened to be just right. And then, as I say, came Prentice Duell, the architect and the man who, later, headed one of the Oriental Institute expeditions in Sakhara, but he had been at the School in Athens, he'd been at the Academy, he was a very fine watercolorist as well as an architect and was one of the first who made any copies of some of the Tarquinian paintings. He gave me one

of the best pieces of general advice of anyone. He said when he knew I was going to Greece--"Pick one particular thing to look for. Whatever it is. Just pick some one thing, and as you go on the trips round the country, if you look for that, you will see infinitely more of everything else. Otherwise if you get to a site, there's just so much you 'oooooh'. Whereas if you say 'oh, can I find so-and-so, of course, while you're hunting for so-and-so you're seeing everything else. That was what sent me to the mouldings, you see, because I saw on the first trip of the American School at Athens as we started off, that magnificent morning for three days at Delphi with Rhys Carpenter, now the Director in Athens, that anyone who ever experienced would never forget. By the end of the first morning, in which we had looked at every cutting, every letter, every wearmark or weathermark on every block, from the entrance only as far as the first Treasury, we had learned to look for the things that matter in archaeological architecture. I was too good a little girl, I had learned my lesson with Rhys--he started his Greek Architecture setting everybody back on their heels, saying "Now I'm going to bore you." Well, the very idea of Rhys Carpenter boring anybody would make you sit up in your chair. He said, "Yes, this is just terminology, just words, terms of parts of the building, but you might just as well be a plumber come to fix a leak without a bag

of tools as try to do Greek architecture without your terminology. So, I want you to know these so that if I woke you up in the middle of the night and asked you to repeat them either forwards or backwards, you could do it." Well, when Rhys said that, you did it. And so we learned it very carefully out of the book: this is the Doric Order, this is the Ionic Order, all the little details. Right in order. You get out in the field of Greece, and you see, to your amazement that these funny little things at the top that you have learned to call a moulding are not all what they were in the book! That's a great shock. But you have learned to know from Edith's sculpture, from Mary's Greek vases, from Rhys himself the general field of architecture, to know that things change throughout the history of Greece, but they change always in a logical development, and so you automatically say to yourself, well there must be some logical development, logical explanation for these changes too. That was the whole beginning of it, you see. So by the end of that year that I had, when Prentice Duell came through Athens on his way back from Sakhara, where he had left Bryn Mawr and gone to join the Oriental Institute, head up the expedition in Sakhara, he said, "Come on, let's walk up Lykabetos," and as we walked up he said, "Now tell me what you've been doing this year." "Well," I said, "You told me to look for something special." I told him what I'd

been noticing. He said, "Yes, very interesting, very interesting. I don't think I've ever noticed that." And that's all he said. But at breakfast the next morning, the maids, with horror on their faces came to me, "Thespoinis, Thespoinis, the Director wants to see you right away in his office." They thought I had done some terrible [thing].

Labalme: What did they call you?

LSM: Thespoinis, which is the Greek for "Miss". So Thespoinis got up and walked over across the street to the Director's office. Rhys (who was now Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens) said, "I've sent for you right away. Prent has just been in before he took the Orient Express leaving this morning to say what you were talking about last evening. Why haven't you ever told me about this?" "Oh," I said, "It didn't occur to me as anything that important." He said, "Well, it may be very important. And Prent recognizes that and so do I, and he came to offer the School the funds to extend your fellowship for another year to do that piece of work, to find out."

Labalme: Isn't that marvelous!

LSM: I want to digress here to speak about Prentice Duell. He grew up as a boy on a not-at-all affluent ranch in Arizona. Father died when he was very young. Mother had a lot of children to raise on their ranch. Prent decided the best thing he could do was run away from home and leave one less

to be handled. He'd heard that in San Francisco there was a home for newspaper boys. If he could get a job as a newspaper boy and get into that home, he could make a start on life, which indeed he did. He finally went to the University, along came the first World War, he had by then been studying some architecture. He got to France. It was discovered that he knew how to draft. He was put immediately into the balloon service because we didn't have many people who could set down what they saw, and so he served in the balloon service over the German trenches.

Labalme: You mean, for observation?

LSM: For observation, drawing what he saw in the way of trenches. Well, there wasn't any G.I. Bill in those days, but there was a provision of some education for our service men after the war and so he stayed on and went to the Beaux Arts while he was in France. He came back, went to Harvard and then was teaching in the School of Architecture in Cincinnati when Rhys, who had crossed his path somewhere, tapped him to come to Bryn Mawr when Rhys went to Rome. Then Breasted-- those were the years when Charles Breasted came [to Bryn Mawr] on the first Flexner lectureship--recognized Prent's magnificent painting skill as well as drafting and that set him off with the Oriental Institute and a long career generally. What he always said was, people have helped me all along the way. I can't ever do anything back for them.

But the way I can return it, I hope, is by doing something for younger students who cross my path. That was his explanation whenever I tried to thank him for what he did.

Labalme: Where did the money come from that funded your second year?

LSM: His own personal funds.

Labalme: His own personal funds? How extraordinary.

LSM: And he extended it another year, offered it again a third year, but by that time, I'd been scrunging because I knew I needed--and I managed to live for four years on the two-year fellowship, and I said, please, no, don't give me anymore money to live here--in that period, of course, the exchange was such [that] one could live very cheaply and could be very careful. I said, save it for--by that time, everyone was saying this must be published--of course, the School hadn't any more publication funds then, less even than now or than when I was editor--I said, save it towards publication, which he did, because he then contributed a great deal to the final publication by the School, but he deserves the credit, really for the mouldings.

Labalme: This was your first work on mouldings.

LSM: So then, Rhys said to me on this early morning, if you will accept this, come back. I want to tell you right now that Prentice Duell is a very remarkable man. (By that time I knew that myself, by the way). He gives it with no strings attached. He believes that you have made such good use of

this year that you will make good use of another year, even if--we want you to know, that if this project, after you've given it a reasonable try, proves not to be rewarding, not to be worth it, and you find something else, you're perfectly free to switch to another subject. Wasn't that magnificent?

Labalme: Very. Very unusual.

LSM: Well, it wasn't necessary to shift because I then went down to--I'd been asked by Rhys to look over a box of antiquities that had been confiscated from a man who was trying to get out of Greece with them and they'd come from Corinth, and they'd been given back to the School by the archaeological service to deal with, put in the Museum there. I'd gone down on spring vacation and the regular staff had left so there was room for me in the excavation house to do that. Dick Stillwell, the architect at Corinth at the time, was driving me back down to new Corinth to get the train back to Athens. I didn't know him very well. He was just sort of the august architect of the excavation. But I told him about this and his immediate reaction was, it would be worth doing even if the results are negative. "Oh," I said, "I don't know quite how to get at the drawings." He and I both said, "You (I) must do it with full-scale drawings, and accurate." He said, "When I get back to Athens, I'll show you--I think I have the answer. I was riding up from

Southampton to London in the train one day, and there was a very unusually talkative British man on the train who turned out to be a salesman for this instrument for machine shops. But it occurred to me right away that it would help me get the profiles of the mouldings here at Corinth. I got one of them and I'll show it to you when we get back to Athens. This happens to be a British instrument, but I guess you'll get it anywhere." So I made plans to go up through Europe in the summer, see some of the other material in the museums with the idea that I could just pick this up. Dick said, "Oh you could get it anywhere in Germany, surely." Well, I tried when I was in Italy and didn't find it, but that didn't worry me that I didn't find it. I went on and spent most of the time in Germany. Everywhere I went nobody ever heard tell of such a thing. My German was fairly rudimentary and elementary, but at least I could describe enough what it was. Nobody had ever heard of any such a thing, and I was getting desperate when I got down to Vienna, almost at the end of the summer.

Labalme: What were you doing on this trip, going to museums?

LSM: To the museums where the architectural pieces from Greece and Asia Minor were on exhibit--Berlin, Munich and Vienna. And I was staying in a little pension in Vienna, the keeper of which was very interested. I was getting desperate that I couldn't find anything like this. Well, she told me about

an area of Vienna near one of the polytechnic schools--I'd been going round the university areas. She said, "Go over there. They sell all sorts of little instruments." So I went along, one after the other. Got to one tiny little shop where there was an elderly man. I began to describe to him-- "ein moment, ein moment Fraulein. Last night, at home, I was looking over various things that had come in the mail. I thought this was something strange I had never seen before. It sounds to me, it could be. You come back tomorrow." I could hardly wait for tomorrow to come and go back, and as I started down the street, way away, I could see him standing out in front of the shop. He saw me coming, he waved frantically, and as I arrived, here he was waving the advertisement. It was indeed it! It was a French patent, but it was exactly the same. It was the Maco template. That was the name of the British firm. It was originally a British instrument. This, that they were offering, was far superior to what Dick had--just a little one this size [shows small dimension with hands]. I needed something much larger, and this was, in fact, 22 centimeters, just about encompasses most Greek mouldings--when I got over into Roman and Etruscan things, it was something else again.

Labalme: And you have that here?

LSM: Yes. I'll show it to you later. So, with that I set out, then going first with the School group up to Delphi, thinking that was a very good way to start to get a great many of all periods with some more or less fixed dates to start with. Then I went around to many other sites, as long as the weather held and worked in Athens itself through the winter in the bad weather. But long before that, even by the time I got back from my first trip and they'd offered me--it's hard to believe now there was a room in Gennadeion with nothing in it, but there was at that time, it being relatively new, and they let me have that room.

Labalme: This is the Library, right?

LSM: Yes, I just laid everything out on the floor. Instantly, one or two fixed pieces, I saw the development! I saw there was indeed a development in all these different forms, and I realized instantly then that it was worthwhile, that there was a logical development just as I knew there had to be. If there was a development in profiles of pottery as I had learned, and in sculptural style and in proportions of architecture, there must be in these proportions of these mouldings as indeed there proved to be.

Labalme: What excitement!

LSM: Well, I didn't mean to make that long a story of it, but that was it and from then on I realized that it was worth doing, and I kept on moving just as fast as I could, keeping

Rhys abreast of what I was finding, and he was very keen about it and then by spring he called me over and said, "Now, see here, what have you done and what have you left to do?" I said, "I need to get to the islands--I thought I could still do the islands in the time I had left--and then I want to go home via Berlin and the British Museum, get the Asia Minor things that were in those museums in order to have some of them which of course were important." And he said, "What are you going to do next year?" I said, "I don't know, but at least I'll go on with what I have and try to do something with it." "Well," he said, "I'll make a symphonia with you. If you will go to Asia Minor this spring, I'll bring you back another year." Well that wasn't very difficult to accept!

Labalme: Why did he say a symphonia?

LSM: An agreement. Yes. He said, "You know what you're getting in for?" Two people from the School, a Swede and a Dutchman, both big and hearty and far more elderly than I, had just come back from an attempt to visit the sites of Asia Minor and had a horrible time. They were full of the most awful tales--the troubles to get about and--

Labalme: Political problems or physical problems?

LSM: Physical problems and also just lack of ability to get at the things.

Labalme: Transportation?

LSM: And they'd had trouble with the local Turkish authorities who didn't want them to touch things and so on. And he said, "In the face of that, you're willing to tackle it?" And I said, "Of course I am." "Well," he said, "I thought you would. And so I told Prent, when he wrote to say he would renew your fellowship, that I thought you would, and I know you have something very significant now, but you've got to add the Asia Minor material, not only to carry it into the Hellenistic period, which you must do, but to round it out generally. Your conclusions can't carry the weight they should unless you've covered all the significant geographical portions of ancient classical Greece. So, I said, "Sure, I'll try it." And I did, and he said, "I can give you a letter to Schede in Istanbul and that's the best I can do." Schede was the first secretary, as the Germans call it, rather Director, of the branch of their archaeological institute in Istanbul. Well, I went, taking a couple of younger students along with me, actually, first-year people that year, and Schede with all the graciousness and hospitality said, "Oh yes, our houses are on the sites. Here are the keys. My secretary will bring you the bedding. I suggest that you take along some kerosene. You will find little primus stoves in each place which you can use to make your meals and just bring the keys and the soiled bedding

back to me when you are through." This was international cooperation, scholarly.

Labalme: I'm not sure who Schede is.

LSM: Martin Schede. He was the first secretary of the German Institute in Istanbul at the time. I meanwhile had written to Bruno Keil in Vienna. (The Austrians had worked in Ephesus, and I had to get to Ephesus) to ask his permission. He wrote back most generously enclosing a jaggedly-cut half of his visiting card, saying "Take this to our house. You are welcome to use it as long as you like." It was the old Homeric method! He sent the other piece to the custodian of the house. Duly, when I arrived in Ephesus, very solemnly the guard, from out of his vestments, pulled it out, put it together with mine, beamed and threw his arms around me and welcomed me. I had the work in Ephesus. It's been a great privilege, really, to have lived in the years I have, because I did know Greece and Asia Minor in a stage that was still so close to antiquity and I like to think, therefore, that in trying to pass it on to students and groups that I've talked to since, it's something that students nowadays with all the will in the world can no longer get because life has changed.

END OF SIDE ONE, CASSETTE ONE

SIDE TWO, CASSETTE ONE

[Unrecorded talk about the number of details in the above account]

Labalme: Bryn Mawr will also love the details.

LSM: It's the thing I often tell Pat McPherson. I owe everything I've been since 1923 to Bryn Mawr.

Labalme: Was it '23 that you first went out?

LSM: No, '29. I was the class of '27. I stayed doing graduate work the next two years and went out to Greece in the fall of '29, and was a first-year student there along with Homer [Thompson]. We arrived on the same ship, peering in the early morning light for the Acropolis, and we've been such close friends and almost like brother and sister ever since. Then, I stayed on until '34, in Greece, came back and came home here for the fall, then went up--Edith Hall Dohan had become a close friend. I neglected to say in the years that she was--in the senior year when she was first teaching us there, knowing that I was going to take the Athenian examination--in those days, one of them was modern Greek. Well, anybody sitting in an American college or university never having seen modern Greece was pretty much at a loss competing with the people who were in Athens and who knew their modern Greek. We might do well in the other subjects, but that one is going to drag us down in our overall average and Edith said, "Would you like me to teach you some?" So every Friday afternoon, I would walk all the way over to the

Pig 'n Whistle--remember?--and take it into 69th Street, take the 69th Street train out to Media, where she would meet me, drive me out to her home in Hamanasset, talking Greek all the way, until I gradually picked it up. She'd keep pointing at things at the side of the road for me to guess which it was that went with that particular word.

Labalme: Where had she learned it--in Greece itself?

LSM: She had been there in Greece digging in 1908, '10, '12, digging with Seager. It was still as close to her as when she had had it. She spoke very easily. So I arrived with a little knowledge of the modern Greek.

Labalme: That was a great help. I know then that there are very interesting years at Mt. Holyoke, but let's move on down a bit to your first acquaintanceship with the Institute, if that doesn't skip too much.

LSM: No, I'll just skip to the point of saying that once the work there in Greece, of the mouldings, the work in the islands and Asia Minor was done, the first thing I did when I came back to the States in 1934 was to take the subway up to Columbia with my folio of drawings and show them to William Dinsmoor. He was tremendously impressed because, of course, he was Greek architecture in those days, and the following years, then, he said, "But you've got to do something in west Greece." I said, "I don't know--" He had at that point a very low opinion of west Greek architecture, he said

he didn't know whether there'd be much worth doing, but we've got to see what the connection is. I said that I'd love to, but how? Someone else's ill fortune was my good fortune. When one of the Academy fellows fell ill and had to be sent home, (there were two-year fellowships in those days at the American Academy in Rome), they asked the Trustees not to have a whole new competition, but did anybody have anybody to suggest and William Dinsmoor--bless his heart--said, yes, I'd like to send Lucy Shoe over there to look at those big mouldings in south Italy and Sicily. So that's what sent me to Rome and they kindly offered me a second year but at the same time one of the very few existing positions came vacant with Caroline Galt's death (she was at Mt. Holyoke), and I had to take it and give up the extra year in Rome. So I did. I taught the kind of schedule there that never allowed me to get at my work. Homer Thompson was appointed to the Institute in '47. In January of '48, He and D[orothy] begged me to come down and spend a long weekend with them between terms at Holyoke, so I could, and he said, "I'm now supposed to bring some people here to work with me. I want you to come and get your Italian, Sicilian mouldings done." So that's what brought me to the Institute. I asked for leave and got it. Homer brought me as an annual member in '48.

Labalme: That was your first year?

LSM: Yes, '48-'49. And it was just bliss. I wanted to say, that for one who had been teaching then since 1936, fifteen hours a week, heavy committee work, graduate work as well, to come and have no commitment but to do that work in an atmosphere of nothing but calm and peace and all the library facilities I could want--it was the rare thing that Hetty didn't have in her library, because she still had her wonderful library up in her office then, which had many of the early volumes which are not in the main Institute library. So I didn't need to have to go down to McCormick for those things--it was just bliss.

Labalme: In all that middle period, from 1934--you came back, no, 1937 you started at Holyoke?

LSM: Yes, because I'd gone to Rome.

Labalme: So from '37 to '48 you really hadn't had--that's eleven years? But you'd been able to do a little bit more on the--

LSM: I had bought a piece of plywood and then a piece of lighter wood--that I could handle more easily, the size of my single bed which I kept under the bed. And if I had fifteen minutes, I'd pull that out and put it up on the bed and juggle my drawings among them. And then I'd have to get ready for the next day or I'd be dead tired and I'd put the lid on, so to speak, stick it under the bed again, so that it was [at] a state in which, with some uninterrupted time and in an atmosphere of everyone keen about something new

and exciting and worthwhile that they felt they were doing-- it's hard to describe, but you know it.

Labalme: Of course. And you hadn't had a chance to publish any of this, so really nobody knew.

LSM: The original study had been published, but nothing about the west. And the American Academy had said they would gladly, eagerly publish it in their Memoirs when it was available, so I knew that the publication was assured if I could just get it in a state to do, and the Institute let me do that.

Labalme: Were you able to do that in one year?

LSM: Oh yes. Homer sometimes says that he thought it was remarkable that I did. Not many people who come accomplish quite so much in the year. Well, I said, I think it was because it was just such a--it was paradise to me! Not that I hadn't loved my teaching--don't misunderstand that, I loved every bit of it. When I gave it up later I missed it, but I like to think I have also some sense of a scholar, and it had been a great grief to me that here I had had the support to do this piece of work and I hadn't been able to finish it.

Labalme: Very frustrating. Do you remember other people of that first year?

LSM: Mary White was there, from Toronto. She was working on her archaic Greek history, and she, too, from a very heavy

teaching schedule she had at Trinity College just gloried in the atmosphere.

Labalme: There must have been quite a group of classicists there.

The Meritts were there, the Thompsons and Hetty Goldman.

LSM: Yes. That was when I first came to know Hetty, actually.

Labalme: Did you have any sense of anything to do with those historians who were not classicists, because by then there were quite a few who were in other fields? Was there any sort of contact?

LSM: There hadn't yet come--Cherniss was the philosopher--he came first that year, and it was somewhat later that Kantorowicz came, he wasn't yet there. Of course Gilbert wasn't there, and it was much much later that George Kennan came. I knew them all much later when I went back.

Labalme: Ed Earle was there.

LSM: Yes, I knew he was there as a member of the Faculty. He wasn't about very much as far as I was concerned. Now he may have been, but no, we did not have much contact with him.

Labalme: Did you have the Classical Seminar that year?

LSM: No, we still had the tradition that I learned from Ben was the fundamental one which Flexner had established, that in Ben's words, or as close to them as I can get, we were to come and be absolutely not responsible to anybody for anything. [Scholars] were free to spend their time as they

would. They'd been selected because of confidence in their scholarly quality and that they would use this leisure simply to do what nothing else had allowed them to do. Just as I tried to suggest a few minutes ago, it seemed to me that [there were] no commitments of any kind, and the reporting of what you were doing came later, because--of course Flexner had left by this time, Aydelotte was the Director--he had carried on that same tradition. Now I had the impression--this is only an impression--I have no facts to back it up that before this time even, there had grown up in the mathematical school, much more of a tradition of meeting together, whether as formally as a seminar or not, one got the impression as one talked to the mathematicians that they constantly met together and shared what they were doing. Now of course, we met together, but completely informally. We sat around that round table at lunch together, and had always, we quite regularly, most of us went--we were housed over in Building A anyway--we went back after lunch down into what I always referred to as the frigidarium and they said, "You old Roman!", but that large room which I understand was sunk below the level of the rest of the floor to accommodate Herzfeld's Persian cabinets, wasn't that so?

Labalme: I don't know. I'm not sure where you're thinking of, now.

LSM: Homer's big room in Building A. We understood that had been sunk to accommodate the height of the cabinets which he had, because that of course had been built to his [Herzfeld's] specifications, even as Building B had been built to Ben's and Hetty's specifications. So we would come back, and instead of going directly to our own rooms, we'd sit around that big table that's still there in his room. Homer always set out on that table everything that came in the mail new, and we picked up this catalogue, or that book or the other, and we would sit there ten or fifteen minutes, chatting about [them]--he would say whether he'd had time to look at it yet or we'd--so there was a great deal of this informal sharing with each other. We would constantly talk to each other of what we were doing but nothing formally at all, and nothing that you had to do. But it grew out of what we [were doing] and the atmosphere that Homer created and Dorothy there--oh we might come back from tea [and] if we'd begun to discuss something at tea we might sit around that table and do it before we went back to our own rooms.

Labalme: They still serve tea in the Common Room.

LSM: Yes, and we always went for our tea, of course.

Labalme: What about dinner? Did they serve dinner in those days?

LSM: Not at first, no, not when I was first there, just lunch. I can't remember when--

Labalme: Where did you live?

LSM: Do you know where--I guess it's still there--Davidson's Grocery Store?

Labalme: It's moved, but I know where it used to be.

LSM: Well, that three-storey building where it used to be--Mary White and I had the second floor apartment there.

Labalme: Did the Institute arrange for you to have these apartments or did you have to fend for yourself?

LSM: I can't remember whether it was the Institute officially or whether it was Homer personally. I really can't say.

Labalme: Somebody took care of you.

LSM: Somebody had arranged it for us when we arrived. We didn't have to do it.

Labalme: How did you get back and forth?

LSM: I had my car.

Labalme: So you could drive.

LSM: Mary sometimes used--because she used the Firestone Library more than I did. There was the station wagon, and Jessie, the one to whom I referred the other day. Jessie drove the station wagon in to get the mail and so you could come in with Jessie when she got the mail and then she came again in the afternoon I think. There wasn't as elaborate a schedule as later, but you could always come in with her.

Incidentally, that reminds me of another little tale I wanted to tell you. I can't be sure whether it was that year or maybe one of the first years that I came back, but

it was very early on in my days there. We had gotten into the station wagon to go to do something in McCormick--there were one or two others, but there was space otherwise and we got started off, and Einstein and Gödel were walking along the main road not right up through the center past the old tree as they normally did, so Jessie stopped and said, "Would you like to ride?" And Einstein said, "No thank you. I prefer to walk." At which Gödel said, "Oh, but Miss Dukas is in favor that you should ride!" And Einstein smiled and said, "Oh well, if so, then I ride," and duly got in. And we dropped him off at his house.

Labalme: Why was Miss Dukas in favor of his riding, do you think?

LSM: Well, maybe he was a little tired, or I don't know. But, at any rate, we came to know her very well later, too. She used to sit with us a great deal at the historical round table for lunch, and she laughed when I told her that. She said "Yes, I sometimes did think he oughtn't to walk home, and so I would tell Gödel and home he would come" and--in fact I asked her because this tale had come around mixed--and so she told me the story about Einstein and the painter--do you know that one?

Labalme: No.

LSM: There was some painting needed to be done in the back stairway--I think there'd been a leak or something of the sort, and [because she was] very anxious not to disturb

Einstein by having anything going on around the house she had arranged with this young man to come at a time when she thought that he was safely out for a fixed time. But he [Einstein] came home, however, earlier and rather than being disturbed he was interested to see what was going on. And he went out--at this point the young man was very precariously perched on a bit of scaffolding across the stairway, reaching up. Einstein looked up at him and said, "Oh, I envy you that dexterity with your hands." At which, she said, the young man nearly fell off the scaffolding. Well Einstein went off a way and the young man came down rather breathless and he said, "Gosh, that man envies me! Why did he say it?" And she said, I had to explain to him that yes, of course he meant it, that he does indeed have a very great respect for those with skills that he does not have, and even though he plays the violin, and not at all badly, that's the one dexterity with his hands that he has and he's conscious of not being able to do many mechanical things and he quite honestly meant that the very skillful way in which he was wielding this brush he envied--but he nearly knocked the poor young painter off the scaffolding!

Labalme: That is funny. Do you have any sense of the administration from that early period at the Institute? When I talked to Ben, I had the sense that to him the administration was invisible--this was after the time of Flexner.

LSM: He has said that always. Yes, it was part of what I've just said. Flexner's notion was that you should be completely without responsibility. Therefore to bring you to a lot of faculty or committee meetings and so on was just against that principle. He knew all too well how beset the faculty members are in institutions with a lot of these meetings. And that again was one of the freedoms that he wished to give them. It was from that point of view--I do not believe those who say he wanted to handle it very autocratically--not at all. Flexner's point of view was to give the faculty member all the freedom and opportunity and advantages to do the best possible academic work.

Labalme: And you yourself, as a visiting member, had naturally nothing to do with Aydelotte.

LSM: Absolutely nothing at all. From what I've gathered from Ben, Aydelotte kept a status quo. He simply carried on as best he could Flexner's atmosphere and general method of management with which he agreed. He put a great deal of his own attention of course on his Rhodes scholar business. His Rhodes scholar secretary had one of the rooms in Lowe's rooms up above us, in building A.

Labalme: Was he managing the Rhodes scholarship? What was his connection?

LSM: He was the--well I don't know what the proper term was--was it Secretary of the whole business? He handled all the

applications and all the business that had to do with it through this very lovely lady who lived in Swarthmore also and who came over every day and held her office there so she was close to consult with him on all the points. I'm sorry to say I've forgotten her name--she was a lovely person.<sup>1</sup>

Labalme: Well, then, you were away for the next few years.

LSM: The next year, just, because in February of that year Frank Brown of the Academy had come back from Syria and was the Director-in-Charge of the classical section of the Academy. Chester Aldrich was--no Chester was no longer there. Laurence Roberts was Director then. But Frank came over for the Christmas meetings of the Archaeological Institute, and he said to me there, "I want you to come back to Rome and see what you can do with the Etruscans and republican Romans." And I said, "Oh Frank" (whom I'd known from my early days back in Athens), nothing I'd love more, but either it is absolutely impossible, because it was all I could do to get this present leave after twelve years or else it's my only salvation, because I know they're teetering in Mt. Holyoke as to whether to keep archaeology as a viable subject in a liberal arts college. Because of the numbers. They were counting numbers. And he said, "How soon can you find out?" "Well," I said, "I'll try." He

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Howard Jenkins.

said, "Please find out. I'm leaving in two weeks. Try to find out in the next two weeks, because if you can come I want definitely to ask for you as one of the resident fellows." By this time they had the different kinds of fellows from what we'd had before, you know. I'd be one of the older resident fellows. He said, "I'd like you to come do that and then take you to Cosa in the spring with me." So I called up our Dean, Harriet Allyn, at Mt. Holyoke, and she said, "I don't know what he's thinking right now, but come up and talk to him." "He" was always the president. So I made an appointment and took the train and went up, and, as I say Mr. [Roswell G.] Ham and I had always got on very well because I came to Mt. Holyoke when he came new, and he turned to the people without any of the background of the controversy to work on his committees with him and so on and we'd always gotten on very nicely. Well, he quite bowled me over by saying, "Well you know, Miss Shoe, I came here thirteen years ago not believing that archaeology should be in our curriculum at all," and he said "You've convinced me for this long, but I think the time has come now that I can't justify small classes." They weren't as small as some of the classical ones, but of course he didn't dare touch Greek and Latin. "But," he said, "we want you. I want you to stay. There'll always be a place for you. I told Harriet the other day I'd like you for my dean." I

said, "Mr. Ham, I am an archaeologist--classical." Here in Austin we've learned to call ourselves classical archaeologists so we're well identified. But there one could say archaeologist. I said, "I put thirty years of my life on it because I believe in it as part of the classical tradition, which I do believe firmly is a part of our liberal arts tradition. I wish to spend my life on it. I don't want any boondoggling arrangements made for me. Either keep me here as a teacher of archaeology or tell me, and I go." "No, no, no, we mustn't have you go, we mustn't have you go." I said, "I repeat: if you cannot keep me teaching archaeology, it's all right. I go." Well, he thought they really couldn't. I said, "That's all right. That's my answer to my present position. I'll go to the Academy in Rome." Well he hadn't known--then he got all upset because it would have been kudos for Mt. Holyoke. I said, "No, I will go." He said, "Let me keep you on our faculty with your rank for one more year, without salary but on our books." "That," I said, "I will be happy to do." So I went back over to see Harriet Allyn and told her and she said "You go pick up that phone and call the Academy office this instant and tell them you're going to Rome." So to Rome I went and did the Etruscan and republican Roman things which I'd already begun when I was there before in the time I had--whenever I got to some of the republican sites, I

made the drawings. So I did work at that and did the little things that were expected of the resident fellow to help the Director. Frank and I worked very very happily together and then, it was in the course of that year that they wrote over and asked, Louis Lord wrote and asked whether I would consider taking on a new position for the School in Athens as editor, which would involve simply building up a publication unit of our own, no longer paying the other university presses but doing everything from reading the manuscripts to accepting them to editing them to producing them to selling them to wrapping them up and putting them in the mail. And with one secretary I did that for twenty-three years.

Labalme: I know you did. Extraordinary.

LSM: We built up, in that time, the School as a publication unit.

Labalme: I wanted to ask whether there had been a publication before.

LSM: There had been lots of publications, run by a committee of the Managing Committee, all volunteer. For many years there was Harold Fowler of Western Reserve and then George Chase of Harvard. George Chase published my first profiles--and then Ben. This all came at Ben's suggestion, because he realized he could no longer be responsible for the publication of the new material. He must himself study and publish and direct everything else, because the first publications of the Agora were now beginning to be ready,

the final publications as well as more of Corinth and more of the Gennadeion and more of many things. And he talked to Louis Lord, the chairman of the Managing Committee and said, "See here, what we need is another staff member of the School"--they ranked me along with the professor in Athens--"who would establish our own publication office--be a paid staff member and just simply set up the whole publication"--because by this time the Harvard press which had acted as the press was wanting more and more percentage on the business--why not do it ourselves, in other words.

Labalme: Had there been any connection of the School with the Institute?

LSM: That's the other thing I wanted to say. It was part of Ben's plan, because I had been a member of the Institute before, they had evidently liked what I had done in that year and because here I had another lot of material to complete, to work on and presumably would continue to do some other work on my own, Dr. Oppenheimer agreed and evidently the School of Historical Studies, as it had changed its name to, that whatever I did both of my own research--the publication of it--and the very editing of all this Agora material--and this comes back again to the picture of the Agora and the Institute that I want to pick up on again in a minute--were considered worthy works, at least for an annual membership, and it was on that condition

that I was to be a member of the Institute in my own right, though without stipend while I was also working full time for the American School. The Institute would not only give me a secretary and physical space, but what about the already existing stock? Well, when Fuld Hall was built, evidently, and they were all asked what they would like, neither Lowe nor Herzfeld asked for anything more than the particular rooms they had over there in Building A, but Ben had said he wanted a basement to store things. There would be various things to be stored. Hetty agreed that she would have things she wanted to store. That's the reason there's a basement in building B, and that's the only basement there was when they started. It's Ben again. So Ben said, "I will turn over--" He talked to Hetty and they said yes. "We're only using about a third of the available space-- we'll give the rest of the space to the Publications Committee" and all of this, which is of course a very considerable contribution, the space for the three of us, the stock and me and my secretary, would be in lieu of a monetary contribution to the School which the Institute previously had been making as a member. You see, the supporting institutions contributed \$500 a year to the School [in Athens]. It began with \$250, I believe, but I think it had been \$500 by then. The rental of that much space anywhere else would have cost a great deal more, so

that the contribution of the Institute in that respect has always been a very, very great one.

Labalme: I think the [monetary] contribution began when Ben came to the Institute because before he came, I think, he raised with Flexner the question of Institute support.

LSM: I would imagine so.

Labalme: So that this now was in lieu of that.

LSM: I don't know whether he finally did tell you, but I'll be as brief as I can in saying that Flexner paid a visit to Athens and Bert Hodge Hill showed him about and showed him the area of central Athens where the Agora was, and he said, "The Greek government is anxious to have this area investigated"-already it was sort of the beginnings of the thought that they were tearing down some little old buildings, might be building some things higher and therefore with deeper foundations, they ought to make some effort to excavate the area properly. The Greek government was anxious to have some one of the foreign schools take this on, and he, Bert Hodge Hill, wished that the Americans could, but of course they never had any money--it was \$250 at first, the contribution of about 40 to 50 institutions--it didn't take anybody very far. So they were thinking they might have a group of the foreign schools and divide it up in sections. According to Ben, Flexner said, "Impossible. It will never work." Did he tell you this?

Labalme: He mentioned it. But it wasn't so clear. He didn't want the French to do this and the Italians to do that.

LSM: He said, "You'll never be able to bring it together. It's got to be under one school." And Bert Hodge Hill said, "I quite agree. But how? Where are we going to get the backing for it?" And Flexner said nothing then, but he came back and went right to Raymond Fosdick.

Labalme: To whom?

LSM: Raymond Fosdick. That was Harry Fosdick's brother, wasn't he? He was one of the--just what the name of his position was in the Rockefeller orbit I'm not certain, but he had the close ear of Mr. Rockefeller. And he went straight to Mr. Rockefeller with it. This interested Mr. Rockefeller immediately and he made, of course, the famous anonymous gift which remained anonymous for many years. No one but Flexner and Ben and one or two others knew that it was John D. Rockefeller personally, not the Foundation. It was a personal interest and Raymond Fosdick shared Flexner's interest in it, but this is something--I brought it out some in my history of the School. It's the first time it's anywhere in print, because it's very little known. I, for one, think it's one of the very great things Abraham Flexner did and that he ought to have the credit for it. People ought to know. It finally came out [that the donor was]

John D. Rockefeller, yes, but who was behind John D. Rockefeller? Abraham Flexner.

Labalme: He had a genius, didn't he, for--

LSM: He did. He saw instantly with that administrative skill that it had to be one group and his caring for American classical scholarship, he wanted it to come, so that when, then, the gift was made and the organization begun and Theodore Leslie Shear made the Director, he appointed two fellows first to come out and have some training in excavation, in his own excavation at Corinth the first year, and they were Homer Thompson and Fred Waage who came. Shear privately financed a part of the excavation at Corinth, the North cemetery, where Homer and Fred Waage got their first field training. Then there was the next year--that was '29-'30--it was the next year, the spring of '31 that they began actually digging in the Agora. So you see that the chronology of the Institute and the Agora are very close there.

CASSETTE ONE, SIDE TWO ENDS [about counter 251]

CASSETTE TWO, SIDE ONE [marked Lucy Shoe Meritt 3]

LSM: So then as members of the first Faculty of the Institute were being appointed, naturally Flexner's interest in

classical things, first of all, made him see that one of the very significant fields in classical study at that moment-- and that was the kind of thing that he hoped the Institute would encourage, you see--would be this excavation and the study of it. Again, Flexner was the kind of scholar that there are not sufficient of. As Rhys used to say, excavation without publication is destruction. The excavation is the tip of the iceberg. You've got then to study it and publish it. Flexner saw that he'd started through Rockefeller the digging in the ground but he'd got to provide the space for the study of this material and one of the fields that he knew was going to be particularly--he felt--rich and must be studied was inscriptions. And here was this young man that he knew, who already was working on some very significant parts of Greek history in inscription, and he talked to Charles Morey in Princeton who said, here's a man you want, he's just opening new fields in all directions.

Labalme: Morey knew Ben already?

LSM: Yes, he knew of his work. Ben had taken his doctorate at Princeton.

Labalme: I see. And so he followed him--

LSM: He followed him a bit, even though he'd taken it not in the fine arts, as Morey was. He'd taken it with Capps in Classics. But everybody knew everybody in those days.

Labalme: And Ben at this time was at Johns Hopkins?

LSM: Yes, and he was working on the Tribute Lists and Flexner was seeing what he was doing with that. He wanted that to go on and I think he probably suspected that Ben would have something to do with the material in the Agora. Well, the minute Shear was appointed, he, then, allotted the study of various fields to various scholars, giving Ben responsibility for all the epigraphy. So there was Ben with that assignment and the Tribute Lists that he was already well on the way with, here were these two big historical bodies of material, and the Institute as Flexner envisaged it was the ideal place to set that man down and give him the freedom to do it. Not only the freedom of time by himself, but the opportunity to bring other young men to work with him, which was what Flexner cared about also. And that's the reason Ben built up what came to be known internationally really as the Meritt, the Princeton school, because they all came to work with him and learn his methods. It was an informal thing but the influence went all over the world by the young people that he would meet here and there and he would bring, because although he was given the responsibility by Shear for everything that came out of the Agora, epigraphical material, in spite of this controversy that we spoke of, some accused him of not sharing the material--in the first place, he had the

responsibility. It was given him by Shear and it was confirmed by Homer. It was his business to get that published, and if he didn't, the blame was on him, not on any of these other little people that might take things and not get them done. But when the controversy was at the hottest at one point, I sat down and went through the issues of Hesperia and my files, and I found that it was between forty and fifty people at that time, and there have been more since that had worked on the material.

Labalme: That he had really brought to the Institute for this purpose.

LSM: So one could hardly say that he had hung on to the material himself. On the other hand, even with all that he had given to anyone who was interested in this field, he would give inscriptions to them, he still had thousands--there were nearly seven thousand up to the time that he stopped being responsible for it--when others picked up with the change of command when Homer's directorship finished. So that's the picture.

Labalme: Through Homer's directorship he continued to be in charge of the epigraphy. And there were seven thousand bits?

LSM: Nearly seven thousand separate numbered inventory pieces. Now many of them were later found to go together, so there were not seven thousand separate texts in the end, but there were close to it.

Labalme: But the Tribute Lists and these inscriptions were connected, right? Some of the inscriptions dealt with the Tribute Lists?

LSM: Actually, some pieces of the Tribute Lists were found. They could be added to what had been studied and published earlier.

Labalme: Where did he find material about the Tribute Lists that was not in the inscriptions? You said he'd begun on that earlier.

LSM: He'd begun on it actually from the little pieces that were scattered here and there in the various museums, and of course there was some reference to the Athenian empire and the way in which it was financed in literature. But one had to fill that in from the actual pieces of stone that recorded what the payments were. There were references in the literature to the sending out the heralds to collect the money and so on, but here you got the actual confirmation of that in many cases. I don't know whether that makes it clear.

Labalme: Yes, it does.

LSM: I used to say to him, as his editor often, he'd bring his material in and I'd say, "Now Ben, you're writing for the convinced. You're not writing for the general public, no. But even the general classical public doesn't know what you're talking about here. Put in a little bit more." I

constantly made him do it. Because he knows it so well himself, you see, it was hard for him to realize that certain things wouldn't be clear. He'd say, "The very first article I wrote, Leicester Holland went over it, and he said, 'Cut it in half. You've talked too much.'" I said, "I thoroughly agree, and that's one of the virtues of your publications. There are no wasted words. But once in a while, you need not to waste but just to add a few more."

**Labalme:** Tell me about your own experience during those twenty-three years. Were you able to do your own work too?

**LSM:** Not very much. Again, I thought I was busy at Mt. Holyoke, but [at the Institute] I worked what I used to call twenty-five-hour days and eight-day weeks. I never left the office till after six, I always worked in the evening at home, and I worked over the weekends. That was the only way we could get the job done. I came home in the summers for a couple of months with my mother. Charlie Morgan, the wonderful chairman with whom I worked practically all the time because Louis Lord who established the position was retiring that very year, so I actually took over in 1950 with Charlie Morgan of Amherst and he and I and Ben who had been my predecessor just worked as a magnificent team getting the whole thing organized, and Ben and Homer and I worked as another team from the point of view of the Agora material. If you measure things in terms of time and getting things

out, getting the material available to other scholars which was the primary responsibility of an archaeologist, after all--what the Institute contributed to that, by letting the three of us be there within half-a-moment of each other. A point could be cleared up immediately that would have taken days by correspondence. Here and there in some circles, I may say, I'm afraid perhaps inspired by jealousy, there used to be a lot of criticism of all that Princeton clique that controlled everything. We didn't control. We just got the work done! And that's what Charlie Morgan used to say: "I don't care where you are, physically, Lucy, as long as the work gets done. You pick up and take it to Austin." Which I did. I sat in that front room through the summer where the breeze would come in on both sides and worked all day long.

Labalme: Your parents were here?

LSM: My mother was here. My father had died. My mother was alone, and I liked to be with her some of the year anyway, and then a little later she came up through the fall with me in Princeton and would be back here alone only a few months in the spring until I came later.

Labalme: Her parents were--?

LSM: From Philadelphia.

Labalme: What made her come to Austin?

LSM: My father was one of the earliest safety engineers in this country, and from that came to join the general idea of workmen's compensation when it first erupted in our lives, back in 1910-12, and so he was a member of the first states which had the law, as you probably know, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and later New Jersey. Those four states, the boards that administered the act constantly met every month and worked things out together and so on. My father was a member of the Massachusetts board until he was called back into service during the first World War, at the end of which, rather in the course of which he was badly injured and he left the government service and went back into the private insurance business, with General Accident in Philadelphia as safety engineer. Then he fell again, he was just getting a little discouraged with the Eastern climate when Governor Neff of Texas asked him to come down and talked to him about coming down to administer the workmen's compensation law in the State of Texas. The Legislature had passed it. Nobody down here had the slightest idea of what to do about it. Neff had looked at the names of the various people in the boards of Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, liked what he saw of my father, asked him to come. My father was always eager to advance the safety of us in any way he could, plus the fact he liked Austin right away. He left Philadelphia for that appointment. We took

him to the station on crutches. He said to me as we left the house, "Bring my cane along too." As the train pulled out of the station, he handed his crutches out of the window to me and arrived in Austin with a cane only. He came to see Governor Neff who liked him immediately and offered him the position and he telegraphed back, "I'm staying." That's what brought us to Texas in 1923.

Labalme: That's a nice story.

[Interruption]

Labalme: Now we can continue. I guess that explains why you and Ben retired here.

LSM: Two reasons, in answer to that. One was that although he had indeed as he and I both, I hope, have indicated, had had such happy and productive years for which we were so grateful, he recognized that there is a difference in retirement, and he thought that he would be happier to have most of the time--we'd planned to go back for visits, as we did--but he thought he would be happier away from the old setting, leaving it quite clear for others that came, without him around. The second reason was that my mother had died in December, 1969, and this house was sitting here, beckoning someone. So we thought, why not do that? So when we came back--she died the year that we were in Greece--the last of many times that Ben acted as annual professor at the School, and I had again picked up the publication office and

just transferred it to Athens--my secretary continuing the production and sales section there [at the Institute]--but I took the editorial section over, so we came back here in the early summer, June, when we came back to this country and looked things over. And then we came down in January, '71, and found this remarkable contractor who is himself a very skillful cabinet maker who would take on the bookshelves that we wanted added to the house and a few repairs. So then I came back in June of that year while they did these things, and that meant that we were ready then in '72, ready by December of '71. We sold the house in Princeton and moved down here just about Christmas time of '71. Ben went to teaching--they had immediately asked him to do a seminar--at the University here.

Labalme: Which gave you another academic environment.

LSM: And gave us the connection, very nice here, with full access to the Library and all the facilities of the University. I continued the work at the Institute until July of '72 and then carried the office again up to the Lake [Lake Ahmic, in Canada], as I had done for the past couple of years only, and then we drove home across Canada and down the Rockies, criss-crossing back and forth, and from September '72, we've been resident here except for the summers that we spent back up at the Lake, until this past summer. The following year, Ben continued to teach and they also asked me to do a

seminar in architecture in the department, for a couple of years.

Labalme: That must have been fun.

LSM: Then, from those positions as visiting professors, the department then decided that they kind of liked us to have some connection and they asked us--the University created a category, which they now use for many people in many departments, of visiting scholar which they have given us for life, very kindly, which gives us all the library and professorial privileges of the University, just asking us to be available. Our definition of "available" is that we have tea every afternoon. For several years we kept an office in the department and would be there certain hours for the graduate students and the faculty, but then it seemed better just to urge them, since we're not too far from the campus, to come in. The other members of the department and the graduate students--not all of them, some years more and some years less--but we keep very closely in touch with several of the department--Ingrid [Edlund] and Cynthia [W. Shelmerdine] and Joe Carter, the archaeologist, particularly. And our joint libraries--I haven't shown you yet Ben's reprint file which is very valuable. In the back room. Bryn Mawr apparently is going to be very happy to have that. It does contain some rather rare things that are not available here. So we make things available for the

students and members of the department as they come. I might tell you about one member, full professor now, who was associate professor at the time, whom at that time, a couple of years ago, we had not known as well. He's a very fine musician, gives little concerts in his own home. He has both a grand piano and a harpsichord, plays them both and he gathers others, for little baroque evenings, to which he invited us kindly, knowing we appreciated them. He called one day and said, might he come to see us? I said, certainly, we'd be delighted. He said, I want to know what you know about Gallienus in Athens in the Agora. Well, I said, right off-hand I don't know much but come on. Meantime, I think I had some recent manuscript of Homer's on the late period which I thought might have something in and I knew Ben had some materials. He came and we were sitting there. He began to ask Ben what a particular problem was and did he know anything about something--this was a field that he was just moving into from something else that was important in a literary way. I'd gone out to put the tea kettle on. I'll never forget the spectacle of this! This dignified, almost middle-aged young man came out and stood in the middle of that kitchen and just jumped up and down like a five-year old with glee.

Labalme: Because?

LSM: He'd asked a question and Ben had immediately said where's my copy of Agora 15. I had taken it in to him and he'd opened it up and found the inscription that gave him exactly the information he wanted to know!

Labalme: Isn't that marvelous!

LSM: I mention that not to blow Ben's horn, though it deserves to be blown. Quite that much doesn't always happen, but there have been some other times that I have a little information or idea or it seems something that they didn't happen to know that I could help fill in, so we try to think there was a little of the quid pro quo. It's a very great privilege for us, and pleasure, to keep up with the young people, because there are--this young man ever since always comes and talks his problems over with us. Sometimes we have, as I said, either a book or a thought or a memory that adds a little, and that's what scholarship is all about, and that's what, as we've been saying all afternoon, Bryn Mawr, the Institute, made it possible for us to do for the young people here. Now I think you ought to carry with you this sense, that we feel, Ben as a Faculty member all those wonderful years and I as a very grateful annual member for many years, feel that the tremendous power, I might say, of the atmosphere that we had at the Institute to encourage and to increase and help progress any thoughts or abilities we had of our own. This--given us by the Institute--is

something that we feel we want to carry on to others and that we like to think that that is the idea that Mrs. Fuld, Mr. Bamberger and certainly Abraham Flexner had in founding the Institute. We think that's the kind of thing they had in mind. They didn't want it just to be a wonderful ivory tower for the scholar to get on with his work, but for it to carry on to others the message of something worthwhile in scholarship.

Labalme: That's right, and in that sense there's no real division between an elite group working at the Institute and the rest of scholarship.

LSM: No, not at all.

Labalme: It's a continuous two-way street.

LSM: Exactly. That's the reason, in a sense, by leaving Princeton and coming here, we feel we haven't abandoned the Institute, but maybe we're continuing a little bit of what the Institute wanted us to do from the years that we were there.

Labalme: While you were there, did you sense that the Schools were all separate creatures, that is, the Mathematics School and the--

LSM: More so than we might have wished. I had, of course, had the comparable experience of the Academy in Rome, especially having known it in both the pre-war and the post-war years which were two totally different establishments.

Labalme: Why is that?

LSM: The pre-war Academy, of course, was chiefly, as you know the history of the Academy, the Academy itself and the School of Classical Studies, two completely separate entities at opposite ends of town having absolutely nothing to do with each other. Then comes the lady from Philadelphia, owning the lovely Farnesina villa on the Janiculum and leaving it, to the horror of her relatives, to the American Academy in Rome on condition that the two groups from her country join.

Labalme: Was that a good idea, do you think?

LSM: I do. George Mead of McKim, Meade and White and one of the founders of the Academy felt so, and many of the classical people did too, but though they came together there, on the lovely Genoese palazzo that was built across the street from the Farnesina, with just the Director and some of the musicians in their studios down below, they remained pretty much apart on one ground in particular. The Fine Arts fellowships, the Prix de Rome, was available only to men-- whereas from the beginning the classical fellows admitted women, and also admitted students on other fellowships who were not fellows of the Academy. They came and joined the groups. There was also the other difference, that the separate arts, the artists went about their own business, and although they did play together and work together a little bit, again it was informally, whereas the classical

people all joined and went on trips together and did things around Rome together and so on. A little more formally. So there was a distinction that way. And of course, there was a very strict distinction with the men and women. The women of the classical group weren't admitted to the main part of the Academy. We never set foot in the main parts and we were not allowed to eat in the dining room with the other fellows. We ate in the butler's pantry, and so on. After the war, when the fellowships were opened to men and women in all fields, they all came and lived there in the Academy together, there was--well there's nothing like sitting down at the big long table all together. I know in my own case, I was an inveterate walker all over Rome--I used to be known as that woman of the churches in the dark, because I might be walking back to the Academy from wherever I'd been, the museum or what not, but I never went by a church without going in, and sometimes the vesper services were on, and I would come back for dinner and talk about this, that or the other and some of these fellows--even though they might be architectural fellows--hadn't thought to go into all these churches. Well, they began to get a little interested. Before long, we were all getting along very nicely indeed. There was much more give and take between--still wasn't quite as much as was ideal perhaps--but there was growing, when I was back the second time, far more between the groups

to the mutual benefit of all. They couldn't speak all of each other's language but they could all speak some of each other's language--let's put it that way.

Labalme: But don't you think that's easier between, say, architects and landscape gardeners and classicists than it is--

LSM: Between mathematicians and historians. Yes. Certainly. And I think there could never be in the Institute--Ben can speak to this because he after all knows more of the Faculty members who naturally knew each other better than we members did, but I still think that there are again grounds for some language, and one of those grounds--and that began to come in some of the years that I was there--was music. Because many of the mathematicians are musicians, as you know. When they began to get little groups of musicians together and play little concerts, that is, after all, a universal language.

Labalme: Yes! This is members and Faculty themselves playing the instruments?

LSM: Yes. I personally felt that those little get-togethers were much more profitable than the occasional speaking, in seminars, on their own work to each other. Sometimes, sometimes they were very worthwhile--I suppose I shouldn't question it, but--

Labalme: Many times they were not?

- LSM: I think Ben wouldn't mind my quoting his saying several times he probably could have put those two hours to better use back in his own study. But he had thought that he ought to turn up because it was Mr. X, Y or Z from University A, B or C.
- Labalme: Lucy, going back to what you just mentioned about women at the Academy, tell me how you felt as a woman at the Institute, because there wasn't a great number of women.
- LSM: No, of course Hetty was the only Faculty member.
- Labalme: Did you feel any kind of isolation?
- LSM: I must say, and this is perhaps difficult for many women today to understand, that I have never in any of my career, and I have been in many positions much of the time when I was the lone or one of very few women, I have never felt discriminated against in the least. I have never felt that I was treated any differently from what I was worth. That's putting it perhaps too bluntly, but that first year at the Academy, there was one other woman, there was one other classical woman alone, we got on perfectly with not only the other classical fellows who were men but, in spite of what I said a few moments ago, we got to know, somehow just by meeting them around the cortile and the fact of being in the Library together, we'd talk, I guess I just have a habit of kind of blurting out something exciting I'd seen that day. I'd come back through the cortile, and I'd meet somebody and

I'd say, "Oh, I've just been doing this," and I did that not thinking whether this was man woman black white green purple two feet or four! I mean I just did it! And I think from that, they took me just for what I was, and I took them for what they were. I remember so well the first air raid drill, along in the spring that year. Sirens went off. I was standing down in the cortile.

Labalme: Which year are we now?

LSM: This is '36. This is significant, when you think of the dangers. Immediately the fellow I was talking to said, "Oh, let's go to the roof to see what we can see." And I just turned and said, "All right, tell me about it." And he looked back at me and said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I can't come up there." And he said, "Oh nonsense," and he came rushing back down the stairs, took me by the arm and brought me right up straight onto the roof.

Labalme: On forbidden territory.

LSM: Well, you see the thing was, you could always bring guests. They could bring all the lady guests they wanted into the studios, those artists, but their own fellows couldn't come up. So I was coming as his guest, you see. We went all the way up on the roof and watched things rushing here, there and everywhere. Then along at the beginning of the summer, I had been off in Greece for a couple of weeks. By that time, as was customary, the tables had been moved out of the

dining room into the cortile for the meals. And there was a long table for the men, but our little table in the butler's pantry hadn't been moved out. So I went to go to lunch that day and I didn't see it so I just stood apart and I waited till the butler came and I said, "Gianni, where's my table? Please bring it out so I can sit down." He began an avalanche of apology and a couple of the architects and a landscape architect at the end of the table heard this and they said "Oh, come and join us! Come and join us!" They turned to him [Gianni] and said "Don't bother to bring out that table. Let her sit with us the rest of the time." ~~And~~

I did, for ~~that meal~~. But by evening my table had been brought out to the adjoining side of the cortile. ~~see enclosed sheet~~

Labalme: Good! Well now, in terms of the Institute, did you feel any kind of sense there that there were so few women members--it didn't matter?

LSM: It didn't matter in the least. It never occurred to me, it really never occurred to me.

Labalme: Or that there was only Hetty Goldman on the Faculty, because in these days people remark on that. One woman on the Faculty then, we have one other now!

LSM: Well, I suppose that goes back to the generation at Bryn Mawr that I belong to. My reaction was--it was wonderful that she was there, not wonderful that there weren't more! I just thought it was grand that she was there. It never occurred to me to think of it otherwise. As I said, that

On page 61

where indicated please add

for that meal. But by evening Gianni had brought my table out to the adjoining side of the cortile, around the corner from the fellows' long table.

I had hardly taken my place (the only one set) at my table when one of the fine arts fellows picked up his place setting and moved over to join me at the little square table. From then on for the rest of the year I never sat alone there. One or two of the men, sometimes my classical colleagues but usually some of the art fellows, joined me as the spirit struck them.

may sound strange to you, but this is absolutely true. As far as the School is concerned, I worked those twenty-four years with a committee that never had another woman on it. It changed constantly, but never had another woman on it.

Labalme: This is the Managing Committee of the American School [in Athens]?

LSM: The Publications Committee of the Managing Committee. And it never occurred to me! We just all got on beautifully.

Labalme: There was just the work to be done.

LSM: The work to be done. I don't know how they felt--you can ask Ben--but I didn't feel any differently. We just got the work done. I chaired the Committee. They didn't seem to--I never had any feeling that they minded it. They seemed to like it as far as I could tell.

Labalme: Do you think that that's partly a result of having gone to a college like Bryn Mawr where really there was a kind of concern for that?

LSM: It didn't matter. I think that may have been it.

Labalme: I tend to agree with you from my own experience as a Bryn Mawr graduate also. Tell me about something else. Funds for your publication. There is in the files a letter of thanks from you to Robert Oppenheimer for some money, I think it was six thousand dollars he made available for printing the index, the epigraphical index. Do you remember? Were those subventions usual?

- LSM: This wasn't the index to ATL 4?<sup>2</sup> The Institute did, I think, have a subvention to that.
- Labalme: Here is the letter. It's March 30, 1966. And it thanks Oppenheimer for \$6000. Was this from a Director's Fund?
- LSM: That I have no idea. Out of what fund of the Institute he got it, I would have no idea. But I do know that the Institute supported many publications of its members. They supported both volume three and I know volume four of ATL-- which, of course, was a School publication--I'll get up in a minute and get the volumes and check.
- Labalme: But these, because members of the Faculty such as Ben and Homer had done--
- LSM: The ATL was entirely Ben's and this was this. Then they also made a large contribution toward my volume, that was the Etruscan and Roman volume. Because in answer to your question just before we stopped before, I didn't do as much work in those years as I would have perhaps in another setting. Compared with the previous dozen years, I did more than I would have if I'd continued at Mt. Holyoke. But I did do the third large book on my main publication, and I did several articles, so I did continue to do a fair amount of my own work along with the editing of the School's work.
- [To Ben Meritt]: Ben, do you know anything about the policy

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<sup>2</sup> Athenian Tribute Lists.

of the Institute, helping to support the publications of the members? Do you remember from any of your Faculty meetings how that was done? [To Labalme] Is there no record of that help for any other, anything of George Kennan's and so on?

Labalme: Oh I'm sure. Yes, there is, but I was just interested in this particular case, whether it was a support of the American School's work or the member of the Institute.

LSM: No, of the member of the Institute. Certainly in my own case, it was because I was a member of the Institute.

END OF CASSETTE TWO, SIDE ONE

CASSETTE TWO, SIDE TWO [marked 4 on the label]

Labalme: We're looking at publications now in which the Institute participated.<sup>3</sup> Did they give a subvention to the American Academy?

LSM: Yes, they did.

Labalme: I see [the words] "aided with a grant." Wonderful!

LSM: I ought to recall whether the ATL 4 which was published under my editorship--I think the Institute covered it completely, as I remember.

Labalme: This is 1953, so the other one referred to [in the letter] was in 1966.

LSM: That was the index to Hesperia, 11 to 20.

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<sup>3</sup> Lucy Shoe Meritt's volume on Etruscan and Roman moldings, published in the Memoirs series of the American Academy in Rome.

- Labalme: One gets the impression that all these institutions worked together. Is that right? The School, the Academy, the Institute?
- LSM: Yes. Exactly. I would be interested to know what other publications of other members of the Institute have been aided, because I can't believe that ours are the only ones.
- Labalme: But I think it's fairly unusual, for them to have aided a member who wasn't a member of the Faculty. But you had really an unusual position there. You were not the ordinary annual member, after all. You were a perennial, if I may put it that way. Was there ever a problem of the space that you occupied being needed by others, because in the beginning there seems to have been plenty of space, but then--
- LSM: Yes. By the time I retired, they had decided that they did need that extra, those two offices that we had occupied. You see, Ben had retired too, so there was someone else in his office, and there were others coming to work with him and so on. As long as Ben was there, our Publications Committee, I think, was always thought of by the administration of the Institute as part of Ben's work, which indeed they were, in very large part, because a major part of the publications of Hesperia for years were some of his work or of those working with him or Homer's. Between the combination of Ben and Homer, well over 50% of what we were

publishing was the work of either one or the other of them and their associates. When Ben left, that left only Homer's connection to be followed. And by that time the new West Building had been built and there was all the basement space there--

Labalme: In the Library?

LSM: No, before that, we moved over into the basement of West Building. The stock was all moved over there, the offices. Stock was moved first, then the offices. Well, not all architects pay sufficient attention to the geology of the land in which they are building.

Labalme: And it was damp?

LSM: It leaked like fury! Come spring, it just poured in there and damaged quite a bit of our stock, actually. What were we to do? I had retired to be sure. My successor hasn't had the position I had at the Institute, in the first place.

Labalme: Is that Mary McAllister who succeeded you?

LSM: Yes. And we were very grateful guests, so we couldn't really complain. We could at least announce, and that's about all we did. We let it be known, so that the property itself could be taken care of. And so it was decided that something else radical must be done, and that's when, after the Library building was built, it was moved over in there, into the basement which I take it does not leak.

- Labalme: No, although you know it's moved out since then into a little building, a very attractive little building at the end of Olden Lane.
- LSM: I didn't realize. When did this happen?
- Labalme: Just this past summer.
- LSM: That was it, because the last time we were there was a year ago this spring.
- Labalme: They needed the space in the Library for some of the mathematics books. And they now have sufficient room.
- LSM: Actually we were using that store room of Ben's and Hetty's.
- Labalme: Where was that?
- LSM: In Building B. Our stock was in that room. Remember I spoke a little while ago of the fact that Ben had a basement built in Building B. So all of Hetty's material had been moved out. And Ben gradually condensed more and more of his so that we had practically the entire room which was serving us pretty well. But of course when Ben left, then that space had to be available to others, so it was very kind of the Institute to continue to keep the American School Publications Committee, but they did that because of Homer, I think; after all he was still an active member, and what I said a moment ago was still true, that a major part of the publication was his responsibility.
- Labalme: I'm glad you explained that because it makes better sense to know the background.

LSM: As I say, it started with being a quid pro quo, so to speak, in lieu of the regular monetary contribution, though we all recognized as time went on that it was very much larger-- even many of the institutions as time went on and values changed increased their monetary contributions, but even so, at the rental rate in Princeton, we all recognized that the cubic space we had was worth a great deal more than the translation into dollars would have been. I think the American School has always been very conscious of that and very appreciative of it.

Labalme: There's something I was very curious about, and I didn't have a chance to talk to Ben--and that was the tandem typewriter. I saw that. Did Ben have something to do with this?

LSM: [to Ben Meritt] Wasn't that Harry Woolf's idea, dear? The typewriter? That big typewriter that was made especially for you at the Institute, the Greek and English typewriter? The theory being that you didn't have to shift your page from one machine to the other. Wasn't that Harry Woolf who thought that this would be--

Ben Meritt: I don't know whose idea it was.

Labalme: Did you use it, Ben?

LSM: Yes, he did a certain amount. It took an awful lot of trouble to get the bugs out.

Labalme: It's such an extraordinary contraption!

LSM: I've forgotten now which--it was IBM--they just couldn't seem to get a Greek font with all the epigraphical signs that were needed by then. And the manuscripts, for example, that he was turning over to me, I had to just go over by hand and change every single breathing and accent in all our Greek texts, because they weren't clear.

Labalme: That's a nuisance.

LSM: Well, it wasn't only a nuisance. The possibility of error when you did it by hand, changing something, for the printer to see which was right, was very great. And this was bad and costly in every way. Of course the Director's whole idea was that this was going to save everything in all directions. So Ben had sent for the man again and again. They came up and so on. Finally one day Ben wasn't in at the moment, he came and he had to go right by my office and he inquired when Ben would be back, that he'd come about the typewriter, or I'd said, was there anything I could do to help and he'd said he'd come about the typewriter. "Well," I said, "I think I can tell you what the difficulty is. After all, I'm the editor and I'm one of those who's fussing about what it turns out." So I picked up another manuscript that I had in hand that Ben had done on his old Royal typewriter, and I said, "I can't believe that IBM with all that it's supposed to be can't duplicate a good old Royal typewriter, years ago!" That sparked him. He sort of

bristled. He said, "I should think IBM could." I said, "I should think so too!" So he went away, and the result of that was something that was at least passable, but all of this had taken weeks not to say months and we always--Ben always felt sorry that so much expense had gone into it, because as far as he was concerned, he had done the other for so many years, and he didn't mind taking the sheet out and putting it in again. But the Director with all the goodness of his heart thought that he would save him time and energy and all the rest. But sometimes these technical things don't always work out. Is it used now at all?

Labalme: No, but it's there. And Christian Habicht showed it to me.

LSM: He doesn't use it either?

Labalme: No, because now they get balls, which you can exchange very easily, with all the characters. The font is on a ball which you slip in and out. You have the English on one and the Greek characters on another. And that makes it easier. Well, it's nearly time to stop. Is there anything we haven't covered, Lucy? It isn't the last chance, because you can always write things or we can meet again.

LSM: Those three little stories that I told you yesterday--did you want me to repeat them?

Labalme: No, I have them written down and I can send them to you. You can add and correct.

LSM: Those are the ones I really wanted you to have, because I think there's so much of the essence in those three.

Labalme: People are bound to ask me this, so I'll ask you. Were you at all involved in the time of the troubles with Kaysen? By then, you'd moved here?

LSM: Now wait a minute--it was Kaysen, not Woolf, that was responsible for the typewriter. Of course it was. I thought as I said Woolf it didn't quite fit my picture of Harry Woolf otherwise. Let me take that back. It was Kaysen, definitely.

Labalme: Did you have an impression of the directorship of Kaysen?

LSM: My only contact with him was through that typewriter. As far as I was concerned, he was always very hospitable and seemed to be glad to have us there, and always very pleasant to me personally. I wasn't after all in the councils. I was just a very ordinary humble member.

Labalme: Well, you had lunch with the Faculty, didn't you, with some of the Faculty?

LSM: Certainly. I think the Faculty must have been very discreet people and they didn't discuss it. They stopped outside their own councils.

Labalme: Did you feel that in your period at the Institute it had changed particularly from the earliest--

LSM: I felt the difference in the larger number of people. There was a great difference between the very few of us there were

in '48-49 and the almost masses there were by '72. 1971-2 was the last full year I was in residence and there were just so many, as we said earlier, regretfully, we just never even met the mathematicians, because in general, and I don't mean this by way of criticism, I mean it just as a comment on what, I think, seems to be more or less characteristic, that the historical people, whether they were in the same chronological field or not tended to be more generally talkative to others around the tea table. They would come up and speak to somebody that they hadn't met formally. I never had a mathematician or a scientist speak to me. But the one great mathematician, as I was telling you the other day, was the one who never failed to speak to everyone.

Labalme: Einstein.

LSM: We were very conscious of that, that if you passed him on the walk, in the hall, anywhere, he nodded and smiled and said good morning or good afternoon, and right behind him would come a flock of young mathematicians who would look at you as if you were the Rock of Gibraltar and move on! They didn't even pick up the hint from him. There was just a different code, I guess.

Labalme: And perhaps, a different generation.

LSM: I was going to say, somewhat a different generation, meaning the code, and also, a different human being. Because from these little bits I've learned from Ben, the things I've

learned about him from Miss Dukas who used to sit so often with us at lunch, from the latter years when she was there, going over all of his papers--she ate lunch with us quite regularly and so we learned from her quite a bit of what she was finding and the kind of things she would recall, things in their life together, back over the years, and I came to realize what a very considerate human being he was. I think he liked people and he was just pleasant and kind to them. I daresay there were people among the mathematicians who were just as--maybe not just as but at least kind and friendly, but they didn't extend out to people they hadn't met as much.

Labalme: Although maybe this is partly built into the nature of the subject.

LSM: We used to note, of course, that they all came in and sat at those long tables and didn't necessarily speak to each other. Whereas we always came in and sat at the round table and always made room for another no matter how crowded we were and we just talked right around the table.

Labalme: Maybe historians like to talk more.

LSM: Maybe. We were willing to break what we were doing and they probably didn't want to break their train of thought at the moment. After all, the principle of the Institute as it has been always been reiterated to me from Flexner's days on was, a man is absolutely free to do as he likes, get on with

his work, and if it's to pay no attention to anybody else, all right. If it's to pay attention, something else again. I think that probably was the code and certainly Aydelotte continued that. Under Oppenheimer who himself was always himself very friendly to people, he too always spoke when he met one. He didn't move about as much as Einstein did. You weren't apt to meet him as much, but he made therefore a great effort to have these little groups of people talking on their work.

[Addressing Ben Meritt] "Did those spring dances begin before Oppenheimer's day, dear? Did those spring dances go back to Flexner's days? That big dance in the spring? In April, at the Institute? That favorite phrase of yours-- "jail-break!" By which he meant absolutely everybody was there. Of course, it was very nice. It was the one time you saw everybody, from the boiler man right up to the Director, all dancing together. Are they still held?

Labalme: They have it on Valentine's Day or the weekend closest to Valentine's Day. There is a dance and it's the same thing. Everybody comes, and it's a very nice occasion.

LSM: I don't recall it in '48-49--under Aydelotte. Maybe it was. I had the idea that it began with Oppenheimer. You can check that in your actual records. It may have been there, and I just don't happen to remember. But I remember the ones under Oppenheimer, because he and Mrs. Oppenheimer

stood at the foot of the three little steps in the Common Room, very graciously receiving everyone.

Labalme: And that's where the dance was held?

LSM: Yes, right in the Common Room.

Labalme: Now it's in the Dining Hall, but that probably didn't exist.

LSM: Now it's a much larger group. And then we all repaired to the top floor for the midnight feast. It was a very lovely occasion. I can't imagine anybody who didn't go. You all went, even if you didn't dance, people went up and down the corridors and visited. It was a friendly time.

Labalme: I asked Ben a bit about Oppenheimer's great, anguished experience with the Washington problems. Did you feel any repercussions?

LSM: I can't say that we felt repercussions. We were all very conscious of it, of course. We were very conscious of the guards who sat right there, as you start in the Director's Office, that first little room.

Labalme: There were guards?

LSM: There were guards.

Labalme: Why were there guards?

LSM: Well I think they'd been there always. I think they were there before the controversy started. The minute he came, because of the records and so on that he had. There were Atomic Energy Commission guards, two or three of them, who sat there. They loved to collect stamps, and--

Labalme: Really?

LSM: If you took them some stamps from all over--so you never went into the Director's Office--some of us--without taking some stamps to the guards and they loved it and we'd have a nice little chat with them.

Labalme: Postage stamps?

LSM: From all over the world. They just loved collecting stamps from us, and Ben always had a lot of them. Ben's always so friendly with everybody, they loved to see him come. But they were friendly with all of us and then there were some of them downstairs in the basement of Fuld Hall near where the storeroom of all this material was and they just sat there all the time.

Labalme: I didn't realize that.

LSM: Yes, they were there. We sometimes kind of thought we saw a little more or less anguish on the Director's face if we happened to see him and we would sense that. I think we all had a feeling that we just hoped it would be over, and we believed in him.

Labalme: And it didn't affect the Institute in terms of its reputation?

LSM: Not so far as I was concerned. Or any of the people that I knew. It may have with some. I can't speak for everyone, by any means.

Labalme: Well that's very interesting. I'm going to release you from  
your attachment here, and thank you very much, Lucy.

END OF INTERVIEW.

Conversation with Lucy Shoe Meritt, Nov. 11, 1988 in Austin, Texas.

The following are some anecdotes and additional background which LSM wished to share:

I. There was a period in the 50's when Robert Oppenheimer gathered the Institute community in the Common Room to hear members speak. On one such occasion, a German professor addressed the group for a tedious two hours on "History as Science". Afterwards, there was considerable discussion. Einstein was sitting in the third row, and eventually he raised his hand, like a schoolboy, and when called on, rose to his feet and said: "I think Herr Doctor Professor forgets that you cannot put the human spirit into a test tube." At that, Robert Oppenheimer adjourned the meeting.

II. On another occasion, John von Neumann showed a group of visitors the great computer which he had had built. He was impeccably dressed, urbane, elegant, dignified. Then he told them: "Now that is it, ladies and gentlemen, but I beg you to remember that the computer is only as good as the person who puts something into it. It will never be a substitute for the human mind."

III. When the cafeteria was on the top floor of Fuld Hall, there were rectangular tables with two round tables on either end. The historians tended to cluster around the first round table. There was always room for one more, and that's where Harold Cherniss, Otto Neugebauer, Marshall Clagett and George Kennan tended to eat. One day there was a European present who wanted to know about the "generation gap." George Kennan said: "I consider it the greatest

thing I have given my children, that they have lived for a time under the same roof as their grandparents."

IV. Once, when Lucy Shoe Meritt was opening a package in her room near the stairs, she exclaimed aloud at the photograph inside which had been taken of an Etruscan wall painting and showed some mice running in the painting. Erwin Panofsky was going by with his dog and looked in to see what was going on. "Could Michelangelo have seen this tomb?" he asked. "Perhaps," LSM answered. "That would explain the mouse in the Medici tombs," he said, and took the photograph off with him in great excitement.

V. Of Mike Morgan: a remarkably generous and caring man, completely approachable in big things. He had a very humanitarian point of view, and if people found themselves in sudden trouble, he would see situation and do something about it.

VI. Of the Dauncey family from Ontario: originally, a pioneer family who owned much of Lake Ahmic. The Daunceys had many children, one of which, Wesley Dauncey, was much appreciated by Dr. Flexner and was the caretaker for the Flexner home. Flexner brought Wesley Dauncey to the Institute as manager of Fuld Hall. His second wife was a <sup>Dorothy,</sup> "ladies maid" who had come to Lake Ahmic with a Pittsburgh family, a beautiful woman with a fine mind. She came with Wesley to the Institute and started out there as a telephone operator. She became Ben's secretary and taught herself Greek. She was the best proof-reader he ever had. When the Meritts and Flexners moved up to Lake Ahmic, she went along and worked there in the mornings with Ben in a room over the boathouse where Wes fixed up a table for her typewriter. Since she was

entitled to one month off, this way she took two months in free afternoons and worked in the mornings. This was where the ATL (Athenian Tribute Lists) was written. This arrangement was made by Dr. Flexner to accommodate Ben's work and to give the Daunceys a chance to be home for the summer.

INTERVIEW WITH LUCY SHOE MERITT

Date: November 20, 1989

Place: Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ

Interviewer: Patricia H. Labalme

"Another anecdote"

CASSETTE ONE, SIDE ONE (counter 141)

LABALME: I'm meeting with Lucy Shoe Meritt and it's November 20th. We're just going over Benjamin Meritt's interview. Now, we can talk and I won't have to write everything down frantically. Let's see. I think that will pick up our voices. Yes.

LSM: As I understand it, Dr. Flexner's interest in Greek and the whole of ancient Greek civilization was his abiding interest. He had long, therefore, wanted to see the excavations and had finally succeeded. Burt Hodge Hill, Director of the American School, to whom of course he went, was happy to show him around Athens. As they stood on the Acropolis, Burt Hill waved to the north down into the area that we now know as the Agora and said, "This of course is where the heart of the ancient Athens that you know and love lies. We must investigate it somehow. They're beginning to tear down the old houses, build up something higher, that means digging deeper and destroying what's there. The Greek government can't afford it. They want one of the foreign schools to take it on. None of the foreign schools can afford it--we're going to have to work together with a group

of the foreign schools and divide up the area." To which Dr. Flexner replied, "It won't work!" "Yes, I know," said Mr. Hill, "but there's no other way and we must do something before the evidence is gone. The American School ought to do it. We can't possibly do it alone. We have to work together." "No, it won't work," said Dr. Flexner. "What are you going to do? You're going to divide it up and you'll discover that the dividing line is right in the middle of one building that you find? Who's going to publish which side of the building?" You see, Dr. Flexner envisioned from the very start the completion of an excavation right down to the publication of it. Well, he came back home worrying about this. And that's when he went to Raymond Fosdick, and he not only went to Raymond Fosdick and asked him to go to Mr. Rockefeller but Dr. Flexner himself invited Mr. Rockefeller to lunch. And he told Mr. Rockefeller that "If you sponsor the recovery of ancient Athens which is the core and background of our whole civilization, there's no better way for you to gain immortality."

**LABALME:** That's marvelous.