

Norman Livson

- Born 10/3/1924; died 2/2/2005
- B.A. in Engineering (1945), M.A. in Psychology (1949), and Ph.D. in Psychology (1951) all from the University of California, Berkeley



Major Employment

- Visiting Scholar, Institute of Human Development, University of California, Berkeley: 1998-2005
- Professor, California School of Professional Psychology: 1988-2005
- California State University, Hayward:
 - Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology: 1987-2005
 - Psychologist, Counseling Services: 1981-1991
 - Professor, Department of Psychology: 1966-1987
 - Chairman, Department of Psychology: 1966-1979
- Research Psychologist, Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley: 1953-1989

SRCD ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Norman Livson

Interviewed by Lucy Ferguson
In Berkeley, California
July 29, 2004

Ferguson: Interview with Norman Livson, interviewed by Lucy Ferguson at her home in Berkeley, 45 Alta Road, on July 29, 2004. Okay, so why don't we go at it from the top where they ask you to describe your family background along with any childhood and adolescent experiences that may be of interest, etc.

Livson: Okay. Would you monitor me in terms of going on too long? Well, my family background is I was born in Brooklyn, New York. My parents both came from a place in Poland, which was at that point under Russian control. My father's family moved to Palestine then under Turkish control, and at the age of 14 was almost rounded up in 1914 for service in the Turkish army; he escaped because a cavalry officer showed him how to get out of the encircling trap. And family sent him to Alexandria, and he there learned the "needle trade"--

Ferguson: This was still your father.

Livson: This is my father. And through Greece he got to the United States just before we got into the war. And by then he was an accomplished tailor and ended up being a tailor. And the year of my birth, 1924, founded Norman's Sportswear, which thrived for many, many years. And I would go there and I would be the darling of the women who were Italian helpers. The needle workers themselves were all men, they don't care about me. And my mother didn't make it over until just after the war and had really no education that was not allowed to Jewish girls where she lived. So she went through the eighth grade in whatever night schools were available and was the intellectual of the family. And, unkindly, would often refer to my father, even using the word "boorish" which I guess she learned in school, for never having read a book, which is probably true. But he was bouncy and happy and social, and she was very reserved and read books and stuff like that there. It was a very strange marriage, and my father was often to say, "If only I could get your mother to smile at me once in her life, this would all have been worth it," and hearing that would break my heart.

Yeah. And so I was in Brooklyn till age six and then we -- and we kept moving, I went to six different elementary schools. I don't know why they kept -- I think my father was gradually climbing up the social ladder. We never lived anywhere more than two years. One of the criteria for moving was to always have me near a school because I was seen as incapable of walking to school more than two blocks or something. But the New York school system had "skipping", which if you were pretty smart they'd skip a grade. And as a cynical Marxist friend of mine later informed me, that's a good way to save money. And so I skipped five times and I got out of elementary school two and a half years ahead of the usual time. That got me into DeWitt Clinton High School at about 11 1/2 or so. The high school became the Bronx High School of Science about two years later. And I was there a year; it was a block away from where we lived, and my mother got called from the principal's office for the first time and the last time in her life and said, "Your son is very smart, we will send him to the main campus with 12,000 males, which is three miles up town into the Honor School." And my mother said, "You can't do it, you can't do it, he couldn't possibly get there." And anyhow, she finally relented and I had three years of high school in this Honor School part of the DeWitt Clinton, which was incredible. I mean the teachers and the curriculum and the textbooks were all different. In my history class, I remember both teachers were PhD's; Dr. Belasco said most, "Well you should understand that my view of history is Marxist and, knowing that, you must take that into account in this class."

And then in the middle of the first semester of my senior year, my father went to visit his sister in Los Angeles for the two-week vacation, called up, said he's never coming back to New York; he would die on the shop floor. He's sending his brother, Louie, who's insane but very funny, to buy a 1939 Plymouth four door sedan, which they had already purchased, and drive me and my mother and my little six year old brother across the country into Hollywood. And she cried and I cried and my brother was very confused. And in the middle of the semester we got driven across the country by a route, which I later tracked, which -- I was the guide but he took the road that looked less traveled, covered about double the distance.

Ferguson: So how long did it take you?

Livson: About 18 days. I mean it was insane, it was totally, totally insane. Bronx to Los Angeles. At one point it was Passover and we were in the middle of Texas and my mother started crying, we won't have any matzo. And my uncle who was a real sweet man said, "No worry, next town I get you matzo." And he pulls into the town and he finds a clothing store, he goes in, guy's Jewish, says, "20 miles down the road you'll find this grocery store and they keep matzo's in the back." So we finally made it, and I got dumped into Hollywood High; I had been to an all-male, 12,000 male, school, dumped at the age of 15 into a co-ed school, Hollywood especially, with academic standards of zero. My first day on campus I wore the same uniform that I had worn to school in New York, which was brown corduroy trousers, a jacket, a tie, a briefcase. I was the butt of incredible cruelty, which stayed that way for the semester and a half that I went there. I guess I was in Coventry. No one talked to me, I mean it was just humiliating, and I also had an authentic New York accent, which they thought was very comical. And I graduated, on graduation night everybody, I thought, piled into cars to go up to Santa Barbara to get liquored up and God knows what else, and I went home and cried all night.

And then I entered UCLA when I was 15 years old. Tuition was \$17.50 a semester.

Ferguson: What year are we at?

Livson: We are at '42 now. Or, no, we're 1940.

Ferguson: 1940s. So war was looming?

Livson: Yeah, yeah, war was going on. Yeah, it was January, 1940, I entered UCLA. And, and, and some very nice man says, "What's your major?" And in all honesty I said, "What's a major?" And he rolled his eyes and sent me over to an advisor who later I found out happened to be a member of the Math Department who was assigned to advising duty for that registration day. And he looked at my

transcript and he looked selectively, being himself in mathematics, "Oh you did good in math, how about becoming an engineer, young man?" And I said, "Fine," I always did what the teacher said. So I signed up to be an engineer. We'll skip over that. I spent two years at UCLA in pre-engineering. They didn't have the full four-year program. That's fortunate because that's how I got to Berkeley, because to continue engineering Berkeley was the obvious place, although I also applied to the University of Washington. And--

Ferguson: Norm, it's interesting, just parenthetically, how many of my, at least my contemporaries of graduate school and other people I've known since, who became distinguished psychologists, especially statisticians, started out in something like math or engineering.

Livson: I have known many--

Ferguson: I mean it's almost a typical pattern--

Livson: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I didn't know anyone who started out aiming to become a clinical psychologist, because who knew, who knew what that was, right? And so when I got to Berkeley -- I think on my birthday, October 3, 1942 -- to continue my engineering courses, and within a few months Dean Vorhees, Dean of Agriculture, had just come back from Washington, gathered up all the engineering students, 99 1/2 percent male, saying, "I got a nice deal for you, it's called the Enlisted Reserve Corp. And if you join you'll be in the Army, but you will be guaranteed that you'll be able to complete your undergraduate degree and you will then go on to officer's training school. Who wants to sign up?" And I somehow needed my parent's permission, maybe I was under 18. And so I did. And I proceeded, and then probably as a function of the tremendous need for more manpower due to the losses in the Battle of the Bulge, in April all of a sudden, boom, you were called in. So I was called in and went to -- and I won't give you my basic training experiences, which are delightful. And my exposure to anti-Semitism was a first. I mean quite, quite horrible stuff. But that's certainly relevant.

Ferguson: It -- just to, as a clarification there, was there anti-Semitism particularly in the LA High School experience, it was just--

Livson: Oh no, no, oh no--

Ferguson: That was just snotty high school kids.

Livson: No, no, everybody is Jewish. No, no, not in Hollywood High, but there was a nearby high school where I don't think there was any non-Jew in the whole place. And, and I should have gone there. That was a mistake. No, I -- no, none whatsoever, it was just that I was this funny looking kid and I was very fat and chubby and had red hair and freckles and dressed funny and talked funny and I was a kind of a butt of jokes, and -- anyhow, so -- and, and my own cousins teased me unmercifully about my accent, so I think I dropped it with amazing speed. I remember talking to Abe Maslow, with whom I worked part time at Brandeis in 1962-3. And one of his criteria for reaching his self-actualization listing was, if you're foreign born, retaining your accent. That was a sign of greater actualization. But anyhow, I lost mine very quickly.

So then I got into the Army and I didn't do well there, and I got shifted around and had adventures, never got overseas, ended up guarding, as a guard in a prison camp in North Carolina.

Ferguson: Oh, delightful.

Livson: Half of which were German soldiers and half of which were people that were forced into the German army -- Dutch, many nationalities. And a common occurrence, once a week or so, would be raids by the non-Germans cutting the barbed wire between the two halves of the camp. Taking butcher knives from the kitchen and doing some slaughtering of Nazis who they had unkind feelings about. And I remember some officer came and was complaining about this situation that was

happening at all the other prisoner camps. And I was smart enough not to say, “Well for God sakes, why don’t you put all the Germans in one camp and all the non-Germans in another and you won’t have this trouble.” But not being a natural born leader (as a private first-class) I didn’t do that. So--

Ferguson: Saves money that way; don’t have to feed so many prisoners.

Livson: I did a very, very clever thing. At one point we’re all asked, “Anybody here speak German, we don’t have any interpreters?” So I figured, well, I knew Yiddish at that point very well, it was my first language, one language of the streets, and I didn’t know German. And I said, “Okay,” so I was told, “We loaned a typewriter out to some place out in the German side of the camp and we want it back.” So I said, “Well,” and I wandered around and looked, and I was doing a lot of mimicking of typing and saying “schreibe machine”. Turned out to be the right word and I got the typewriter and came back to, “Oh my God, you’re a great interpreter.” But I’d gotten to know people, and their food made with the identical rations that American troops got, that was apparently Geneva Convention or whatever it was at that point. I would eat there as often as possible because the food was a hell of a lot better prepared. And, I mean there are all kinds of war stories. Making very, very close friends with a Czech guy, he’s -- but I don’t think you want this, right? No. Very nice stories.

Ferguson: But it is in a way relevant because--

Livson: But no developmental -- yeah--

Ferguson: --you were certainly gravitating away from engineering and becoming interested in “human nature” you should pardon the expression--

Livson: Well, I sort of -- sometime in high school I actually read Freud’s *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, I remember that. I don’t know how I got to it, it might have been recommended by a teacher. And I was fascinated by that.

Ferguson: At my high school it definitely was not recommended by a teacher, but I still read it.

Livson: Yeah. But actually my first brush with psychology -- and this is sort of relevant -- is I was a teenager and I don’t know, maybe -- and, well I would read incessantly and, at least living in New York in the summer, every Friday I would go and check out about five books and read them during the week. But I think just accidentally I encountered a book called, *Be Glad You’re Neurotic*, by, I remember the name, Louis Bisch. Could be wrong, but I remember it. And I ate it up, because I knew I was -- for some reason I knew I was neurotic and this guy was telling me it’s great. I mean all the greatest people are neurotic; if you’re not neurotic you’re dull.

So then I got out of the Army, I can’t remember when, early ‘44, something like that. Never got overseas, which I didn’t mind just because I didn’t want to get shot at. And came back to Berkeley half intending not to complete my -- oh, I’m sorry, during the Army phase I was sent to Army specialized training program. We were put on a train when we were in Fort Hood, Texas, where our basic training had been in the heat of the summer. We didn’t know which direction we were going, and being kind of mainly Jewish intellectuals, we didn’t know about east and west. But anyhow, one of us figured out we were going west and we ended up in the train station in Palo Alto. And we entered Stanford’s Army Specialized Training Program in engineering, which I loved, which I did for a fall semester and most of a spring semester. And that is when the call came up that they needed bodies. So I got shipped to Camp Roberts for training and then across the country to North Carolina.

So when I got back to Berkeley -- I’m hazy about the day, I think it would have been early ‘45 but I’m not sure. I really did not want to just -- and I got a completion certificate from Stanford for the engineering program, but I hadn’t gotten a degree and I would have another two semesters of engineering courses and I didn’t want to do it, but I did complete one BS in a following semester. I had to argue with an advisor who said, “Why take the six week course in psychology when there’s one in

petroleum engineering at the same time that'll really increase your marketability?" But I took the six-week course and just loved it. And I said, "There's something there." That same semester I also took logic, poetry, sculpture -- I was encouraged by the instructor (Jacques Schneir, a well-known sculptor) to become a sculptor--

Ferguson: Interesting.

Livson: Oh, I loved doing it.

Ferguson: And you took a philosophy course from Ed Strong, I guess.

Livson: Ed -- and I also took one from Will Dennes. I also took another one, a logic course, from Paul Marhenke. I took the economic -- I audited some of them; Economics of Capitalism by Carl Landauer, who boasted about having named Yugoslavia.

Ferguson: There were all sorts of interesting characters.

Livson: Oh yeah.

Ferguson: But I know the whole cast of characters in the Philosophy Department of those days precisely the time that you're describing, my mother was getting her PhD in philosophy--

Livson: Oh really?

Ferguson: Yep, yep.

Livson: For some reason I had something to do with Jacob Loewenberg--

Ferguson: Yeah, right.

Livson: Remember him?

Ferguson: Oh I do, sweet, sweet man.

Livson: Oh God yeah, yeah.

Ferguson: You know that Jack Loewenberg and Tolman and Sanford and a couple other people were the original and final non-signers of the Loyalty Oath.

Livson: I didn't know that about Loewenberg, no.

Ferguson: Yeah.

Livson: Not surprised, but I didn't--

Ferguson: Tolman was very exclusive when he held out, because he said, "You know, I can afford it if they fire me." And I think, I don't think he necessarily meant that he would get a job in another university, although instantly he did, but that he had private means and it was not a big disaster. Jack Loewenberg held out, was a non-signer to the end, lost not only his job, but all his accumulated retirement pay. Now of course eventually they won the suit and he was reinstated, but for a couple years there, he didn't know what he was going to live on. And I think one of the eastern universities did give him a position--

Livson: Did he ever come back to the faculty?

Ferguson: Yeah, he came back but he was within a year or two of retirement--

Livson: Yeah, yeah, I know, I remember. Well I remember Krech telling me that Tolman's argument to Krech saying, "Look, I can afford not to sign, you can't, you're a young man," so forth and so on. And I don't even remember whether Krech signed or not, he managed to stay away. He went to Oslo for year and Harvard for a year and--

So here I am with 18 units of liberal arts and humanities and my engineering degree. And what are you supposed to do? You're supposed to get an engineering job. And I did try, and this is a long story, irrelevant I think to this interview. I mean I just, I had a fair record in engineering. I didn't enjoy it; I was probably like a B or average, possibly worse. In fact, what sort of saved me was there was project at the very end where you did an original experiment, which for me involved evaluating strength of materials, Bakelites, and an even -- and taking pictures of stress patterns. And I was just in seventh heaven. I said, "This is what I'd like to do." My first taste of research. And I said, "Oh man, this is marvelous." But then I discovered that's not the kind of job you get, I mean, they want drafting. I couldn't get a job despite trying. I was finally offered a job at the Joshua Hendy Iron Works down in Sunnyvale by a very nice older man. I was going to be his protégé in writing technical manuals, and I, and I fancied myself -- I was really going grow up and be a writer. So I figure engineering background, I was relevant. And we met one afternoon and he took a shine to me, and he said, "You've got the job after I clear it with my boss." And I came home and was wondering, should I commute to Sunnyvale or move out of Berkeley and all that? And the next morning he called me up very embarrassed saying I didn't get the job. The boss turned me down and he didn't know why. But he gave me a slight hint, which really came down to that the boss hadn't seen me until I came by that day to visit this man. So the name Livson didn't signal the fact that I was Jewish, but my appearance certainly did and he was having none of it. Years later somebody who did get an engineering job in the Bay Area at this period, and spent his life as an engineer said the anti-Semitism in the engineering field in the Bay Area during those years was just unspeakable.

Ferguson: That's, you know, that's sort of horrifying and interesting, because I wouldn't have been particularly aware of that.

Livson: I wasn't either.

Ferguson: I mean I wasn't in that field, you know, and in those years I passed as not being at all Jewish. So, you know, for double reasons I wouldn't have been aware of it. But that is interesting because--

Livson: Well I should have known--

Ferguson: --practically everybody I ever knew in the social sciences was a Jew.

Livson: So I spent that year -- I wasn't a bohemian because it was too early to be a beatnik. I was part of a wild -- I don't know if the name wouldn't mean anything to this interview, of course -- the name Sammy Tannenbaum means anything to you? Well he was a wild-eyed anarchist rebel type and he had long hair. And once the fraternity boys picked him up one night and shorn him of all his hair and -- very bright guy, very articulate, very sane, very political, very sensible. But I became his lieutenant. And I lived most of the time in a seven room apartment over on McAllister near Divisadero, which we called the Mecca, where people came and went and left money in a cigar box or something for food. And there were mattresses all over the floor, and this was my year to discover myself. And I wrote poetry, which I had done when I was younger, and was having a great time. I was once -- walked to the top of Telegraph Hill and it was my job that day to do the shopping for this Mecca. What's the word that we probably -- we didn't have the word -- what's the word for a bunch of people?

Ferguson: Commune.

Livson: Commune. Thank you. We had a commune. I didn't know it was a commune. And so I was sitting there right under the statue at the top of Telegraph Hill making a list, trying to remember what was needed, and within earshot there were two women, I guess tourists; one said, "Look, that's a poet." And I heard that and I thought, well for God's sakes, so I just looked up for inspiration and I had a great time and they left thinking that they'd seen a poet. Anyhow--

Ferguson: Did they know that they had seen a psychologist?

Livson: No I wasn't in psychology at all then. No, no, I didn't know what I was going to do. I did apply to the Civil Service Commission and got a job evaluating engineering applications. This was in the U.S. Appraisers building on Montgomery. And I did that for about three or four months, discovering that there were engineering college instructors in certain parts of the country who were being paid the equivalent of 25 cents an hour at that point. I was kind of shocked. But I only did -- and in fact it was a fixed job, they had a fixed number of applications. And through chance I moved into a house where just about everybody was in psychology, and they were graduate students, among them Paul, Paul Petersen. And they were--

Ferguson: This was in San Francisco or in Berkeley?

Livson: Oh no, no, I'm sorry, this -- I mean all the time I'm in San Francisco I still had a little place in, in Berkeley. And so I would drop in on their sessions as they were getting prepped for -- oh what the hell were the early exam -- comprehensives?

Ferguson: Yeah, prelims, whatever.

Livson: Pre -- yeah, well, whatever. And I found myself sitting in and getting interested and finding out what books they had to read. And not knowing what else I was going to do with my life, I decided to apply to graduate school in psychology, and was ushered into the office of C. W. Brown, the then chair, who you may remember, the feisty, tough little ex-Army major, something like that. And he looked at my record and he said, "Where do you get off thinking you can apply to graduate school? I mean, you've got this one six-week psychology course." I said, "I know, I know, but I've been studying and I really want to," and then he gave me a very bad time, but he says, "Alright, I'll tell you what. You come back Monday, we -- people like you show up once in a while and we're ready for you. I have a long test, multiple choice" -- and I don't know what it was actually -- "if you pass that we'll let you in provisionally and then you take 18 units in the fall to make up for your undergraduate deficiencies, and then if you do well in that with at least a B" -- or something like that -- "you will be a graduate student." And he threw a copy of Dashiell at me, which was then one of the introductory psych textbooks. He threw a statistics book at me, but I sort of knew that from my math. And I came back the following Monday late in the afternoon and he gave me this test. I was doing a lot of guessing and I felt stupid; I mean I may as well leave but didn't, but finished the test. And so I hand it in to him, he says, "We may as well not keep you in suspense when I can just grade it while you're sitting here." And I -- this is my life; I have no idea where I'm going. I mean if I get in that's one direction, if I don't I have no idea. And he's really noisy about it: "Oh, wrong, wrong, oh, never." And it takes him about 10 minutes. "I don't think it's even worth adding up how many points you got, I mean, all right, I'll add it up." I mean this is almost verbatim because it's burned in my memory. He said, "Well, Goddamn, you made it by one point."

Ferguson: What a story.

Livson: And thereby I got into psychology and took 18 units. One of them was by another Nevitt Sanford teaching personality, very badly I thought. And I took some statistics -- I mean I don't remember what I -- I took social from Robert Tryon, and I really took to it, I said, "This is where I really belong." And so I got all the proper grades, and then I became a graduate student. And somehow I blundered into the field of perception, became a teaching assistant to Egon Brunswik, of whom we could go on for several hours. Difficult man who I loved, and--

Ferguson: I certainly had exactly the same experience with Egon.

Livson: Yeah, there's--

Ferguson: An impossible man, but there was something about him that was just terribly lovable and you felt as though you had to kind of help him through life.

Livson: Well, I was his TA in -- one of his courses was perception and involved an infinite number of really quite rare slides, and I operated the projector and we didn't have proper equipment, and I would jiggle it once in a while. And anytime I would jiggle it he would, I mean, get all red, because he had serious high blood pressure--

Ferguson: Absolutely.

Livson: In fact, he had surgery at the University of Chicago, I think he had the first operation, cutting the vagus nerve -- is it possible? And, but no hint of developmental classes, nothing, absolutely nothing. So I got into perception and I did my undergraduate research, sometimes on my own and sometimes with other, well, graduate students. And I was thriving and I reached a point where you took what we called then the comprehensives. That's the first touch I ever had of developmental. And it was administered -- it was graded, I guess, by Harold Jones. And I found that I enjoyed the questions. I guess I'd done some reading, although I didn't really cram for it, because it was one of nine -- one of twelve tests -- I forget how many fields. But I apparently passed it with honors.

Ferguson: I think you had to pass 12 fields altogether.

Livson: Yeah, 12 fields and a certain number with honors and so forth. And I didn't know how relevant that passing with honors was, but--

Ferguson: So that exam that Harold Jones--

Livson: Yeah.

Ferguson: --administered was actually your first contact with developmental.

Livson: My very first -- I mean outside of a few words in the introductory six-week course. No, it was my first contact, yeah. And I found these are interesting things and I really got into it and I probably worked harder at it than I -- well, certainly more than I expected to. And I found out that I seem to know more or could make more up than I could on the other exams. And anyhow, so I passed those and I got started--

Ferguson: I wouldn't be surprised if it was a multiple choice exam--

Livson: I think -- no I think they were essays. I think -- I'm not too sure, yeah.

Ferguson: I was going to say, if they were multiple choice, etc., items then I probably made some of them up because my first year in graduate school I was Harold Jones's TA--

Livson: I may be wrong, I don't remember, maybe it was a mixture, yeah, yeah. I do remember feeling it was a reasonable exam. I mean it wasn't looking for little bits.

Ferguson: Well then there must have been some essay questions.

Livson: Yep. And then I got started on my doctoral dissertation. Krech and Crutchfield were my in-department committee members. And poor old Franklin Henry, a psychologist who ended up in the PE

Department is the outside man, which -- how many people had him? I don't know -- there's a story there. But then life developed and the Year of the Oath came by and Krech left and Crutchfield left and--

Ferguson: So there you were without a dissertation committee, huh?

Livson: Yeah, well there I was with having -- Leo Postman sort of took Crutchfield's place and -- oh, what's the name of that nice man who lived by the side of the golf course? Ritchie. Ritchie became dissertation chair--

Ferguson: Oh, Benbow Ritchie, yeah, yeah.

Livson: Yeah, he became my chair.

Ferguson: You know, you know how Benbow Ritchie got into psychology don't you?

Livson: No.

Ferguson: Well he started out as a philosophy student, you know, he--

Livson: I'm not surprised, but that I didn't know --

Ferguson: He was a classmate of my mother's. But the Philosophy Department in those days required that you had to have a master's in some other field--

Livson: I know.

Ferguson: --and so they sent him over to -- or he decided to get his master's in psychology, and he ended up working with Tolman on the latent learning experiments and he got hooked and he never went back to philosophy.

Livson: My old dear friend Phil Deuel was a philosophy student and came into psychology because of that requirement. And, in fact, I actually had him in a class for some reason, I don't know why, it doesn't matter, 1951 or something, I think I was teaching sort of a first year graduate class.

So I'm working away on my dissertation and it's going to be very modest, it's going to revolutionize all of Gestalt psychology, which was my loyalty then. And I was simply going to prove the isomorphic assumption, which was critical to Gestalt Theory. And indeed I did. And -- but I was going along and -- I don't know whether you remember Bob Rollin.

Ferguson: I'm sorry?

Livson: I don't know if you remember Bob Rollin, he was in physiological, Marian Rollin, his wife, was also--

Ferguson: Not -- no I don't.

Livson: Well, Bob Rollin and Marian, and Flo and I -- Flo was a graduate student in clinical. Actually she was slightly ahead of me, but when we got married in '48, on advice of her therapist -- which is very interesting -- on urging, on blackmail by her therapist, she dropped out and got some kind of terminal master's, although she would have gotten her doctorate well before I did. And we had a pact that when we both got our degrees sometime in '51 that we would take all our money and go over to Europe and bicycle around until we got broke and come back. And we had a sacred pact, but one night I came back with Flo from having dinner, our first experience with pesto actually, in San Francisco at the Brian Gusto, at the corner of Broadway and Columbus, and there was a telegram offer of \$6,000

project director, whatever it was. And I don't know where it came from. We replied immediately and I finally tracked it down that Else Frenkel-Brunswik had gone to a convention and run into a guy called -- so angry at him I can't -- Leslie Phillips, Canadian, he was Head Psychologist, Worcester State Hospital, having replaced a very major figure, Shakow?

Ferguson: Yeah.

Livson: Yeah, yeah, Shakow had retired. And \$6,000 when the only academic jobs I'd looked into were Smith College at \$3,500 and Tufts offered \$2,500. We did have this sacred pact not to take jobs, but when I saw the \$6,000, I relented and I did my dissertation in six weeks. And it worked and that's when Leo Postman told me I had cheated on statistics and Rheem Jarrett was called in and had the guts to tell Leo Postman that I had done it right and that he -- Jarrett cited Leo Postman's use of the analysis of variance in publications as prime examples of the misuse of the analysis of variance. Oh, that took courage to do that. But anyhow, the thing worked out fine. It was -- I mean I was very proud of it. And as I've told you, Leo, at the last minute, said, "I'll only sign this if you promise never to publish it." And I didn't agree and he did sign it. And I got it in an hour before the deadline at the graduate office, and got to Worcester about two or three weeks later.

Still no developmental. I was Project Director on the concentration of 17-ketosteroids in the urine as a diagnostic criterion for schizophrenia. The work was actually sponsored by Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology, which was across the river from the Worcester State Hospital and it was funded through them. And they were very rich because they had just come out with the oral contraceptive. And they had a Christmas party, which would rival anything that Bill Gates could possibly do.

Ferguson: So this was primarily on adult schizophrenia population?

Livson: Yeah. And although I worked in the hospital and had my first experiences in a mental hospital, and it was old, in fact, it contained a letter by Abraham Lincoln saying what a fine hospital it was. And I walked around with I don't know how many clanking keys and it smelled, especially when you went down to the basement back ward. It was quite an interesting experience. I did not get along with my project director because in the first week he asked me to analyze some data and I did and he said, "Well it didn't come out right." And I said, "Well I did a chi-square." He says, "Why do you subtract the Yates correction, because it's a small sample? What would happen if you didn't?" And I said, "Well, it wouldn't be doing the test right." He said, "Just compute it." It came out "significant" and I said, "But this is wrong." He said, "I like the -- I mean, I don't think you need the Yates correction." So I said, "Leslie, I quit." This is in the first week. And -- but I didn't because I didn't have another job, but from then on we were at arm's length and I did what I needed to do.

Krech suggested I go visit Abe Maslow at Brandeis. And I did and got a job teaching the advanced general psychology course for the students who were all going on to graduate school. This was Brandeis's first class, first graduating senior class. And I prepared like hell, you know advanced students, and I came in with notes upon notes. And then with about 20 students I started talking and mentioning well-known psychologists and I noticed a blankness, you know. And after a few questions I discovered all that they'd learned was psychology according to Abraham Maslow, and psychology according to Jim Klee -- a very interesting man with a very off-beat theory of personality which nobody ever heard about -- and a factor analyst from University of Southern California analysis. So I retooled and taught a very good introductory psychology course. Maslow was a very strange man, but we get along. And I thought I might get hired there, but I was not hired there, and actually Maslow was quite honest and quite open. And he said, "You have a speech problem that gets in the way of your teaching." And I wasn't surprised and I didn't get mad at him, he seemed to make sense. And at that point the year was drawing to a close and I said, "Why don't we just come back to Berkeley?"

Oh, I'm sorry; I was offered a job at the Naval Personnel Laboratory out in Coronado around San Diego. It was a good job, paid a lot of money and had something to do with personnel assessment, which I didn't know about but I figured I could do it. And I almost remember the name of the man who hired

me, but that doesn't matter either. So we packed up and got in the car and visited Berkeley on the way down to San Diego to start a new life. And we got there and we planned to spend about a week in Berkeley, and I run into Paul Petersen, who's an old lefty, and he says, "I'm surprised you got cleared for a job at the Naval Personnel Laboratory." And I said, "Well nobody said anything about it." And he said, "Well, the way they work it" -- and he seemed to know -- "is that they do a preliminary clearance. Nothing really, you know, major it shows up about you in terms of your, not qualifications, your security clearance you're hired. But then after you're hired they do an intense investigation and checking with your neighbors and so forth." And I said, "Oh shit. I had been a member of the American Youth for Democracy, which was a front organization, which I know." So he said, "I would call them up and ask them what your status is. Like, for example, will there be a full security investigation once you get down there." And I was embarrassed to do this, but I did. And the man very forthrightly said, he said, "Oh no, you, you've passed the first screen, but we certainly do a thorough security clearance after you're here." I said, "What happens if I don't pass it?" He said, "Oh, then you don't have the job." I said, "Oh. I don't think I want to do this." And probably that day I wandered up and down the hall and ran into Theodore Sarbin, who had just gotten a grant to study perceptual behavior of juvenile delinquents. I don't know how he got it because he didn't really know what it was about, but he needed a project director. And it kind of had some interest for me. So I took that job for a year.

Ferguson: That sounds to me like a typical Ted Sarbin story.

Livson: Yes. Ted Sarbin. I, what I meant by the horrors of when he was assigned to do a Role Theory chapter for the *Handbook of Social Psychology*. And he tried everything to have his students do it, and they couldn't. And he finally, looking like he was at death's door, took off a few weeks and went to a cabin somewhere and came back and had written, what I'm told is a very, very good chapter. But he had to do it himself and somehow that disturbed him.

Ferguson: That practically put him at death's door.

Livson: I mean it was pathetic; he was sallow, he was -- well anyhow -- so he and I didn't get along too well because we did the research and got some interesting stuff and at least one paper came out of it, which I wrote. Knowing a little bit about the world, I put his name as an author. It was myself and a very good research assistant and then Ted Sarbin. And he looked it over, and I don't think he understood the paper, and he sends it back: "I think it's fine, but I think my name comes first because I'm the principal investigator." And I said, "No it doesn't." So we had a big fight about that, and it turned out his name came third and we published the paper. But it was a year's job, it wasn't -- I mean we weren't doing too well, but the grant--

Ferguson: I presume that's on your CV?

Livson: Yeah, yeah, it's in here somewhere. And there I was coming towards the end of that one-year thing and still you will notice no developmental.

Ferguson: Well, except that nowadays you would think--

Livson: Yeah, yeah, that would be -- yeah. Yeah, adolescent--

Ferguson: I mean the field of developmental has shifted in interesting directions in recent years.

Livson: Right, yes, yes, true. I -- you're right, I hadn't even thought about that. And so somebody said Jean Macfarlane is looking for somebody up at the Institute of Child Welfare, as the Institute of Human Development used to be called, IHD. And, I mean I need a job. So I went up and interviewed with her and for reasons that will forever escape me and I never cleared up with her, she thought I was just right for the job. And hired me for the coming fall, and that was my entrance into the field of developmental psychology. And--

Ferguson: Truly, can't you imagine why Jean Macfarlane -- see, we were talking about why Jean MacFarlane might have hired you.

Livson: Why Jean Macfarlane hired me. Well, I sort of knew that she was sort of an offbeat lady. I did know that she had reached out and tapped people whom she hired who other people didn't quite understand why she hired.

Ferguson: Like Charlie Hanley for instance.

Livson: Yeah. Or even, I think, Read Tuddenham, I'm not too sure. Yeah.

Ferguson: Yeah.

Livson: She might even had a hand with Sanford, but I'm not sure. I'm almost sure, yeah. So I made no pretense, in fact I -- my memory is I made no claim to expertise in developmental. I made claim, which was true, that it was just -- and the idea of a longitudinal study, which I'd known about, really rang bells in me. I thought, I mean the idea of study of lives.

Ferguson: You had been involved in a longitudinal study, but somehow the idea of one--

Livson: I first found out about it just preparing for Harold Jones's developmental psychology comprehensive exam.

Ferguson: Because what -- the year that we're talking about now, when Jean sort of hired you, what--

Livson: 1953.

Ferguson: 1953.

Livson: Yeah.

Ferguson: So some of those longitudinal studies had actually been going since--

Livson: Since '29.

Ferguson: --'29--

Livson: No, '32 I think--

Ferguson: Yeah, '32. That particular one, '32. So those--

Livson: They really both started in '32, both the Oakland Growth Study and the Guidance Studies.

Ferguson: So essentially those studies are, had already been going for 20 years or so.

Livson: Oh yeah, yeah.

Ferguson: It -- you know it's not surprising to me that people like you and Charlie Hanley would have been hired around that same period, roughly speaking, because I think what happens when you start a longitudinal study is, if you have any smarts at all, and obviously those people had a lot of smarts and a lot of acquaintance one way or another with child development, you know, and some theories of personality or whatever, you asked a lot of interesting questions. Your data begins to pile up and about 20 years later you're starting to figure out what the hell do we do with

the data, you know? And obviously your record up to that point suggested that you had the capacity to do good things with the data.

Livson: Yeah. Well, I liked research and I liked to write and by then I had actually published a few papers. I had published my dissertation immediately upon Leo Postman's insistence that I don't publish it. The very first thing I did when I got to Worcester was write it up and send it to the *American Journal of Psychology* and received it back from the original edits -- Karl Dallenbach, you know. He only changes my "thuses" to "hences". Somehow he threw in a lot of "hences" and I didn't like "hences," and I was, you know, a negativistic little bitch, and I changed everything he did back to the way I did and they published it.

Yeah, anyhow, so I guess what I told her is, and which was true, that -- because before going to see her I found out as much as I could about this. And I was bubbling over with all kinds of things that I could possibly see done, including playing with the physical growth data. In fact I got quite involved in adolescent development correlates of early and late, and so forth. And I did do quite a number of papers on that. And -- but I mean I was just -- I think what came through, I would guess, was that I was very curious and probably quite bright and would be productive. And I essentially did exactly as I pleased for the years.

Ferguson: And also, I mean the other component was that you had a very strong, you know, math assessment. What nowadays we would call an assessment--

Livson: --assessment, but yeah--

Ferguson: Well, you know--

Livson: Statistical I was, yeah.

Ferguson: Yeah. I don't know why I call it assessment. I'm thinking about, for instance, Jerry Wiggins, who was a colleague in my early days at Stanford, who sort of almost was somebody who defined the field of assessment. And I think if you'd wanted to just stay in that field you could have. I mean you were interested in those sorts of problems. Although it sounds as though at that point in your life if somebody asked you what kind of a psychologist you were, you--

Livson: I had no idea.

Ferguson: You -- wouldn't you have said, "Well I've done work in perception, I've done work in social"--

Livson: I had some vague idea, more than vague; I really wanted to be a professor. But my speech impediment was such that at that point I saw as disqualifying. It was getting better. I was in analysis, which may or may not have helped that. In fact one of the reasons that we came back from Worcester after the year was for me to resume analysis, which I had started well into graduate school. And why she hired me, I don't know, maybe she thought I was cute, I have no idea, which would be for her an adequate criterion.

Ferguson: Yeah, I know.

Livson: Yeah. I mean I don't consider myself cute but--

Ferguson: Well, she liked people and when she liked people, she liked them very much.

Livson: Yeah. And she liked them--

Ferguson: And she supported them, you know, in all sorts of ways.

Livson: Yeah, I know. So I -- that's -- I mean that was the -- well, C. W. Brown telling me I had passed an exam by one point, Jean Macfarlane having the whim of hiring me are two of the most accidental and influential turning points in my -- I really hadn't thought about that, you know. So the idea of a life with a clear plan just evaporates right there. And when I first got there I didn't know what to do. And I did something which turned out, I think, quite useful for me and for the Institute. There were many -- I'm guessing at the number -- 20, 30, maybe more, unpublished manuscripts. I heard about them, I asked to see them, they were all in the file; some of them had been unpublished because of personal run-ins. For example, Nevitt Sanford had done a number of things on the TAT, which, for reasons that escape me, Jean did not allow him to publish. So I -- there were many of these things and I met -- and they weren't all in one file, but one suggested another, and I talked to all the old hands around there. There were a lot of people there who were not professionally trained. Oh, Edith Rathen, Doris Elliott, whole bunch of people who were on some government and workforce doing correlations on a sheet of paper about this big and taking about a day to do a single correlation. And I guess--

Ferguson: Yeah, I mean, I'm making faces because I remember doing three-way analyses of various - see, I was a student of Leo Postman's, so I was doing three-way analyses of variance to finish up my dissertation, which I had to finish, I had to finish up in a month because Stanford had hired me.

Livson: Yeah. Oh, you were under that pressure too.

Ferguson: Yeah. And so I was down there, you know, sweating away in the statistics room and doing three-way analyses of variance on the old desk calculators.

Livson: A Friden, Marchant, or a Monroe?

Ferguson: Monroe I guess.

Livson: The cute little Monroes. I loved--

Ferguson: Yeah, little Monroes. Was agony because if you punched in one thing wrong--

Livson: Yeah, you've got--

Ferguson: --you'd had it and you had to do the whole damn thing over again.

Livson: I know, I know.

Ferguson: God bless computers.

Livson: Well, what I did is I self-assigned myself the job of producing very, very detailed summaries of these very numerous unpublished pieces of research from the Institute. And I gave a label to that document -- it may or may not be in my CV, well, I don't know if I mentioned it or not -- and I did that and I passed it around to all and sundry. Most of the people said, "I didn't know that so and so ever did an analysis of so and so."

Ferguson: When you say that document, you mean it's something that's in the archives of IHD?

Livson: Yeah. I used to have a copy, I can't find it anymore. I'd be surprised if Pamela, who's the present archivist at IHD, doesn't have a copy. I may have even mentioned it to her, I'm -- and I think she once looked for it and found it, but I'm not sure. It was mimeographed, I remember that, and it was quite thick. And not realizing that what I was really doing was I was conducting for myself a spotty but quite broad ranging survey of the resources of the Institute, because these unpublished things came in all kinds of different shapes and sizes and so forth.

Ferguson: I mean everybody from Sanford to Harold and Mary Cover Jones, to --

Livson: I mean one -- there was one very, very intriguing thing which I don't think anyone even knew about. Well, the data collection at the Institute for the Guidance Study was run intentionally or otherwise in a very atheoretical way. I think if there was any plan to -- was being asked it's whatever happened to occur to somebody who was talking to somebody on a particular day. So it was theoretically neutral and that proved to be a blessing I think. I think if it had gone down a narrow theoretical path it would be less useful to this day. So there was a whole mess of stuff. There was one very nice thing about having people just tapping into their "natural" thing and measuring that--

Ferguson: Okay. Sorry about the interruption.

Livson: Yeah, no it's fine, but I've lost my train of thought.

Ferguson: Oh, we were talking about the atheoretical nature of that data set from -- or the cumulative data set--

Livson: Atheoretical is even a kind of a kind way of putting it, it's really kind of almost the accidental--

Ferguson: Sort of omnium gatherium, huh?

Livson: Yeah, yeah, I mean whatever anybody wanted to do, and so these -- I mean, like those tapping speed preferences, which nobody remembered, didn't show up anywhere, but it was done by a guy named William Sickles. Turned out to--

Ferguson: Oh I remember Bill Sickles, yeah.

Livson: You -- nobody remembers Bill Sickles.

Ferguson: Well I do.

Livson: Oh for God sakes. Did you ever know the thing he did where he measured intelligence by how well you could reproduce tachistoscopically exposed patterns of five by five grid patterns of dots with only some dots there and--

Ferguson: Yeah, but that sounds vaguely familiar.

Livson: Well I found that and with Flo we embarked on something where we correlated Wechsler Bellevue IQ with a scoring of Sickles' test and got a very high positive relationship. I mean one of the many unpublished things that we did. So I had fun doing that. Some of the unpublished works were in the area of adolescent development and precursors and correlates and sequel of rates of development. Yeah, and to so -- I don't know why that so intrigued me, but it did and--

Ferguson: Well, you know, it -- that early data that came out of the guidance study and that Mary Cover Jones, I think, had built into the, to the even earlier studies if I remember right, lay fallow for a long time, and then somehow or another, and I don't remember whether Tanner did his work first or that work here came out first or whatever. But all of a sudden there was a whole--

Livson: *Growth at Adolescence*, that's a great book. And I met Tanner once or twice when I was England and I was very impressed by him.

Ferguson: But there was good data.

Livson: Charlie Hanley and -- what's her name, poor lady that committed suicide -- Nicholson did this marvelous thing on, and it sounds dull but--

Ferguson: Arlene Nicholson?

Livson: Arlene Nicholson. A factor analysis of something like 11 or 13 different indicators of adolescent growth rate. And with the finding both for males and females of a single growth factor which absorbed most of the reliable variance, but then there were different factors for men and women. And in fact it was called the Maturity Score, which was very useful. And then Read did this monograph, this painstaking monograph presenting all the actual physical growth data. I mean with all the anthropometric Medford measurements for each subject over the years, you know. I can see it as a brown monograph. So, so I loved--

Ferguson: Read, I mean he was there and he was interested in developmental data. I think genuinely interested in developmental data. But Read was also a marvelous statistician in the sense that he could explain statistics to dumb heads like me.

Livson: I didn't know that.

Ferguson: The only reason--

Livson: I didn't know he taught statistics.

Ferguson: --that I understood factor analysis well enough to pass comprehensive exams easily, to have intelligent conversations with Quinn McNemar when I got to Stanford, etc., was because I had taken that course that Read used to teach for undergraduates in, you know, sort of assessment methodology, etc. And he had a component in there on factor analysis.

Livson: I didn't know that.

Ferguson: And I took it as sort of catch up when I was in graduate school and then I decided to go into clinical. And somehow or another he got me to understand, or I mean he got probably 50 percent of the students in the room to understand what factor analysis was all about, you know, sort of the basic principles. He was good at it.

Livson: You know I'm glad you told me about that because I never knew him well, and I share -- well what came through to me was really other people's views of him. And he was viewed not as a lightweight but as -- well not as a heavyweight I mean. But I liked him a lot and he was just reliably courteous and decent and fine and sweet, and his funny little walk.

Ferguson: Well his funny little walk, of course, was that he had severe rheumatoid arthritis. And--

Livson: I, I never--

Ferguson: --worse as he got older. But anyway--

Livson: Which he never complained about.

Ferguson: No. He never complained, he was just -- did his job.

Livson: Yeah. So I mean here I am gradually becoming a developmental psychologist and--

Ferguson: By immersion in the, mainly the longitudinal data.

Livson: Yeah. But, by immersion and with, as I remember it was no direction, certainly no constraints. And I don't even remember what I did first and why, that's why I'd have to look at the public publication list, because I just moved from area to area. All this, until '62, was in the old building, at 2739--

Ferguson: Bancroft Way.

Livson: Bancroft Way, which was originally the home of Professor LeConte -- I was told anyhow. And I had the whole attic to myself, except after one of the research assistants joined me. And then we -- and we'd -- I sometimes -- and we'd sit out on the balcony, which overlooked the nursery school, so we could look down on live data.

Ferguson: Just running around down there.

Livson: Running around down there. I did do one study with Paul Mussen, supposed to be a joint study and just ended up that I did all the work.

Ferguson: Paul arrived right around that same time at Berkeley as my memory--

Livson: I got to know Paul and we were very, very close, but he was a very strange man. I never really got to know him. But he came out on some leave, but definitely planning to stay here. And he carried around a little book--

Ferguson: I think he must have been at Ohio State till--

Livson: Yes, right. Yeah, yeah. And he had a year here, and he had a strategy and he had a notebook. And that notebook he had every member of the psych department, and he discussed strategies so far as I could possibly help. And he sort of worked like hell but always could kind of relay the kind of, the impression of verging on lassitude. But--

Ferguson: He also was -- well I mean it's sort of continuous with what you're describing, but he was also, in my experience, the greatest fund of gossip about members of the field I ever encountered.

Livson: Yeah. I completely agree. And he -- so we got to know each other quite well, and I had very mixed feelings about him because I thought that his reputation in the field, his academic reputation, far exceeded what I thought I knew that he knew. I thought he was a very smooth operator and a very extraordinary politician. And so getting to edit the *Handbook of Child Psychology* and, you know, all that stuff was, you know, a lot of it was political. And he also must have been a tremendous organizer to actually keep all these people on schedule and get them in, you know?

Ferguson: The other thing I think that really set Paul up in a certain way was the Mussen, Conger, and Viagan text, which came out at just the right time. The field really, I think, was ready for a slightly more theoretical, slightly more organized -- a text organized in that way, it really took off.

Livson: It took off and it lasted for I don't know how long in subsequent years--

Ferguson: Many, many subsequent years.

Livson: Yeah. I would run into Paul cutting and pasting for, you know, revisions. But -- and then at some point he got to be Institute Director, which is a whole other story. So I'm not quite sure what happened from the time I came to the Institute in '63 and found my legs, and then, as I say, oh, life was very good at that point because I always had a research assistant. And they -- I think Wanda Bronson might have been one, but she might not have been my research assistant, but I certainly worked with her, and at least in a supervisory capacity.

Ferguson: I think she was, may technically have been a research associate of some--

Livson: I think she was an entry level -- yeah.

Ferguson: Yeah, roughly around the same time, couple years before.

Livson: So a very large -- well, I more or less set the direction of things I was doing, and what sort of caused my moving from A to B to C within the very, very broad, unconfining field of the data, I'm not sure. But it was in part influenced by who my research assistant was at that particular moment. I once had a very arrogant Lebanese Christian named Elias Tuma. And, among other things, he was supposed to work with Wanda, and he said, "I don't work with women." Anyhow, we did do a paper -- well, you know, I forget it now, but it was a good paper and it got published. And years later I looked him up and he ended up to be a full professor of economics at some quite respectable American university.

My first contact and close friendship with a practicing Catholic was Tom Nichols, who was already 44 years old at the time. He had had a career in, I think in wildlife management or something like that. And we did a number of papers. That's when I started working with Jack Block, and having trouble with Jack Block, and with Thomas Nichols as mediator.

Ferguson: As who hasn't?

Livson: Well mine were a little fiercer than most. I seem to have run out of momentum. Why don't you guide me, otherwise I'm just going to ramble on.

Ferguson: Yeah. Well essentially what we've gotten into is sort of your -- that phase of your career that was based in what became IHD, essentially, somewhere along those years. And there are questions in here about what published or unpublished manuscripts best represent your thinking about child development, which of your studies seem most significant, which contribution is the most wrong headed, which I think is a good question. And sort of goes on to, you know, institutions you've affiliated with, teaching experiences and so forth. In a way for the sense I get is that it's sort of is almost like a, not so much a carpet that got woven with a particular design in mind from the very beginning--

Livson: Oh no. Yeah.

Ferguson: --but more like a patchwork quilt that you had that early teaching experience at Brandeis, then you came back to Berkeley, then essentially you got hired at IHD and that got you into the longitudinal research, etc. It doesn't sound as though, although there were a whole cast of interesting characters around, that you really thought of any of them as a mentor at that--

Livson: No. I had one mentor and that was David Krech. And while at the Institute -- well in fact I'm just looking at my publications and -- yeah, okay. My first one is the dissertation, which we all count, and the second was my dissertation in the *American Journal of Psychology* in 1953; I didn't miss a beat. And I guess it was very low -- very short publication lag. I wrote something called "The Note" on the Gaierand Lee's Pattern Analysis in the *Psych Bulletin* with this guy, Tom Nichols. I had forgotten all about that. He and I discovered something, I guess that there was something -- oh I had a very early interest in, I guess you'd call it typologies, in and patterns and profiles. I worked for a long, long time with Robert Tryon in his very massive and superb cluster analysis computer program and I was in on weekly meetings for revising it. And I think after he either retired or died or something, I became the campus resource for people--

Ferguson: --for cluster analysis--

Livson: Yeah. And some people would come and say, "What does all this mean?" or, "What should I do?" and so forth. And somehow, ideologically -- well, theologically practically, my main interest has -- the idea that there's no average person, there are typologies. And I think the best thing I ever wrote -- unfortunately in publication it got truncated -- but was the idea of, well it's called the "Developmental dimensions of personality" and it was a chapter which ended up in the 1973. It's probably the thing that I'm most proud of actually. It was at one of the early lifespan developmental psychology gatherings at West Virginia, which was itself a very weird experience. And the way it was presented by the chairs, who were K. Warner Schaie (who just was out on Monday as part of a site visit team to an eight million dollar grant application by the Institute. They were out on Monday) and Paul Baetes was the co-chair of this thing. They said, "You know, just write your heart out because what we're going to do is going to be a little meeting, dozen people at the most. We'll have it in very early so we'll all be able to read it. And we're just going to sit down and have a nice little session about each other's work, at great length, it's going to be like three, four, five days." And so I did that and I just poured my heart out on that. And I did things there that I haven't done before or since. My whole idea of kind of the big picture is that you can probably, with doing a lot of compromising, get people into some kind of broad typologies. And then you start studying within the typologies as though they are the whole population. And so continuity and change and everything else is not for people in general, but within type A, B, C, D, which I outlined in great detail, and practical detail, in statistical detail. But -- and I sent in my paper with about 40 pages, and found myself not getting the other papers that I was supposed to have read by the time I got there, wondering about that, but not too hard. And then getting to Morgantown, West Virginia and being told, "Oh, there's a change in format, we're going to have a big auditorium and all the students and a bunch of other people are all invited, and you'll have half an hour to summarize your paper. And, no, we haven't read the paper because we didn't get to circulating it." And--

Ferguson: Oh, one of those conferences.

Livson: Well, that was one of the worse moments of my life. My speech problem was then better, but not good enough for me to be able to figure that, well, you know, I can make it up or bullshit it or whatever it was. And I was going to be on first.

Ferguson: Where were you institutionally at that point? Were you still -- was IHD still your primary--

Livson: Oh yeah, yeah.

Ferguson: Because you hadn't gone to Hayward State yet.

Livson: No, actually, I take that back. I went to Hayward State in 1966. I take that back, this is '73; I totally forgot.

Ferguson: So your speech problem wasn't really interfering that much with your teaching at that time?

Livson: I -- well actually you're right. Well first of all, as a chair I didn't do much teaching. And the teaching mode that I was able to get was running small sections of the introductory psych course, which involved doing classroom experiments and demonstrations. And it turned out that I was quite a ham. And I enjoyed doing that a lot. And I would, sometimes, take over the big, sometimes 230 person lecture. And to my great amazement I was a ham there too. The places which I didn't like and didn't feel that I was doing a good job were the upper division courses, like an upper division course in developmental psych, which I felt I had the obligation to be up to date and so forth and so on. And I felt that I really wasn't and that I was obsessive about trying to cover stuff, which couldn't possibly be covered within one course. And so I didn't enjoy that teaching, at all. But I did a fair amount of that.

Ferguson: But essentially being trapped in that situation in West Virginia was sort of the analog, you know, with your paper that was your magnum opus, and having to somehow or another summarize it in 30 minutes.

Livson: I seem to remember going into the washroom and having some kind of a, kind of stroke, but some momentary loss of -- what's a fugue, I don't even know what a fugue is, but I think I had something, I blanked out, just momentarily. And then, I don't know, it's enough to make you believe in God or something. But then I went out and went down front. I had gone through the 40-page paper and redlined important things. When I started to look at that it struck me that, I mean, that was useless. And I just extemporized for half an hour. And apparently, I felt and others felt, that I did well. And I had a very, very good time doing that. That is one of the professional high points of my life, because it was actually something that I deeply believed in. It was, you know, truly mine, if you will. I very much regretted that when that thing got published I was forced to come up with a very, very truncated version of the paper, which excluded my kind of ideal plan for how to study personality development. So that was that. You want to guide me some more.

Ferguson: Okay. Have you ever -- or to what extent, let's put it this way, have you actually taught child development, or child development research? Did you do a good deal of that at Hayward, or was it only incidental there? Where I'm now is sort of on institutional contributions, because I think we really covered the intellectual history. Was there anything else you want to say about personal research contributions that doesn't get reflected in your CV?

Livson: Oh, which doesn't get reflected.

Ferguson: Or anything that seems notable or outstanding to you sort of in relation to child development research or, broadly speaking, developmental research.

Livson: Yeah. It's something which I only thought about since we arranged this, and it's completely lost. I don't even remember when. I got the idea before an SRCD meeting, one that was held in New Orleans.

Ferguson: Well, I remember an SRCD meeting in New Orleans and I'm trying to remember what year that would have been.

Livson: I might have it in a paper. But, no, I didn't give a paper there, so it's not here. Anyhow, I'm a little hazy on the details, but I was able to organize -- I guess I must have pre-organized since we met there -- something that I label the Developmental Research Consortium. And it involved in kind of a very loose confederation of people essentially doing longitudinal research. And I'm -- if I were younger I could tell you more, but I'm not so I won't. We did meet at least once at those meetings. And my memory of them -- and I'd be curious to really -- I mean I can't remember anyone else there, and I would like to remember somebody to ask them what they remembered so I could find out what happened. But I remember finding that quite exciting, the idea that there was sufficient overlap, that people could do replications, which really never ever got talked about. You had your longitudinal study and you got one cohort and you're stuck with it and that's life and so forth. That was way, way before the, you know, the more fancy cross-sequential signs associated with Warner Schaie, et al. and so forth. And I think I kept that going for a while, but the details kind of escape me.

Ferguson: Do you remember who was in the group?

Livson: That's what I'm so ashamed of, that I don't. I'm blanked out.

Ferguson: Well, it'll probably come back to you.

Livson: Yeah, yeah. It's been -- I should have -- actually what I intended to do was to sit down with this and kind of quietly free associate and let things come up, but I did not do that. So--

Ferguson: One of the questions that comes up in here asks you if -- what are the experiences with the research funding apparatus and, you know, the way projects get supported and all. I think you talked about some of that in terms of the sort of the IHD funnel that you were working in.

Livson: Yeah.

Ferguson: Do you have any other comments about that, Norm? Did you end up doing most of your, quote, developmental research with the IHD?

Livson: Oh yeah.

Ferguson: And what did that represent in terms of sort of funding sources, you know, support for the studies that you wanted to do?

Livson: Well, I'm trying to think. I don't think I ever got any research support other than for work at the Institute. The one exception isn't an exception, it was a small study I started telling you about that Paul Mussen and I did with the nursery school children, which was a cute little study, which I ended up gathering all the data, analyzing it and writing the whole thing up and then putting Paul's name on it. But anyhow, it was a cute study, but it was at the Institute. At some point I read the handwriting on the wall, as everybody else did, and I did a number of studies involving smoking because there was money in smoking. And I can remember pouring through the first Surgeon General's report and the second and so forth, and spending many years in that field and getting to know people at NIH -- which agency would that have been? There was one woman there in particular (in smoking prevention) whose name escapes me, very facilitating. And she -- so I did get, as I said, one grant through Hayward as PI and then another one through the Institute with Clausen as PI. And one of the fortunate things about me, I think I've always felt, is how sort of naturally eclectic I am. I sensed I knew, everybody knew, that at some point rather than being fully funded by a line item in the Institute budget for research psychologists, that began to evaporate and that's partly why I moved to Hayward. And that's partly why -- and in fact after a while I guess I wasn't getting any money from the Institute. I mean from its university budget. But once I started looking at the smoking, and this is one of the reasons, for example, that I enjoyed teaching at the California School of Professional Psychology and having people with an enormous variety of topics that they want to do dissertations on. And I would get immediately fascinated and enthusiastic, often unfortunately, or fortunately, more than that they were themselves about the topic.

So when I turned -- well, like my first main general area, I think was adolescence and physical growth. I think it was when I ran into the Nicholson and Hanley paper. And it intrigued me because it was such a neat combination of a whole bunch of indicators. And then I got very in -- oh, and then I read Tanner, and the idea that it makes a difference if you're early maturing and it makes a different difference if you are male or female. And that's when I started also working with Harvey Peskin. And so I didn't know I was interested in correlates of rate differences in adolescent on the personality correlates of maturation rates, but once I got into it it's just absolutely all-consuming. And then when I got into smoking I was amazing at how much I got into it.

Ferguson: Did you use IHD data--

Livson: Only IHD data.

Ferguson: And that was all IHD data also?

Livson: All IHD data.

Ferguson: Yeah, because there was -- there came to be a point where, you know, somebody put smoking under the rubric of substance abuse and then, whamo, everything took off.

Livson: Yeah. Well it took off and I jumped on that train, but it was all and always institute data. And--

Ferguson: So, in a way -- back to what you were saying about, you know, typology -- yes, but I think the thing that didn't come through to me as clearly is the way you were describing it was that it was also always the course of development within typology, or within types.

Livson: Yeah. I felt it didn't. Although I'd done that sort of work myself and found a lot of people had done it, but the idea of looking at personality development through the lifespan in an undifferentiated sample, I mean, it bugged me because obviously there are always enormous individual differences, and you average them out. And so I kept feeling that you could preserve them and find out wholly new things if you worked with indifferent types. And to some small extent I did do that and it sort of worked.

Ferguson: What's your take -- you know, I mean this is not my association and not yours, but what's your take on the trend of, what I think of as maybe, especially the last 10, 15 years, to see those types as heavily, genetically determined?

Livson: Oh.

Ferguson: In a biological sense.

Livson: Yeah. Well with a caveat that I don't know much about those descriptions, well -- I am hereditarily not a believer in hereditary determination. How's that? Somehow it just doesn't ring my bells. I don't know why, I guess I have infinite faith in the infinite malleability of the human psyche and it can do any damn thing it wishes. And, like for example, I'm pretty much aware of what seems to be now known about the possible bodily basis of sexual orientation. And I mean whether it's that stuff by Simon LeVey years ago and so forth. And down deep, I think, you know, I don't know.

Ferguson: You know it's interesting because my first kind of encounter, well, my first encounters with the sort of IHD bunch of people were of course Harold Jones and Jean Macfarlane, from whom I took a course, but it was supposed to be clinical psychology, and it was mostly just a course in Jean Macfarlane's reminiscences. And then my other happenstance, my first year in graduate school, second semester of my first year, I was assigned as Nancy Bayley's teaching assistant for her course in infant testing. And that was my first encounter with individual differences in infant development. And somehow or another I got struck with how babies seem to come in such different packages, you know, babies of the same chronological age. And so, I don't know, I -- somehow or another that leaves me feeling that sort of biologically determined differences, or at least differences that have developed by the time babies arrive on the earth, or, you know, pop out of the delivery room or something, you know, are pretty plausible.

Livson: Actually that's something I would agree with. And then of course later on adolescent maturation rate is certainly biological. And I was amazed as to how powerfully it determined personality characteristic.

Ferguson: But then there's also the sort of descriptive fact that those individual differences that are so evident in the first two or three years of life may not be very reliable. Whereas, the individual differences that are evident by the time you're looking at adolescence may be much more reliable--

Livson: And they are.

Ferguson: In the sense of prediction. So, you know, what do we make of all of that? But it does seem to me that the current fashion is to emphasize much more of the sort of continuities from genetically determined and probably observable differences very early in life.

Okay, so this is a continuation of the oral history interview with Norm Livson picking it up a little later in the day. And we've been talking about Norm's contributions to research, some of his publications, institutional affiliation, teaching experiences at Hayward State. Is there anything else you want to say about your IHD experiences at this point other than--

Livson: Oh, well, well as I said I had a free hand in just about doing whatever I wanted. And when the state money dried up then I turned to get the outside funding, which is how I really got into the smoking thing. And those two anecdotes I told you at lunch are probably not worth recording.

Ferguson: Maybe not.

Livson: Maybe not. When I look over my publications, which I frankly have forgotten, I run into one that I really feel very fond of and whether I would rank it highest or not, I don't really know. I was very fortunate, or whatever the word is, a very large number of my publications got reprinted. But one that I really liked, I guess it was sort of counterintuitive -- yeah, okay. Well it shows up in a number of places, but it's essentially adolescent personality antecedents of completed family size. And to make a very, very long story short, with variations and all that, I did not expect this and a lot of people didn't believe it. But it -- but, well, what actually based on a cluster analysis that I did at the -- of the adolescent Q-sort data. But it turns out that in the Guidance Study there was a linear and very powerful relationship between how intellectually competent (the name of one of the clusters) a woman was during adolescence, and how many children she had later on. And what I mentioned that study people would say, "Oh yeah the ones who are most competent have the fewer kids." But the relationship was in the other direction--

Ferguson: The other way around?

Livson: --just marched right up from one to five to eight offspring (the last category). And I remember publishing it. I remember presenting a paper on it, I think at Brigham Young University.

Ferguson: What happens if you partial out what we would think of as professional, higher educational achievements? Does that make a difference?

Livson: I still -- I think I did it and I don't remember, it's been a very long time. We are looking at 1977. Yeah. But I kind of traveled around with that paper, and at one point at Brigham Young and that result offended the audience and they were very polite (being Mormons and they had ties on) and they were very sweet about it, but someone in the audience, you know, forcefully suggested I go back and check my computer printout because I must have gotten the direction of the correlations wrong. Because the--

Ferguson: Like the famous Urie Bronfenbrenner episode?

Livson: I don't know that.

Ferguson: Oh. Don't you know the famous episode, I think this may have been Division Seven of APA and not SRCD, but anyway, one year Urie reported a sort of finding based on some correlations, and I can't remember now what the content was. The next year he came back, delivered another paper based on exactly the same data with the exact opposite conclusion. He said, "Oops, I made a mistake last year."

Livson: And he said that good-naturedly?

Ferguson: He said it with absolutely poised chutzpah. (Wow!) So that's a famous incident in the annals of the history of developmental research.

Livson: I really hadn't heard that. I remember Wanda Bronson was off to give a paper on some Institute data, and this was early in the years of computer analysis. In fact, I mean it's kind of a joke and an irony that I sort of fell into the role of the computer expert when first we started using computers, an IBM 701 up at Cory Hall. And somehow I would do the set-up and go up there, and you actually had to hand-compute on a desk calculator the first two results and sort of make sure that these things were accurate. And we were having programs written for us, and sometimes they had bugs. Anyhow, it's a long story. But she'd done this paper, which had some interesting findings, and I think the day or two before she left we got a notice from the programmer, it was a crazy woman called Elly Krasnow who had as her messages even in her programs, if you made a mistake, cursing you in Yiddish. This was the first program that did correlations with incomplete data.

Ferguson: You were not only the expert on data analysis, you were also the expert on Yiddish.

Livson: Right. Exactly. And so she came up, she said, "You know that there's a bug in the missing data correlation program. If your N is this, this, this or that, you've got" -- as she said, "bupkis." And, unfortunately, at least part of, maybe all of Wanda's sample used that N and I never found out what she did as she took off with the to-be-presented paper. Those are the vagaries--

Ferguson: What we were talking about Dick Alpert later and I vividly remember the day, the morning when we were rushing to do some data analyses on the identification study at Stanford, and he showed up and said, "Well, I solved our problem. I couldn't get the data to run through and I couldn't get the data to run through, and I finally figured out how to solve the problem, I invented the third sex." You remember the problem when you divided the sample by gender?

Livson: Yeah, right.

Ferguson: Zero variance--

Livson: I like him. I didn't know him well, but I really -- in fact I could never figure out the bond between him and Tim, because I found him quite authentic.

Ferguson: Well, we can talk about Dick some other time.

Livson: Okay. Yeah. I just remember something totally off the point, maybe it isn't. Some long time ago -- I'm blocked on his name, it's probably kind of some rising young star in developmental, his name may come to me -- had the gall, had the chutzpah to publish a paper, which as I remember it the point was isn't it fortunate that the entrance of males into developmental psychology has rescued it from the very sorry and embarrassing state that it was in when it was entirely run by women who counted blocks and did all kinds of other useless and stupid and unimaginative and untheoretically founded things. And he published that paper. And I remember just being absolutely outraged, and I think -- I'm not sure if I wrote him. I'm also not sure whether this was instead or all at a meeting, but I'm -- I think there was a document, I remember reading it. But he made a big point that the whole face of developmental psych changed when men finally got over their feelings that developmental was not for real men, and that you could put your quantitative skills and your experimental method expertise to use and so forth, and he just trumpeted this whole thing. It was the most horrible thing that I -- well, not most horrible, but it was, I mean it was so awful.

Ferguson: Yeah, fairly horrible in terms of sexism--

Livson: Does that ring any bells with you?

Ferguson: Well, I couldn't at this point identify who the particular person was. There was certainly an era in there and it was around those years that I was working at Stanford with Bob Sears and Eleanor Maccoby and so forth. Where there suddenly was an influx of bright young men into the field, you know, the Jerry Kagans, the Marty Hoffmans, etc., etc. All of a sudden it became a field that wasn't, you know, 75, 80 percent women and 20 percent men or whatever. But, and that also, in time to some extent, coincided with the ability to test much more interesting hypotheses because you could handle big data sets much more efficiently. I think that's really what happened; that was the breakthrough.

Livson: Well I don't know if it was so much big, but--

Ferguson: Well, complicated inter -- yeah, when you remember, as you were saying earlier, the days when poor ladies were sitting there or more poor research assistants like Charlie Hanley for instance, were sitting there and scrutinizing, you know, big sheets of inter-correlations and trying to make sense out of them. And if they'd had sense enough to use Tryon's cluster analysis it would have helped them a lot. But it took a long, long time for cluster analysis to take--

Livson: Oh, he had to sell that and never really successfully unfortunately. It was -- I, as I say, I became very involved and I'd go to these weekly meetings and I would advertise it around as best I can.

Ferguson: But you see what, when it became possible to do sequential analyses of correlations efficiently, it became so much easier to really test our ideas relatively quickly.

Livson: But one of the dangers was that as computer analysts became more and more accessible and inexpensive, more programs became available, I mean the whole world opened up. It was so easy to kind of have a, almost a casual thought of, gee, I wonder what would happen if we ran ta da, ta da, ta da, ta da. And so I would turn to whoever was on the staff who actually talked to the machines and I would ask them to do so and so. And sometimes the next day I would have this massive printout and it just piled up. And--

Ferguson: Sometimes the next day you'd have the third sex.

Livson: Yeah. And so I gradually, but clearly, became aware of somehow computer analysis had a down side, or was a mixed blessing. And somehow sitting down with the data, like for example, doing scatter plots, which nobody does, could be absolutely fascinating. You would see outliers and that would give you a, you know--

Ferguson: Well, and also sitting down with the data, which was something that for instance Quinn McNemar taught me early on, was a pretty important thing to do because maybe what you were looking at was a significant curvilinear relationship.

Livson: Oh yeah, yeah.

Ferguson: And you would never find that out if you just ran a correlations--

Livson: Exactly. Exactly the point. So I probably didn't start running through analyses, although I sort of did because I ran out of shelf space. But it was really -- I think I finally began to think more instead of, oh gee, wouldn't it be cute if, because sometimes when the tape came back I wasn't even interested anymore.

Ferguson: You know you were talking about Krech as a mentor. Do you remember, or maybe because you didn't kind of come through the system in quite the same way that I did, you remember his standard lecture to the first year graduate students in the research methods class?

Livson: Well I was in his first research methods class. He scared the hell out of everybody.

Ferguson: Yeah, I think maybe I was in the second or the third or the fourth, something like that, somewhere along in there. And do you remember the pebble pickers and this and that? The pebble picker is what you just described, the person who comes along and picks up an interesting correlation that, oh, you know, this must be--

Livson: I don't remember that.

Ferguson: But the other thing that he was really beating the drum for, in my year at least was that you have to do theory-based research. If you don't start out with a hypothesis and test it, then whatever you end up with doesn't mean anything.

Livson: He was quite fierce on that. And in fact he was so insistent and I was so naïve and so arrogant that -- oh, and well in the semester something like three papers were required, and the first one had to have 50 references. Some outrageous demands which we met. But I remember turning out a paper which was essentially, well it was a theory of everything. I mean here I was a young graduate student and I turned out this thing which ran on for like, I don't know, 25, 30 dittoed pages, all purplish, and passing it out a week before class. And it was probably almost the most intense kind of immersion to try to, you know, "think theory" (I mentioned earlier that I did just this for the developmental dimensions -- yeah, for the West Virginia thing). But it was a wild paper, and the excitement, I'm just talking about it now, I mean I still can feel the excitement. And at the time I was, what, 20 plus years old. And I remember the thing came up in a seminar, and it was small group that had evolved. Dick Christie, you didn't know him did you?

Ferguson: No, I just knew of him.

Livson: Dick Christie, Ravenna Helson -- yeah, of course. And Jane Torrey you probably didn't know--

Ferguson: A little bit.

Livson: She's alive and in Connecticut, or--

Ferguson: That I don't know.

Livson: And so the day came, paper came out and, I mean, I was just flying high, and my speech impediment was gone and I was essentially saying I had solved the problems of the world. And Krech did do that for people, as well as scare the living hell out of them. Once, in a subsequent year, Nanette Heiman was in that seminar, was she in the one you were in perhaps?

Ferguson: No

Livson: Yeah--

Ferguson: But I knew Nanette--

Livson: And so she did her first paper and did what we were supposed to do, and came to class and he says, "Well, today we're going to consider the work of Nanette Heiman. And my opinion can be very eloquently expressed," he picked up the paper and tore it apart. And she ran crying out of the room and he dismissed the class and spent the rest of the evening trying to track down where she lived so he could talk to her and apologize. So he was a very, very, very strange man.

Ferguson: Yeah. Now I, actually I sort of, in my academic career, made a specialty of making friends with strange people, and Krech was one of them. And so actually, he inspired me to go ahead the second semester and do the study that I dreamed up in that first semester. And I don't think it came out with publishable results, but, you know--

Livson: You got it for like course credit? He was a supervisor type?

Ferguson: Yeah, yeah. But, you know, it was the first study I'd ever done but that was fun.

Livson: Oh, I mean it was very, very, very exciting. Which was part of what I enjoyed in graduate school, there was great encouragement and facilitation of, you know, of actually doing undergraduate, doing graduate research independently. And so Phil McBride and I did very good studies.

Ferguson: You know one of the things, one of the reasons that I went back on that time as sort of from the way training tends to be done now education, training. But you remember what the ratio of graduate students to faculty was in our day? It was like about--

Livson: 20 to one?

Ferguson: Well yeah, at least. I mean it was--

Livson: I know when I entered graduate school there was--

Ferguson: I mean there was--

Livson: --there -- well over 200 people coming in.

Ferguson: Yeah, right, you know, the critical mass of on campus graduate students must have been something like, like somewhere between 200 and 350 graduate students, with a faculty that was not enormous. And that meant that people really mentored themselves and each other--

Livson: And each other. There was a lot of each other.

Ferguson: --to a much greater extent than today.

Livson: Well, in a sense that -- well one of the things, and I've totally lost track, because it started years and year ago, but the idea, in fact, was it even required that in order to be accepted into a -- or maybe even the Berkeley Psych graduate school, that you had to have a designated mentor at the outset? I mean is that -- somebody told me that the only way that they got in is if you were hooked up.

Ferguson: Oh, yeah, oh sure, yeah.

Livson: Yeah. It is true.

Ferguson: I think that's pretty much true.

Livson: Yeah. And, I mean, well, totally, absolutely -- well my own sort of sloppy philosophy is quite unrealistic, that -- in fact it is one of the things I got from Krech, which if he were alive he would deny, he would say, all of psychology is really just one study. I mean there's things that look different in a study like retinal cells than you study social behavior. But it really has got unify. And the idea of just working in one corner and not accessible, and somehow I've always believed that, and certainly doing graduate work you should be exposed to all views. The idea of kind of going into somebody's camp and being stuck with my graduate education depending entirely on working with so and so and with a particular species seems totally wrong. Even Tolman with his rats would very, very powerfully discourage people--

Ferguson: See, that was the difference.

Livson: That was the difference, yeah.

Ferguson: Because when I got to Stanford and got somewhat acquainted with the Hullian tradition, I realized what the difference was between that tradition and Tolman, namely that Tolman really didn't want little carbon copy disciples.

Livson: Right.

Ferguson: I mean he was horrified at that idea. He encouraged people to, you know, do different things and--

Livson: Take a clinical course.

Ferguson: Yeah, exactly.

Livson: No, I remember he'd insist on that, yeah. Very different persons lead to very different theories. This is probably relevant to this, I mean it should be: Dick Christie once did a study, I'm almost certain he didn't publish it, you know, on the obvious question of sort of how come Hull and Spence's students don't find latent learning and Tolman's students do? To make a very long story short, well I think he visited Iowa among other things. So the way rats were reared and treated in the two laboratories were totally different. In the Spence place they were treated like they were in some isolated hospital or something like that. With Tolman you had to love the rat up and kiss him and say good morning and say good night and tuck him and everything else. So they're totally--

Ferguson: Yeah, stroke them a little bit between the ears when you put them into the maze and--

Livson: Yeah. I mean totally different relationships. And so he actually carried out a study where he raised a group in the Spencian, you know, hands off way. And I don't remember which standard latent learning test it was. And so he could get disproof of latent learning with the rats raised in Spencian way and prove it with Tolman-raised rats. Which I felt was quite startling, in fact the kind of thing which maybe he didn't publish because people say, "Well just a minute, you can't introduce that into science, that's just, you know, I mean that's just going to rock the boat."

Ferguson: This was like about 30 years before ecological psychology was invented.

Livson: Yeah, exactly, yeah. Which reminds me of having visited Roger and Louise Barker in Oskaloosa, Kansas, which was a fascinating experience. I went there because my first research assistant, Thomas F. Nichols, took his first job there. And Flo and I were crossing the country and we decided to drop by and approaching it there was a tornado approaching an electrical hailstorm. It was this little town -- did you ever go to Oskaloosa? Well, it's about 30 miles outside of Lawrence, Kansas. And we had about three days there, including the first night with lightning like I'd never seen and the house shook. But it was just fascinating, because I don't know whether there was anybody before the Barkers who had that approach to observation essentially. I mean to really become part of a community. So the first night we were there they asked us to dinner, and the phone rings, and Louise goes to answer it and says, "So and so is having their baby and one of us ought to be there," because that's how they worked. They were going to be there, I mean with any event of any importance in the town one of them would be there to observe. Louise says, "I'll go." And he says, "No, no, you went last time. I'll go." But she excuses herself and goes out. And the following day I'm sitting in Barker's office (it's in the second story of a two-story building, I think, in the main square of Oskaloosa). He says, "I like to, I mean I work up here but I also can watch what happens in town." He says, "Well I can see across the street, there's a gas station. See that young man? Well, he's an Eagle Scout. He's also the new father. And in this town we've observed that there's no clear delineation between childhood, adolescence, and adulthood; people sort of kind of move from role to role. So in a sense he's still a kid and an Eagle Scout, but he's also a businessman and a father. And it's one of the things which makes 'Midwest' the kind of town it is; that there isn't 'you're this group or you're this group or you're that group.'" And he just talked on and on for about an hour or two about Hiatt. It was just fascinating. And the thing

struck me as it's the kind of thing that I'd never read in any of the reading that I'd done, and I thought, you know, this guy Roger Barker is on to something, and doing observations that I guess anthropologists do.

Ferguson: In your sort of educating yourself out of engineering, did you ever take any cultural anthropology courses?

Livson: Unfortunately -- oh, I sat in on a -- David Mandelbaum had a course--

Ferguson: Oh yeah. I took that same course.

Livson: And I wish, oh do I wish I had taken his courses. I mean I didn't have time, I was signed up for 18 units and in order to get--

Ferguson: Yeah, right. That would have been 21 units or something. But that course was wonderful.

Livson: It was more than that. For some reason I can remember I walked in there one day and he was talking about different cultures, different views of the causes of illness, and I don't remember details, but I just remember just sitting there with my mouth dropped open like, this is so interesting. I didn't know anybody thought about these things. So my life is an indictment of the importance of the absence of adequate career counseling. And I mean, because I had absolutely zero. In fact, I'd forgotten this, in that year that I was thrashing around trying to decide what to do and ended up getting into graduate school, I had applied to civil service for a trainee position in vocational counseling. And I'd taken the civil service exam, and I got a notification that I had passed the first and that I could have a job. And that came just about the time when I was getting in graduate school. And had that not happened, I would have gone -- for some reason the training would have gone down in LA, and I would have gone down there and might have stayed. And then much later on when I ended up doing sort of counseling work at Cal State, Hayward, that's after I stopped being chair after 13 years. One of the things we did was career counseling. And I was surprised as to how much I enjoyed it and how sort of competent I felt in being able to talk to people about their careers. I always used the same -- well, most often they would say, "I don't know what I wanted to be." And I say, "Well, I'm 68 years old and I don't yet know what I want to be." And they thought that was great. And then they would tell, talk about, you know, choices are for now and so forth. But forever live I thought, you know, if I'd only had somebody to talk to in high school, or even early college. Maybe someone would have said, "Well obviously engineering is not where you want to be." I loved math; that was true. And I did have a man who had written the kind of then standard textbook in calculus, G. E. F. Sherwood, a very roly-poly, Edmund Gwynn playing Santa Claus guy. And I loved the math and I did very well. And he sat me down one day and he said, "Have you ever thought of becoming a mathematician?" Well he's talking to a Jewish kid at 16 with no college-attending relative; I mean the idea of becoming a mathematician, you know, I mean, that's a job? So I of course--

Ferguson: You'd never heard of Einstein, huh?

Livson: Yeah. So I paid no heed to that at all. But I could have been so easily counseled out of it. Now people have often asked me, well, you've made some use of your five years of engineering training. And my response more, with more or less feeling, it was, no. None. Whatsoever. Maybe the math a little bit, but that's all.

Ferguson: Okay. Well, let's see.

Livson: So let me ask you a question. How is SRCD doing? Because I've really been out of touch totally.

Ferguson: SRCD is growing and flourishing. And I suppose I'm, you know, a member of the cohort that regrets its growth.

Livson: Oh, it used to be very--

Ferguson: Its numerosity--

Livson: Very homey, yeah.

Ferguson: But it's flourishing I suppose. Well you kind of dipped into SRCD and out again, in some sense.

Livson: Yeah. I had very little to do with it. About the only contribution, and I couldn't even prove that, is I think that I had been to an AAAS conference. I believe it was the first one where they had poster sessions. And I thought, oh, what a neat idea. Not for the practical thing of letting people get on the program, because they needed to do that for compensation and professional purposes, but just the idea of expanding the venues. And I believe, maybe working through Dorothy Eichorn, I'm not too sure. I think that poster sessions got started at SRCD very soon after that, possibly due to my kind of propaganda, because I remember writing letters to people about it and so on. But that's a long time ago.

Ferguson: Well, and that was probably also about the point of which that membership of SRCD had grown so much and the attendance at annual meetings they really just had to think about different formats, because you couldn't run umpteen parallel sessions and have them all be of equal, you know, stellar importance. And even as it is now, it's hard to pick which particular sessions you want to go to.

Livson: The case -- is it the case that they didn't used to really have parallel sessions?

Ferguson: That was the case in the very beginning.

Livson: That's what I remember.

Ferguson: I mean the first SRCD meeting I ever went to was probably '59. And, you know, there weren't parallel sessions then.

Livson: Well that's a lot earlier than my first. Yeah, well, in '59 I had nothing to do with SRCD yet. That didn't start till '63, yeah.

Ferguson: Till about '63, yeah.

Livson: Yeah. And--

Ferguson: Then your -- what would be about the latest publication in which you were essentially doing developmental research.

Livson: The latest?

Ferguson: Yeah. Most recent.

Livson: Oh, just the other day. No, I'm serious. Actually--

Ferguson: But as far as going to SRCD meetings and that sort of thing.

Livson: Oh. I don't even know. I'm not even sure I ever made a presentation there. And I went probably no more than a few times. When I went, I went for fun, which is not the case of going to APA, because I found SRCD very nice, very exciting. And I mean the idea of a broad spectrum of people really intrigued me.

Ferguson: Broad spectrum in terms of--

Livson: Fields.

Ferguson: --multi-disciplinary?

Livson: Yeah, yeah. I thought that was absolutely neat and great and that was -- I mean that was my philosophy that I guess I picked up in part from Krech, but in part for myself, you know. But the idea that somehow everything should and can be inter-related. But they were somehow enjoyable. I'm just remembering, for some reason I went to something in Maryland. I'm trying to remember whether that had anything to do with SRCD.

Ferguson: I remember an SRCD meeting in Bethesda--

Livson: No, no, I'm--

Ferguson: --that was a fairly early one.

Livson: This was in Hunt Valley. Here we are. It was a conference of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Hunt Valley, October, 1973. Huh, I forgot about that. Yeah. Which was a very fascinating meeting, and it'd have to be -- ah yeah, it was my birthday. And I hadn't told anybody, and I came down to dinner and Dorothy Eichorn had arranged a birthday cake. I was really very touched.

Ferguson: Yeah, good.

Livson: And it was a very nice group, a small group. And it was what these things were supposed to be, it was just a kind of freewheeling discussion. I don't even think there were any formal presentations or anything like that.

Ferguson: Well, so you had that experience with, that was probably not the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and SRCD, organizationally they're very different. But the two organizations shared a kind of interdisciplinary--

Livson: Yeah.

Ferguson: --character. Does that say anything to us about the nature of the field of developmental research do you think?

Livson: I'm not sure what you're saying. Although--

Ferguson: I guess I'm being sort of arcane or abstruse or something about this. But what I'm thinking of is that interdisciplinary character, the idea that developmental research is contributed to by people from a range of different disciplines -- medicine, anthropology, psychology, whatever -- seems to be one of its enduring characteristics. And these are things that make it interesting and productive.

Livson: Yeah. For me? Which reminds me of something I totally forgot. I -- from 1967 to '71, that's a pretty long piece, I was on the Developmental/Behavioral Sciences Study Section of NIH. And that was interdisciplinary. I met a lot of people, made a good friend in sociology. And, oh a very, very cute

Jewish Harvard professor in economics of all people, and we were going out walking at one point and he says, "You know, it's funny being from Harvard and you're from Berkeley." He says, "Let me tell you the difference between Harvard and Berkeley. And Berkeley people say, 'I must be pretty good because I'm at Berkeley.' At Harvard we say, 'Harvard must be pretty good because I'm there.'" He said this very straight-faced, then he broke up. I thoroughly enjoyed being on the study section, that was a hell of a lot of work. We met three times a year, and it was at least a month or month and a half doing the first reviews and second reviews and so forth for each meeting.

Ferguson: Stacks like this.

Livson: Oh God, you've been on study sections.

Ferguson: Well it wasn't exactly a study section. For a number of years I was on the review committee for the Research Scientist Development Award.

Livson: Oh I know.

Ferguson: That was a role on that committee that I sort of inherited from Alberta Siegel. And that was a wonderful learning experience for me because that was very interdisciplinary because that award was designed to help people develop into research scientists who had not necessarily have started out that way at all. For instance, young psychiatrists who had had no training in research to speak of at all--

Livson: Except they would apply to this program.

Ferguson: Except that somehow or another something had gotten them interested in research. And so they would apply for this award and they would get a mentor and they would get some experience--

Livson: I think that's a great program. Is that a government program?

Ferguson: That was an NIH program; it may still be going. You know Bob Emde?

Livson: Yeah.

Ferguson: Yeah. Well Bob Emde was one of our awardees--

Livson: You're kidding.

Ferguson: --at the time that I was on the committee. Yeah, yeah.

Livson: Awardees?

Ferguson: Yeah, yeah. He was supported -- at time that he went to Colorado and for years and years.

Livson: I'm almost sure he was on the study section because when you mentioned the name I know him and I was trying to figure out where I know him from.

Ferguson: Yeah.

Livson: And then I kept picking up -- getting on editorial boards of, I think always of the developmental journals, which was fun because, I mean, it gave you a much broader exposure. Doing all my work at the Institute was really very constraining. So I was on the *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* and *Human Biology* and *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* and, so on. Oh, and then, ha, I totally forgot.

Krech and Crutchfield's textbook, *Elements of Psych*, was practically valueless in the field of developmental psychology. And when I -- and it was published in '58 I think, and I was to do the first revision, which, except for physiological stuff that I couldn't handle, I rewrote like 80 percent of the book. So all the stuff in the book -- I mean it forced me to take a stand back and say, "Okay, what is this anyhow?" And so I found myself reading stuff that I should have read or known before and put it off a lot of time. I mean it was kind of a self education that I should have sort of had before. And somehow it's always been that field of psych -- for the brief time that I was in, quote, perception, I saw it as interesting and prestigious, for some reason being German or whatever it was. But it never really -- and while I was in the Gestalt psychology type thing, I was really fascinated by that. But it was nothing that really spoke to me; it wasn't anything I really wanted to become expert in.

Ferguson: Well, you know, it was interesting because I got grabbed around that same time by the sort of perception/personality research.

Livson: Oh boy, yeah.

Ferguson: You remember the original Alpost and Postman studies? Of course by the time Leo Postman got to Berkeley he'd abandoned--

Livson: Oh, he was embarrassed by that--

Ferguson: He was embarrassed by--

Livson: I mean it was on a paper that he did with Jerry Bruner, you could really get him apoplectic.

Ferguson: I know. But for some reason or other that was what -- that was part of psychological research that really grabbed me in graduate school, because I didn't really, other than that, those early experiences with Harold Jones and so forth as a TA, and Nancy Bailey, I didn't really get involved in research with children and developmental research in general, until I got to Stanford. But, so I was doing, you know, I was persisting and insisting on doing perception/personality research. And I also insisted with Leo that he be my dissertation supervisor. So we arrived at a great compromise. And the person that solved the problem for me, believe it or not, was Jimmy Gibson. Because I was interested, of course, in projective techniques as we all were in those days. And Jimmy was giving a seminar in which I participated, and he said, "You know, now the reason that the Rorschach is useful as a measure of personality is that the Rorschach ink blots are bad pictures." And he said, "I don't mean in the way that the jokes are usually told about them, if you think of them, if you really look at those ink blots, they're bad pictures." And what he meant was their representational qualities. And so I thought to myself, oh, I see, there's a general law here, mainly that you get the most self-revealing and idiosyncratic and generally variable productions to a standard stimulus that's ambiguous in the sense that it sort of looks like something but not quite anything that constrains you, you see. And so you could translate that into other media. And so I did it, an auditory. I invented some auditory Rorschach's--

Livson: Is that what your dissertation is about?

Ferguson: Yeah, yeah.

Livson: Oh, I didn't know that.

Ferguson: Yeah.

Livson: Auditory Rorschach?

Ferguson: Because I was using words, Leo consented to have something to do with it.

Livson: Oh, how clever.

Ferguson: And Mark Rosenzweig helped me to use different levels of masking noise to make words more ambiguous.

Livson: I didn't ever know that, that's fascinating.

Ferguson: Yeah, it was fun. It was--

Livson: Did you ever publish it?

Ferguson: Well yeah. In the good old *AJP*, immediately after I turned it in.

Livson: What year did you get your degree?

Ferguson: Technically, '57.

Livson: Yeah.

Ferguson: Although I was already teaching at Stanford--

Livson: Yeah, I know.

Ferguson: But it's interesting how, you know, these different pieces kind of suddenly come together and you think, oh well, that's the way to do that.

Livson: Well, without knowing anything about it I'm convinced that all this cross fertilization is gone and, you know, it just isn't possible anymore. You know, right from the start you are forced into just an ever narrowing funnel that you're lucky to get squeezed out at the end as a specialist in the, you know, third retinal cell from the right or something like that. And since I don't know any current Berkeley graduate students do whatsoever--

Ferguson: What I think we're getting at CSPP, the best of the students that we got at CSPP were the students who just wouldn't quite make it for admission at Berkeley, because, you know Berkeley is taking six students a year in clinical.

Livson: Yeah, yeah--

Ferguson: And maybe two or three students in developmental.

Livson: Yeah. You know I'm surprised that they got away with that because, you know, they have a large faculty and you have therefore a huge budget.

Ferguson: Well, I used to have great arguments with Postman, especially because if, you know, I could see the direction they were going in, you know, admit fewer and fewer students, etc., let's do away with clinical. And I used to say, "Look, you may not have noticed but Berkeley is a land grant university and it was set up in order to serve the needs of the people of the state of California."

Livson: Did you really tell him that?

Ferguson: Oh yeah, I did.

Livson: Did he seemed surprised, annoyed, irritated or all three?

Ferguson: No, no, he just thought that was another one of my crazy ideas, and he was used to my articulating crazy ideas.

Livson: Oh, that's--

Ferguson: He never minded.

Livson: Oh, that's how you got along with him.

Ferguson: Yeah.

Livson: I think you couldn't have done that if you were a male.

Ferguson: No, probably not.

Livson: Okay.

Ferguson: But I'm sure you're right, that the sort of general rubric for graduate education narrows, you know, you're admitted as someone or other's student to work on that particular strand of research, etc.

Livson: I think that, I think that necessarily--

Ferguson: The other thing that's interesting though, if you look at the current Berkeley faculty, is that the people who come in to be the, you know, expert in whatever, because there's a slot for that in the faculty, they may shift after a while.

Yeah, well is there anything else that we should say about the current state of the field of developmental psychology or--

Livson: Well I don't know if I'm really qualified--

Ferguson: --where we see its future going or--

Livson: Well, I was never in on -- the word political is wrong, but, you know, on kind of the innards, and I certainly haven't been in at all since, you know, I retired and so forth. And so I think that my view from afar is probably not useful. And in fact I would love to hear your answer to that if you would care to be on record with it.

Ferguson: Well, you know, I think you and I are both retired in interesting ways, because I think you kind of kept one foot going at Hayward and came over to CSPP. And I--

Livson: And the Institute, where I've always had a foot in the--

Ferguson: Yeah, and you really retained that foot at the Institute.

Livson: Yeah, I mean right to this day.

Ferguson: Yeah, yeah, so that as far as being an active developmental researcher, you haven't retired.

Livson: I do it mainly for social reasons. But that's certainly true, yeah.

Ferguson: How do you mean for social reasons? It gives you an opportunity to get together with Harvey again or what?

Livson: Well, with Harvey and Connie Jones, who's an extraordinarily bright woman. And in the course of it, sort of learning that about the outside edges of the leading edge of multi-variate statistics. I mean some of the things that can now be done are the kinds of things that I used to dream up, oh gee wouldn't it be nice if... And now it turns out that it is something that can be done. It's just, I mean it's become a new standard technique or it's not even new anymore. And so I find that exciting, and so I find it kind of exciting to ask questions of the sort which were not answerable before because the techniques were not available. And so Connie, Harvey, and I meet about once a month or so. And, you know, it's great, we've published a few papers. To my great surprise we got an award a few months ago as the paper of the year in the *Journal of Personality Assessment*, with a plaque and a \$500 check (we gave it all to Connie). But -- and I thought, well I thought it was a good paper, but I didn't, you know--

Ferguson: But that is neat.

Livson: Yeah. But--

Ferguson: Well -- so do we have any more final words of wisdom about--

Livson: If I had it to do all over again I wouldn't have gone into engineering.

Ferguson: Right.

Livson: And had I not, God knows where I would have come in the field of developmental psychology. Those are my final self-serving words--

Ferguson: But you think you probably would have ended up in the -- doing research in development psychology somewhere or another?

Livson: Yeah, weirdly enough I think so, yeah. I'm sort of not drawn to physical sciences. I'm not drawn to biological sciences. I'm not drawn to the humanities particularly. It's interesting to read philosophy, but I wouldn't want to waste my time doing that crap. And things have to be useful; they have to serve humanity. And I can't imagine any -- I suppose medicine does. But my own bias view is that I can't think of a field that's more directly connected with the, you know, with serving humanity. And I might have been clinical, because -- and I didn't, well, because I was, I started off completely the other direction. In fact when I entered graduate school there was practically, you know, don't even talk to those clinicians, you know, they were the whole other world. There was actually a study done by the VA, somebody administered a whole battery of tests, including the Miller Analogies Test, to graduate students in clinical and not in clinical to find out what the differences were. Do you remember that?

Ferguson: No.

Livson: Okay. I was a participant, and I think it was designed to show that the clinical people were low-grade fools or something like that. I did see the findings and the findings were quite surprising, but there were no big differences and they certainly were not more favorable intellectually to the experiment over the clinicians. But I didn't even flirt with clinical.

Ferguson: That may have been the Kelly study.

Livson: It might have been, yeah. But somehow I didn't even flirt with clinical at all. Flo was in clinical, certainly some of my best friends were clinicians, in fact still are. But -- so that I felt very, very bold when after 13 years of chairing the psych department at Hayward, I wandered over to the counseling services and said, "I want to learn how to do therapy." And they said, "Well, are you a graduate student?" "Oh come on." And they said, "Well, we can only take--" "I mean I want to be an

intern.” They said, “Well, you can't be an intern unless you're in a graduate program.” And then as a joke one of them said, “Unless you happened to be licensed.” And I said, “I am.” And I said, “Oh my God.” So I had a two-year clinical internship there with good supervision. And I don't think I've ever enjoyed anything more in my entire life. I don't think I've found anything more difficult, more exhilarating, more I really want to get up and get to work. So that's probably the direction I wanted to move in.