

Lois Barclay Murphy

- Born 1902 in Lisbon, Iowa; died December 24, 2003, in Washington, DC
- Spouse: Gardner Murphy
- Ph.D. (1937) Columbia University Teachers College; B.D. (1928) Union Theological Seminary; B.A. (1923) Vassar College

Major Employment

- Sarah Lawrence College: 1928-1952
- Menninger Foundation: 1952-1968

Major Areas of Work

- Child personality, sympathy

SRCD ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Lois B. Murphy

Interviewer Unknown

March 1995

Interviewer: Describe your family background along with any childhood and adolescent experiences that may be of interest. Include educational and occupational characteristics of your parents, where were you born, grew up, what was your schooling like, any military experience, any early work experience? Those are lots of questions.

Murphy: Okay. Well, my great grandfather was very important to me because I was told that in my early childhood that he had said, when he was in Ohio, "I've heard there are no pine trees in Iowa, but there will be when I get there," and I thought that was wonderful and that doing what needed to be done and had not been done was something I would like to do too. So that became a kind of underlying basis for my approach in general.

Interviewer: To life.

Murphy: And also, when I was four—or other times also, but I remember particularly when I was four I spent a summer with my grandmother; this was when my mother was pregnant with younger children. I was the oldest of five children, so one after another. I would be taken to my grandmother when my mother got pregnant and she was very much interested and very attentive and would let me do a lot of things. She also wanted me to help her on things; for instance, she wanted me to pick out the little black bits when she was preparing a chicken to be baked, and she would pick out the big feathers and then she would ask me to pick out the little pinfeathers. This was when I was very, very young—I was maybe three or four years old—and I got the feeling I could do things that grownups didn't want to do or couldn't do. And there were other things like this that gave me a feeling of being able to do things. That was a very, very basic experience. Now, my mother had been a teacher before she was married and my father was a minister, a Methodist minister who was appointed to a series of various positions later on, and so I got the feeling what with my grandmother and the many wonderful experiences I had on the farm with her, and also the skills of my parents, that I was part of a family that could do things.

Interviewer: Did you grow up in one town or did you move around a lot?

Murphy: No, we moved around a lot because my father—I was born in Lisbon, Iowa, and we moved about once a year, you know, where my father as a minister was promoted to one new place year by year by year until I was five. When we got to Chicago and we were there for five years, from my age of five—it was more than five years—from my age of five until my age of eleven—

Interviewer: You were in Chicago?

Murphy: —we were in Chicago. And I went to school and school was very, very easy and I skipped grades so that I graduated from the eighth grade when I was eleven, when the other kids were about fourteen. So my family would not let me go to high school, they thought I was too young, so I stayed home and took care of my little sisters, who were one year old and three years old then, and I loved them; they were darling and lots of fun, and I really got hooked on children at that time.

Interviewer: That was pretty early.

Murphy: Well, I enjoyed them so much and we enjoyed each other so much.

Interviewer: Then did you go to high school then in Chicago?

Murphy: No. The family moved to—my father's position was changed and he was given a—I can't remember the exact name of it, but anyway it was a higher, more important position and we lived in Kentucky across the river from Cincinnati for three years and I went to high school there. But my mother decided that this school wasn't really good enough for us and we moved over to Cincinnati, so that I finished my school in Cincinnati.

Interviewer: Did you do any work outside school? Did you get involved in any work as you were a youngster?

Murphy: Well, taking care of the younger children was my main occupation. My mother wasn't well, she developed bad rheumatoid arthritis when I was ten, so by the time I was in high school it was getting pretty bad and she really needed me to help take care of the children, so that I didn't at that time have a outside job, but I did when I was about sixteen. I wanted to find out what working people were doing, what it was like to be a working person. And I got a job one summer in a Gruen clock factory and I was putting down just one little thing—I can't remember what you would call it—around the clock where the numbers go, over and over again.

Interviewer: Yes, over and over again.

Murphy: Yes, it was very repetitious. I was very bored with it and I got so terribly bored that sometimes I would break my needle just so I could go up and get a new needle.

Interviewer: Where did you go to college?

Murphy: Well, wait a minute.

Interviewer: Oh, you have more there?

Murphy: This says—

Interviewer: Well, your early work experience is what they've asked about.

Murphy: I went to college at Vassar and I majored in economics and in psychology and I took courses in religion, too. And it was a great college, it still is. I enjoyed it very much.

Interviewer: Did you choose it or did your parents choose it?

Murphy: Well, actually the daughter of my mother's best friend had gone to Vassar and my mother's best friend persuaded her that I should go to Vassar. My mother always wanted me to be a lady, and I had no interest in being a lady, and she said, when I went to Vassar, "Vassar will make you a lady," but it didn't. I just came back and I was no lady. So she said, "I will never send another daughter to

Vassar.” I didn’t get along with my mother because I didn’t want to be a lady and she wanted me to be a lady and we just had different ideas about how to live. My mother came from Southern California, where there were ladies, I guess, at that time and I was more influenced by my father’s mother who was a very, very skillful, straight forward, definite woman and she was wonderful to me and I identified with her more. I wanted to be, you know, just a straight forward, honest, direct person who would do the things that needed to be done, and no lady stuff for me.

Interviewer: Other than not being a lady, what was the college experience like? Did you like Vassar?

Murphy: Oh, Vassar was wonderful, sure. I had—there was one member of the faculty was Mary Ely. I was taking a course in religion and she said that she gave a course talking about the environment of early Christianity and I was bowled over; imagine early Christianity had an environment. I was very susceptible and very excited about the new ideas that I got in college, but that was really wonderful. I took—I majored in economics and psychology and also took all these courses in religion and so forth. For a while I thought I would do something in religion, but then I was too much interested in children, and when I had my own children I was hooked.

Interviewer: Well, let’s go back for a minute. After you left Vassar, when did you go to graduate school?

Murphy: Columbia Teachers College.

Interviewer: And then—see, you’re already answering the next question; you’re talking about your interest in child development.

Murphy: Well that started when I was a child.

Interviewer: Way back. Yes, right. That’s interesting.

Murphy: Yeah, when I was taking care of my little sisters I was—

Interviewer: But somehow—when you got to Columbia is that when you decided you were going to work in child development?

Murphy: No. I was studying economics and psychology and I was oriented to working in those fields, but then I got married at twenty-four and I soon had two children. And the children were so fascinating that I lost interest in everything else, I was just interested in the children.

Interviewer: So then did you take a new major? Did you go back and study more child development after your children were born?

Murphy: Yes. I didn’t bother with a Ph.D. for a long time; I thought that would be a great nuisance. I was thirty-five when I got my Ph.D., thirty-five when this book was published.

Interviewer: Is that the sympathy one?

Murphy: Well, yeah.

Interviewer: Yes, right. I know that book, *Social Behavior and Child Personality*.

Murphy: And, actually, at the time that I wrote this and did the research there were a lot of—oh, there was a lot of talk and a lot of studies about aggression and about problem behavior and stuff like that, and so in line with my orientation to do what wasn’t being done I decided to study social behavior, not because I was so absorbed in social behavior, but because I thought it needed to be done at that time

when there was all this stuff about problem behavior in children and so forth, and social behavior and child personality. But my real interest was in child personality and that's what I went on with, that's what my next books were and that's—different aspects of child personality were what I kept on doing.

Interviewer: Were there some special people at Columbia that influenced you?

Murphy: No. Not really. They let me do what I wanted to do. And, you see, when I was getting my Ph.D. I was already in my thirties and I had already had a lot of professional experience. Lois Hayden-Meek was—later Lois Meek-Stolz—was the chairman of my committee, but she said afterwards, “Well you were so mature, you're creative.” And she really wasn't a mentor. I didn't need a mentor, I needed to be free and do my own thing.

Interviewer: Right. Now, you have talked about doing your own thing and you went in the direction of personalities of children. Were there some things in the culture, in the society then that influenced you too? You mentioned that there were lots of studies of aggression, but the question here is what political or social events influenced you? Were there some at that time that you think of?

Murphy: Well, let me think a second. We're talking about the 1930s and this, of course, was a special time in the '30s.

Interviewer: The Depression or—

Murphy: And I don't think that I was focused on the problems of the '30s, but I was very, very aware of them. And they may have—that's an interesting question because they may have turned my deeper awarenesses and concerns toward problems, because my last book, which I have a copy of in there—I don't know whether you've seen that.

Interviewer: Is that the—

Murphy: *Vulnerability, Coping and Development.*

Interviewer: Oh, yes. Yes, I have.

Murphy: It's a wonderful book I'm telling you.

Interviewer: Oh I know it is. I quote it many times.

Murphy: Oh, really? I'm thrilled that you know it. Well anyway, I think that perhaps some of the seeds for that came in the '30s when there were so many problems.

Interviewer: It's interesting, the next question you've already answered. It says what where your primary interests in child development at the beginning of your career?

Murphy: Well, they were long before the beginning of my career.

Interviewer: Right.

Murphy: But there is a point there, in that my own children kept my interest in child development very alive. My own children were fascinating and so it was more a matter of what sustained my interest in child development.

Interviewer: There's really a very profound continuity in your interests.

Murphy: Well, I was interested in quite a lot of things. I was quite an intellectual.

Interviewer: Oh, sure, but I meant in terms of your focus in child development.

Murphy: Well, it was a vague presence all the time with me and didn't really become a focus until later. I'm trying to think—it was an awareness, an interest, a concern with children, of being hooked on children all along. I mean I really was child preoccupied—

Interviewer: Yes. That shows, of course.

Murphy: —from my own childhood.

Interviewer: You know, if you think about the entire body of work that you have done, what to a student would you say are the greatest strengths in it that you would hope other people would follow?

Murphy: What I hope other people would follow would be the idea of doing what needs to be done and hasn't been done, whether it's child development or something else. I think that's the real important thing.

Interviewer: So would you say that's thinking and creativity that's the important thing and not—

Murphy: Well you can call it creativity or innovation or whatever you want to call it; independence, I think. Not doing what other people are doing just because that's the thing that's going on, but doing what needs to be done because it isn't being done.

Interviewer: Well, certainly your study of sympathy set a new path.

Murphy: Yeah.

Interviewer: It wasn't followed immediately, but it certainly became important.

Murphy: Well, the study of sympathy was in the context, again, of all the negative things that were being studied. I guess I was a little bit of a rebel and wanting to be independent, but deep within myself I was independent and wanting to do the thing that needed to be taken care of.

Interviewer: Well, the other side—I suppose I should ask the other side of the question. If you were talking to students about your own work, how would you criticize it and tell them not to do what you did? Can you criticize your own work in any way? What do you think you wish you would have done differently, or—

Murphy: Don't just copy what somebody else is doing. Look around and see what isn't being done that needs to be done and go ahead and do it.

Interviewer: What are the different kinds of impact that your studies have had on the field as you know it now?

Murphy: Well, you would know more about that than I do. I never was interested in following up the effects of anything I did. I just went on and did the new thing. And I have no idea what the impacts were.

Interviewer: Well, once—when you left Columbia and went to Kansas was that a big change in the way you were doing research or, it obviously was not a big change in the basic interests, but something was different?

Murphy: Well, let me see. I started teaching at Sarah Lawrence College in 1928, so I was teaching at Sarah Lawrence College at the time that I was doing this study at Columbia. And Columbia was a teachers college. I was busy at Sarah Lawrence and I wasn't really very much involved with TC or Columbia, they were just a place to get my Ph.D.

Interviewer: I see.

Murphy: And I—you know, I did the work for the Ph.D. but I was really teaching at Sarah Lawrence College.

Interviewer: You were there, what, about fifteen years maybe at Sarah Lawrence, or more?

Murphy: I was there until 1950; that was from 1928 to 1950.

Interviewer: That's a long time then.

Murphy: And then we moved. The only reason I stopped there was Gardner wanted to be—he was offered a position as Director of Research at the Menninger Foundation and that meant moving to Kansas, so we did that. And then while we were there I did my studies that led to *Vulnerability, Coping and Growth*.

Interviewer: Did you work with Escalona or had she been there before you?

Murphy: Well, she was there before I was and I didn't work with her because she left at the time that I came, but my research was on her children and that was wonderful because I had the infancy data from her study to build on and the children were preschool level—

Interviewer: When you began.

Murphy: —and that I could study them. That was a wonderful break.

Interviewer: And how was it different—how was your approach to research different, or was it different from earlier once you were working with these children?

Murphy: She was studying the children at—there was a little group at each age level in the first year of life, and I don't know—and then I studied them at the preschool stage and I—of course, by my time they were verbal and it was inevitable that things would be different. And I think they were just different because the situation was different and the children were at a different stage.

Interviewer: Your work on your thesis, your work on sympathy, was quite experimental. I mean, you had experimental paradigms. In the Kansas work would you say you were doing it differently? Were you approaching children in the same way or—

Murphy: Well, those preschool children, I wanted to see them as a whole. Yeah, I'm just trying to think now about just what we were doing. We—

Interviewer: You saw them over a period of years, did you not? Didn't you see the Kansas children in a longitudinal sense, or not?

Murphy: Well, I saw them through the preschool years, but not much after they started at school. And I'm trying to remember just how things were going.

Interviewer: You mentioned *Vulnerability and Coping* which came out of the Kansas period, right?

Murphy: Yes. Coping—I came across the word *coping* in a report by Anna Freud of children during World War II who were taken from their homes in London out to the country and separated from their mothers. And she was interested with how the children coped with the separation. Well, coping at that time was not in the psychological vocabulary, but I thought it was a wonderful word. So I did studies of children coping with a staff of three or four people, and we gave reports at American Psychological conferences one year. And the first time there were about four hundred people standing against the wall and everybody fascinated with this new idea of coping, and so we did it again the next year and coping just caught on like wild fire. Everybody was *coping*.

Interviewer: Well, talking about that book, maybe just think about the various publications that you had. If you just think about them, which ones would you pick out as the ones that you think are the greatest? Which are you most happy with?

Murphy: *Vulnerability, Coping and Growth*. I mean that I think is a great book.

Interviewer: Number one. Okay. What are some others?

Murphy: Actually, I go from one thing to another and I don't even remember what I did before.

Interviewer: Well, where would you put sympathy? Where would you put your Ph.D. thesis?

Murphy: Well this was my Ph.D. thesis.

Interviewer: Yes, right. Well, do you think that's pretty important? That's a wonderful book.

Murphy: Well, I didn't think about it until other people began talking about it and began saying that this was a great pioneer study of social behavior. And so I thought, well, so I wrote a great pioneer study.

Interviewer: So you'll accept that, right? You'll agree with it?

Murphy: Yes.

Interviewer: What about the book that you and Gardner wrote on experimental social psychology, what do you think of that?

Murphy: Well, that was a routine sort of thing; it was just pulling together everything I could find that other people had done. And I couldn't tell you anything about any chapter of it. I mean it wasn't really absorbing to me.

Interviewer: Well, do you remember that you and Gardner made the statement that went something like this: "For a child to be a certain age is to be in a certain social situation." That has always influenced me.

Murphy: I don't remember it.

Interviewer: Well it's there. But I thought maybe some of the things that you wrote about there you might think about or talk about now.

Murphy: Oh, really? I'm amazed.

Interviewer: What about—what are some other things, maybe unpublished things? Are there some speeches that you made or some appearances that stand out in your history?

Murphy: Now come on, I'm an old lady. I'm 93.

Interviewer: That's okay. That's okay.

Murphy: I don't remember things like that. I mean I got on from one thing to the next. What I did last week, I mean, that's gone.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, we've talked about a couple of very important things.

Murphy: Like what?

Interviewer: The vulnerability and coping and the sympathy and the book that—I know you're putting it down, but I'm saying the experimental social psychology was a major production in that period. That would have been in the '40s or '50s.

Murphy: Yeah, it was. Particularly the second one was better than the first.

Interviewer: I have it on my shelf.

Murphy: It made a point.

Interviewer: Yes. It's a great—it's a good book. Let's see what the next question is. It says reflect on your experiences with research funding over the years. How was your research funded? Did the institutions you were at pay for your research?

Murphy: Let me see. Before we went to Kansas I was teaching and I just did research on my own money. And then when we went to Kansas, let me think, they—

Interviewer: Did the Menninger pay for your research assistants and the costs—

Murphy: The Menninger Foundation paid for my salary and then I just don't remember whether I had other outside money or not. I was not the kind of person who reaches out for money. I think the Menninger Foundation paid for it.

Interviewer: You were very fortunate. You didn't have to spend your time getting money?

Murphy: Oh, no. I never did. Yes.

Interviewer: Well, I think that really covers that, because you're saying that the funding policies of the world didn't influence you, is that—you were supported. Let's turn to the next part which—some of which we've talked about, but it's questions about where you worked, what institutions and—

Murphy: Well, Sarah Lawrence College for Women and then I headed for the other, that's it.

Interviewer: At Sarah Lawrence were you a professor of psychology or what?

Murphy: Oh, we didn't have professors there.

Interviewer: But you were in the psychology department.

Murphy: I was just a member of the faculty. Everybody was a member of the faculty and we didn't talk about professors and that stuff.

Interviewer: What about Menninger, what was your title there?

Murphy: Doctor Lois Murphy, that's it.

Interviewer: That makes things so much simpler. That's great. Now a long question, for persons connected with well-known research sites, NIMH—

Murphy: No, I had no contact with that.

Interviewer: Did you have any role with them?

Murphy: No.

Interviewer: Okay. So none of that question—none of the rest of that question really applies.

Murphy: I never taught child development research or trained research workers. I taught an exploratory course. I believe that a student should have a chance to work on questions that they wanted to work on, so I developed the idea of an exploratory course where I would ask them, "Let's put up on the board all the questions that you've been thinking about that you'd like to be working on," and then they all fell into a perfectly natural combination of heredity, environment, things like that. But at least it came from them.

Interviewer: Right. So you taught various courses in child development and child psychology, various courses right?

Murphy: No.

Interviewer: Just one?

Murphy: I taught this exploratory course.

Interviewer: Yes. You called it that, but the students thought they were taking—well, child development maybe? I'm sure—don't you think they came to you knowing that you were interested in child development and so wanted to be a student of yours?

Murphy: I don't know. I was always interested in the students and what they were thinking about and I really worked from their questions.

Interviewer: Well, was there any time where, doing the research that you wanted to do and doing the teaching, where it was hard to put them together?

Murphy: Why should I put them together?

Interviewer: Well, I mean that you didn't have time for one, or that—see that's a question that comes out of today, but I think what you're telling me is that didn't come out of your experience. The question is—

Murphy: Was there a tension between teaching and research in the field of child development? I never felt any tension. I just did what I wanted to do.

Interviewer: Have you felt that some time you were doing applied research from just the questions you wanted to answer about children? Did you ever work in something like Head Start or—

Murphy: I worked—this question about my role about putting theory into practice, I never approached things that way. That is, I just—when I was thinking theory, I was thinking theory. And when I was working with Head Start and doing the practical things I did those. I didn't try to put them together.

Interviewer: You didn't try to put them together. Sort of mark it off, this is theory, and this is applied.

Murphy: I just go from one to another.

Interviewer: Right.

Murphy: Now I never joined SRCD. I wasn't a joiner.

Interviewer: I know that. I know that. You didn't join SRCD. Did you belong to the APA?

Murphy: No.

Interviewer: You really weren't a joiner. Are you joining anything now?

Murphy: No. I really wasn't. I just figured we really get quite a lot of mail from the APA for Gardner, I really don't want to get twice as much, so I didn't join the APA. I didn't join anything.

Interviewer: Did you belong to any child associations of any kind?

Murphy: I can't think of any.

Interviewer: Did you make presentations at the APA? You must have been invited.

Murphy: Well, those presentations about coping. Those were the main ones. I didn't routinely put my mind to doing something at APA. I just did the coping when I thought it needed to be done.

Interviewer: Didn't you get some kind of citation from the APA at one point?

Murphy: Yeah. Well, let me see, I don't know. I've had a lot of awards and I can't remember them all.

Interviewer: That's right. Well, what were some of the awards?

Murphy: Well, the most recent one was the Dolly Madison Award which was for my life work with children, and which spelled out many of the different things I've done. It had to do with children and it's a beautiful, beautiful thing.

Interviewer: What is the Dolly Madison Award? Who gives that? Is that a government award?

Murphy: Wait just a minute. I'm trying to think. Well, I don't know. It'll come to me.

Interviewer: Okay. What were some other awards maybe while you're thinking about it?

Murphy: From TC Columbia: Distinguished Alumni. And—

Interviewer: I guess—did you get an award from SRCD? I don't remember.

Murphy: No. No.

Interviewer: But I do recall—but I can't think of the specifics—that there was an award from the APA, I think. I don't really know. We'll have to look that up on your vita I guess.

Murphy: Well, wait a minute I'll get one that's right around the corner. I told you about this one.

Interviewer: Yes. “That the Teachers College makes known to all persons by these presence that Lois B. Murphy...” The Teachers College Distinguished Alumni Award, that’s yours. You’ve been presented with that. Well that’s nice. Well, maybe you’ll think of the other awards as we talk about some other things. Well let’s see. We were talking about experiences with SRCD, and that does not apply, so let’s talk about your comments on the history of the field. Now that’s a big order. During the years that you participated in the field very actively what did you see or what do you see as some of the major continuities or changes in that field? Where do you think it’s gone right or gone wrong?

Murphy: I don’t know. I don’t really think about the field as a field. And I really don’t know about the continuities and discontinuities. I’m always just doing what I’m doing. I don’t think of myself as a representative of the field, I’m just me.

Interviewer: Well that’s good. What about you and Gardner? The two of you had a real impact on the field. Do you think of his impact in a different way from yours, or how you and he worked together and had an influence?

Murphy: Well, Gardner was always very, very supportive and very much interested in what I was doing. And sometimes I was interested in what he was doing. He was more theoretical. I don’t know. As I say, I don’t think of the history of the field, continuities and discontinuities. In other words, I don’t think of myself as a representative of the field, I’m just me. And I have so many, many interests, you see, the research was only one thing. And I was a great photographer, taking pictures of everybody and very, very much interested and very, very much interested in my children. And also I have two younger sisters; one is eight years and one is ten years younger and they both have children. And the youngest one, Gwen, has a recent grandchild and she expects—and the grandchild and its family live over in Bethesda and she expects me to keep in touch with them. And my other sister who’s eight years younger has a daughter and a granddaughter, and a granddaughter is a very, very, very good friend of mine. So I’m very much occupied with my family. And I think of myself as a family person. I don’t think of myself as a professional. Okay, so I didn’t get my Ph.D. until I was thirty-five because I was not bothered with—I didn’t want to bother with getting a Ph.D. I didn’t want to bother with being a professional. I just wanted to do what I wanted to do. And then I decided finally that nobody would listen to me unless I had a Ph.D., so I have to get the damn thing. In other words, I was always basically an independent kind of person and I didn’t follow. I just did things I thought needed to be done. And then if anybody else wanted to follow those, then fine.

Interviewer: You don’t think of yourself as a representative of the field. Do you recall, in the period when you were in the New York area, was there a group of influential people like you, but other women in the child development field? You mention Lois Stolz, but weren’t there others—were you part of a little friendship group or not?

Murphy: Well, I knew her because she was chairman of my committee and I didn’t know her all that well. And she had the attitude, that, well, you know what you’re doing and she didn’t really—

Interviewer: Wasn’t there Carolyn Zachary, was that it?

Murphy: Zachary, she was an analyst. I was very much in touch with the analysts at that time.

Interviewer: Oh were you? And what about the—what’s the name of that school in New York? Oh dear, I brought it up and now I can’t think of it—

Murphy: Of course, and in New York period my children were growing up—

Interviewer: Bank Street School. Were you part of Bank Street School at all?

Murphy: Well, I knew the Bank Street people very well and I occasionally taught courses at Bank Street.

Interviewer: Again, I can't remember the name except maybe Louise. I'm trying to think of the name of an influential woman that would have been there at the same time, but you don't think of it? I just wondered whether you had some kind of colleague group. You know, there were not many women in the field at that time and here was really a group of women. I wondered if you got together or influenced each other. You really all went your own way?

Murphy: Well the Bank Street group was a leading group, and perhaps the leading group. And I knew the people there, but I don't really think of the—

Interviewer: You didn't feel part of a little group?

Murphy: No. And I didn't feel a need to. I had my family.

Interviewer: Yes. That was your center.

Murphy: I had my family, my children. They were the important things to me.

Interviewer: You didn't need colleagues in a sense.

Murphy: No.

Interviewer: Are there some other things to talk about to have in your history?

Murphy: Well, yeah. I mean there are things that you didn't ask about. Well, work experience. I was secretary and assistant to Mabel Fernald in Cincinnati for a year and she was a very, very lovely person. Let's see, I told you about the clock factory, didn't I?

Interviewer: Yes.

Murphy: And then I told you about that wonderful environment about early Christianity, which really blew me.

Interviewer: Yes.

Murphy: And then Lois Meek-Stolz, she just patted me on the back and didn't say anything really. And then you said what continuities in your work are most significant? Well, observation, the fact that I was always a very intense observer and very alert and very sensitive to what children were doing, what was going on and how they felt. And I think that's the importance of observation. It really isn't discussed enough; it's really the basis for what's fresh and creative.

Interviewer: In your research, your own observations are the data?

Murphy: Yeah, right. They sure are. And Sarah Lawrence College was a unique place. It had no professor ranks; everybody was just a member of the faculty and was teaching your own thing your own way and nobody looking over your shoulder. It was a wonderful, wonderful place to be. I really loved it. And I was very lucky to be there during my New York years. And I've been lucky all along. I'm just a lucky person.

Interviewer: Isn't that great? And you have family around you now, too, which is very nice. You mention your grandchildren or great grandchildren, which are they?

Murphy: I have a granddaughter who comes to see me once a week and I have a son who lives over in Virginia and also comes to see me at least once a week.

Interviewer: Wonderful.

Murphy: Yeah, it is wonderful, very, very wonderful. And I think maybe the other thing that I haven't said enough about is my photography, because—

Interviewer: Why don't you tell us a little about it?

Murphy: Wait a minute. I've got a lot of pictures right out here and I'll bring some of them.

Interviewer: We have concluded the interview, but we are continuing with Lois's sharing with me another interest, mainly her interest in photography. We're going back to the interview for a moment for Lois to tell us about her experiences in India and Nigeria. What did you do while you were there?

Murphy: Well, I was asked to go to India to help in developing an institution for children. And Nigeria, I went to observe and consult.

Interviewer: Well they're wonderful pictures. There's the same bad mother, right?

Murphy: Yeah, right.

Interviewer: You did develop an institution there for children. You helped them develop—

Murphy: Yeah, somewhere I have them. I want to remember what this is about.

Interviewer: Is that Russian?

Murphy: Yeah. Right now I'm having trouble remembering when I was in them.

Interviewer: 1960.

Murphy: Well, I guess I came through Russia on my way around the world. We went around the world in 1960.

[end of interview]