

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

University History Series
Department of History at Berkeley

Lynn A. Hunt

Historian of France and Modern Europe, Professor at Berkeley, 1974-1987

Interviews conducted by
Ann Lage
in 2012

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Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of Northern California, the West, and the nation. Oral History is a method of collecting historical information through tape-recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The tape recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The corrected manuscript is bound with photographs and illustrative materials and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and in other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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Lynn Hunt, 2007

Photo by Christine Thanlan Nguyen
Courtesy J. Paul Getty Trust

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[End of Interview]

Preface to the Department of History at Berkeley Oral History Series

The Department of History at Berkeley oral history series grew out of Gene Brucker's 1995 Faculty Research Lecture on "History at Berkeley." In developing his lecture on the transformations in the UC Berkeley Department of History in the latter half of the twentieth century, Brucker, whose tenure as professor of history from 1954 to 1991 spanned most of this period, realized how much of the story was undocumented.

Discussion with Carroll Brentano, coordinator of the University History Project at the Center for Studies in Higher Education, history department faculty wife, and a former graduate student in history, reinforced his perception that a great deal of the history of the University and its academic culture was not preserved for future generations. The Department of History, where one might expect to find an abiding interest in preserving a historical record, had discarded years of departmental files, and only a fraction of history faculty members had placed their personal papers in the Bancroft Library.¹ Moreover, many of the most interesting aspects of the history—the life experiences, cultural context, and personal perceptions—were only infrequently committed to paper.² They existed for the most part in the memories of the participants.

Carroll Brentano knew of the longtime work of the Regional Oral History Office (ROHO) in recording and preserving the memories of participants in the history of California and the West and the special interest of ROHO in University history. She and Gene Brucker then undertook to involve Ann Lage, a ROHO interviewer/editor who had conducted a number of oral histories in the University History Series and was herself a product of Berkeley's history department. In the course of a series of mutually enjoyable luncheon meetings, the project to document the history of the Department of History at Berkeley evolved.

In initial discussions about the parameters of the project, a crucial decision was made. Rather than conduct short oral histories focused on topics limited to departmental history, we determined to work with selected members of the department to conduct more lengthy biographical memoirs. We would record relevant personal background—family, education, career choices, marriage and children; discuss other institutional affiliations; explore the process of creating their historical works and changes in the discipline. A central topic for each would be, of course, the Department of History at Berkeley—its governance, the informal and formal relationships among colleagues, the connections with the broader campus, and curriculum and teaching.

¹ The Bancroft Library holds papers from history professors Walton Bean, Woodbridge Bingham, Herbert Bolton, Woodrow Borah, William J. Bouwsma, George Guttridge, George Hammond, John Hicks, David Keightley, Joseph Levenson, Martin Malia, Henry May, Thomas Metcalf, William Alfred Morris, Frederic Paxson, Herbert Priestley, Franz Schurmann, Engel Sluiter, Raymond Sontag, and Kenneth Stampf. Miscellaneous files of the Department, 1915-1929, are also held in Bancroft's University Archives.

² Two published memoirs recall the Berkeley history department: John D. Hicks, *My Life with History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968) recalls his years as professor and dean, 1942-1957; Henry F. May reflects on his years as an undergraduate at Berkeley in the thirties in *Coming to Terms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

Using the Brucker lecture as a point of departure, it was decided that the project would first document the group of professors who came to the department in the immediate postwar years, the 1950s, and the early 1960s. This group, most of them retired, was the one whose distinguished teaching and publications initially earned the department its high national rating. They made the crucial hiring and promotion decisions that cemented the department's strength and expanded the curriculum to meet new academic interests. At the same time, they participated in campus governing bodies dealing with central social, political, and cultural issues of their times: challenges to civil liberties and academic freedom, the response to tumultuous student protests over free speech, civil rights and the Vietnam War, and the demands for equality of opportunity for women and minorities. And they benefited from the postwar years of demographic and economic growth in California, accompanied for the most part through the 1980s with expanding budgets for higher education.

Carroll Brentano and Gene Brucker committed themselves to facilitate project funding and to enlist the interest of potential participants. Members of the department responded with interest, joined the periodic lunch confabs, offered advice in planning, and helped find funding. In the spring of 1996, Brentano and Professor Sheldon Rothblatt organized a symposium, titled "Play It Again, Sam." There, Gene Brucker restaged his Faculty Research Lecture. Professor Henry F. May responded with his perceptions of events, followed by comments from other history faculty, all videotaped for posterity and the Bancroft Library.³

Meanwhile, the oral history project got underway with interviews with Delmer Brown, professor of Japanese history, and Kenneth Stampp, American history, both of whom came to Berkeley in 1946. To date, we have completed a total of seventeen in-depth oral histories with this group, nine of which are now in print and on line. The interviewees represent a variety of subject fields and historical approaches. The series also includes one interview with a faculty wife. (View on line at http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/collections/subjectarea/univ_hist/history_department.html)

Diverse in their personal backgrounds and scholarly interests, the faculty who came to the department in the postwar years had one thing in common: all but one were men.⁴ In the 1970s and 1980s, as more women completed PhDs, women within the academy and the women's movement nationally worked to increase women in tenured faculty positions. The Department of History at Berkeley slowly began to add women to its faculty, beginning in 1971 with the appointment of Natalie Zemon Davis. By 1990, the department had two female full professors, five associate professors, and four assistant professors, of a total tenure-line faculty of sixty-two. During these years, women historians nationally were part of a broader critique of universalist assumptions about history and society that included significant contributions from Berkeley

³ The Brucker lecture and May response, with an afterword by David Hollinger, are published in *History at Berkeley: A Dialog in Three Parts* (Chapters in the History of the University of California, Number Seven), Carroll Brentano and Sheldon Rothblatt, editors [Center for Studies in Higher Education and Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1998].

⁴ Adrienne Koch was a faculty member, 1958-1965.

faculty. Feminist scholars, in particular, were integral to the radical changes in subject matter studied, methodology, and modes of discourse in the profession.⁵ The new intellectual and programmatic directions associated with an increase in female faculty were accompanied by sometimes contentious battles at Berkeley as elsewhere over the evaluation of academic work, teaching priorities, and curriculum development.

The second phase of the project on the Department of History at Berkeley focuses on the women faculty who came to Berkeley in the 1970s and 1980s. In 2003, Natalie Davis was interviewed during a visit to the campus, and in 2008 we launched a three-year project to document several more of Berkeley's women historians. As in earlier interviews, we explore the faculty member's contribution to her scholarly field, examining the development of her intellectual project and working methods, and probe experiences relevant to understanding the development of the discipline and the department. In addition, we discuss challenges facing women in the academy over the course of their professional careers.

The organizers of this project are grateful to the Department of History and to the many individual donors that have made these interviews possible. The considerable interest in the fruits of our project to date confirms our initial premise that departmental histories and personal memoirs are essential to the unraveling of some knotty puzzles: What kind of a place is this University of California, Berkeley, to which we have committed much of our lives? What is this academic culture in which we are enmeshed? And what is this enterprise History, in which we all engage? As one of the project instigators reflected, "Knowing what was is essential; and as historians we know the value of sources, even if they are ourselves."

Carroll Brentano, Coordinator
University History Project
Center for Studies in Higher Education

Gene Brucker
Shepard Professor of History Emeritus

Ann Lage, Project Director
Regional Oral History Office
Berkeley, California
May 2009

⁵ Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York, London: W.W. Norton, 1994), 153. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: the "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 471.

- Bouwsma, Beverly Hancock. *Observer of Campus and Community Culture, Berkeley Department of History Faculty Wife, 1956-2001*. 2008, 136 pp.
- Bouwsma, William J. *Historian of European Culture in the Early Modern Era, University of California, Berkeley, 1956-1991*. 2008, 137 pp.
- Brown, Delmer M. *Professor of Japanese History, University of California, Berkeley, 1946-1977*. 2000, 410 pp.
- Brentano, Robert. *Scholar and Teacher of Medieval History, University of California, Berkeley, 1952-2002*. 2005, 370 pp.
- Brucker, Gene. *Historian of Renaissance Florence, University of California, Berkeley, 1954-1991*. 2005, 211 pp.
- Davis, Natalie Zemon. *Historian of Early Modern Europe, Professor at Berkeley, 1971-1978*. 2010, 79 pp.
- Fass, Paula S. *American Social and Cultural Historian and Historian of Childhood, University of California Berkeley, 1974-2012*. 2012, 113 pp.
- Herr, Richard. *Historian of Spain and France, University of California, Berkeley, 1960-1991*. 2009, 256 pp.
- Hunt, Lynn A. *Historian of France and Modern Europe, Professor at Berkeley, 1974-1987*. 2013, 110 pp.
- Jordan, Winthrop D. *Historian of Slavery and Race Relations in America, Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, 1963-1982*. 2009, 194 pp.
- Keightley, David N. *Historian of Early China, University of California, Berkeley, 1969-1998*. 2003, 163 pp.
- May, Henry F. *Professor of American Intellectual History, University of California, Berkeley, 1952-1980*. 1999, 218 pp.
- Malia, Martin Edward. *Historian of Russian and European Intellectual History*. 2005, 229 pp.
- Riasanovsky, Nicholas V. *Professor of Russian and European Intellectual History, University of California, Berkeley, 1957-1997*. 1998, 310 pp.
- Schorske, Carl E. *Intellectual Life, Civil Libertarian Issues, and the Student Movement at the University of California, Berkeley, 1960-1969*. 2000, 203 pp.
- Stamp, Kenneth M. *Historian of Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, University of California, Berkeley, 1946-1983*. 1998, 310 pp.

Donated Collection:

- Borah, Woodrow W. *Woodrow W. Borah interview: oral history transcript*, by James W. Wilkie and Rebecca Horn, 1983. Transcript in Bancroft Library.

In Process:

- Halperin, Tulio, Latin American history
 Levine, Lawrence, United States cultural history
 Litwack, Leon, United States history, African American history
 Wakeman, Frederic, Historian of China

Interview History—Lynn A. Hunt

Lynn Avery Hunt came to the history department at the University of California, Berkeley in 1974, as a young assistant professor and one of only four women in a distinguished department of fifty faculty members. During her thirteen years at Berkeley she published two highly regarded books and established herself as a leading historian of the French Revolution and European cultural studies. Hunt was one of the founders of the influential journal *Representations* and an acknowledged leader in developing the field of the “new cultural history,” a term coined in her 1989 edited volume by that name. After leaving Berkeley in 1987, she taught at the University of Pennsylvania and now is the Eugen Weber professor of modern European history at UCLA. She is a past president of the American Historical Association.

This oral history explores her formation as an historian, including the influences of her family and childhood in Minnesota, her education at Carleton College, and her pursuit of the PhD at Stanford University during a time of political engagement and turmoil. Her three-year postdoctoral fellowship at the Michigan Society of Fellows thrust her into a “hot-bed of French history” and an engaging interdisciplinary cohort of scholars and writers, encouraging her to “think more broadly” about her historical work.

Interviews focused on the trajectory of her historical work as shaped by the years at Berkeley, her perspective on the culture and governance of the Department of History at Berkeley, and her intellectual partnerships within the department, across the campus, and beyond. She recounts the founding, in 1980, and early years of *Representations*, which brought together and provided “a fantastic level of intellectual exchange” for an interdisciplinary group of Berkeley scholars with a strong interest in theory. She discusses the growth of her interest in cultural history and examines the genesis and evolution of the field of cultural history and its recent critiques, which she views as expressions, in part, of generational issues in the historical profession. At several points, Hunt reflects on the influence of gender, sexuality, and personal issues in her career at Berkeley and in the teaching and writing of history. Finally, she discusses leaving Berkeley for the University of Pennsylvania and her subsequent move to UCLA.

The oral history was video-recorded at the Bancroft Library on October 4 and 5, 2012. Following transcription and audit-editing, Lynn Hunt reviewed the transcript, making no substantive changes. Interview tapes are available for viewing in the Bancroft Library. This oral history is one of twenty in-depth interviews on the Department of History at Berkeley; the list of completed oral histories in the series is included in this volume. Many of the interviews can be found online at

http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/collections/subjectarea/univ_hist/history_department.html.

Copies of all interviews are available for research use in The Bancroft Library and in the UCLA Department of Special Collections. The Regional Oral History Office is a division of The Bancroft Library and is under the direction of Neil Henry.

Ann Lage
Interviewer, Project Director

Berkeley, California
March 2013

Interview with Lynn Hunt
Interviewed by Ann Lage
Interview 1: October 4, 2012

[Begin Audio File 1]

Lage: I'll introduce us by saying this is Ann Lage, for the Regional Oral History Office, interviewing Lynn Hunt as part of our Department of History at Berkeley series. Today is October 4, 2012. Lynn, I'm very happy to have you here, and thankful that you agreed to come up from UCLA.

01-00:00:35

Hunt: Well, thank you for inviting me. It's great.

Lage: If you could stay an extra day, you could come to homecoming and see the UCLA-Cal game.

01-00:00:42

Hunt: Ah, yes. Well, but that might lead to mixed emotions, so it's probably just as well that I'm not.

Lage: I thought we'd start with personal background, somewhat in brief, but with a thought to what molded you and influenced the course you took as a historian. Do you want to talk a little bit about family?

01-00:01:02

Hunt: Sure. So a few words about my background. I was born in Panama, because my mother was sent there during the war, by the US Army. My father had been living there for several years already, as an independent electrical contractor, working in private businesses in Panama. So I was born there, and my sister was born there, and we moved back to the United States in 1948. I grew up in Minnesota, which is a very particular kind of place to grow up. It's very sort of optimistic, quite liberal. It was different from other places, but a great place to grow up. I went to Carleton College, which was in Minnesota, thirty-five miles from where my parents lived. Then I went to Stanford for my PhD, because it was in the West and had palm trees, and I visited it in January.

Lage: Now, I'm going to make you talk in more detail. Should we go back a little bit?

01-00:01:57

Hunt: Sure, if you want. Okay, you want more detail.

Lage: More about your family and your upbringing, expectations, interests as a child, all of that kind of thing.

01-00:02:09

Hunt:

Okay. So I was born in Panama, because my mother was there during the war because of the government, and my father had been there for several years, having left the country during the Depression. He had been kicked out of the Naval Academy at Annapolis, and then he went to MIT, and we ended up in Minnesota when I was two and a half and my sister was very young.

Minnesota was a very interesting place to grow up because it was very liberal, politically. It had a longstanding sort of tradition of liberalism. My mother was a Democrat, my father was a Republican. My mother was extremely interested in politics, so we always knew all the latest things in politics. There were a lot of political meetings at our house, when I was growing up.

My mother's parents lived in St. Paul, which is why we went back to St. Paul. My mother was an only child, but her mother had been born in western Minnesota, into a German-speaking family; and her father was a German-speaking immigrant from, we said at the time, Russia; but it turns out now it was Ukraine, which had a very large German-speaking population. So when I was growing up, I was interested in politics, but I was really interested in history already, because of the immigrant background. It was, what does it mean to be an American? What does it mean to be a European?

Lage:

You mean you thought about these things, or they came up?

01-00:03:44

Hunt:

In truth, I have a very strong memory of thinking I was one of the luckiest people in the world, because I grew up in the United States, where people were relatively prosperous, and where there could be the kind of social mobility that my family had experienced. My grandfather, when he came from Ukraine, worked on the railroad, making ties for railroad tracks. He was a blacksmith. My grandmother had been a seamstress in a sweatshop and then got married, had a child. They spoke German; my mother spoke English. My mother went to high school, graduated first in her high school class, and no one suggested that she go to college. And my father came from a much more sophisticated, East Coast family. Although he'd been abandoned, essentially, by his father, when his mother died, to be brought up by his grandfather, who was a doctor.

Lage:

In what state?

01-00:04:42

Hunt:

In Massachusetts. So his mother died in a tobogganing accident, when he was a child. His father left him with his grandfather. His father remarried, and my father was never a part of the new family. So he was brought up by his grandfather, and his best friend-playmate was actually his aunt, who was only a few years older than he was. So he remembers growing up in a huge house, with really no one to hang out with and a somewhat dreary growing up,

because there was no intermediate generation. So he went to Annapolis, was kicked out of Annapolis.

Lage: Did he talk about why he was kicked out?

01-00:05:31

Hunt: His only thing he was ever willing to say about being kicked out of Annapolis was that he was told he had to stay in his room, and he left his room, and he was kicked out for disobeying the rules, in his senior year. Then it was 1929. My memory was that he then went to MIT; my sister's memory was that he went to MIT first, and then went to the Naval Academy. In any case, at the beginning of the Depression, he left the United States and got a job on a United Fruit Company boat—presumably, being an electrical engineer of some kind—and he ended up in Panama, being an electrical engineer, far away from the United States, where I'm not sure he felt he had a lot of attachments. So when he met my mother, who was sixteen years younger, and they got married and had children, they moved back to Minnesota because that's where her parents lived.

Lage: Did he have a lot of attachment, a lot of family feeling, as a father and husband?

01-00:06:32

Hunt: Yeah, the thing that was really striking about my father was—other than that he was from the East and so he was much more formal than most of the people in Minnesota; he always called all of our male friends sir, and this always made a very big impression. He was very gallant. He always gave the impression—and I think this had an enormous impact on me and my two sisters, who are younger—that the most wonderful thing that ever happened to him in his life was to get married and have children. So he came home every day at five o'clock, and we were always incredibly excited when he came home. And everything revolved sort of around him, because my mother was a stay-at-home mother at the time, before she got involved in politics in a more official way.

Lage: Now, he was a Republican, she was a Democrat. She was involved in local politics?

01-00:07:26

Hunt: She was involved in everything. From as little as I can remember, I remember the 1952 election—I was seven—and my mother was totally in favor of Stevenson, and my father was in favor of Eisenhower. When Eisenhower won, I remember that my mother put up a big sign that said, "We like Ike," to show that there were no hard feelings. But in this election, and also in the '56 election, both of which Stevenson ran in, my mother got all of her aunts and uncles—of which there were many in St. Paul, because my grandmother came from a family of fourteen, many of whom lived in St. Paul; not all, but many

of whom lived in St. Paul—my mother made sure all of them were registered to vote and basically got them to vote Democratic.

Lage: But never convinced your father.

01-00:08:18

Hunt: Well, when my mother ran for office, finally, in 1972, after I had graduated from college and moved away to go to graduate school, she ran as a Democrat, and I'm pretty sure he voted for her.

Lage: [laughs] That's a good story. Well, what were the expectations for you and your sisters? You say your mother, it was never suggested she go to college.

01-00:08:39

Hunt: Well, right, but she did graduate first in her class, so there was a way in which, obviously, doing well in school mattered. My parents made it clear that they expected us to go to college. I think in the case of my father, at least with me, as the oldest, he talked a fair amount about getting a PhD. Or if not getting a PhD, that education was very important. When I was trying to decide where to go to college, they encouraged me, for example, to go to the social teas that were held by Bryn Mawr and Wellesley. My father really wanted me to go to Wellesley.

Lage: He wanted you to go East.

01-00:09:27

Hunt: Because he grew up in Massachusetts. He grew up outside of Boston.

Lage: Well, how did you happen to pick Carleton?

01-00:09:33

Hunt: Well, I had grown up in Minnesota. My grandparents—my grandfather in particular—had trouble speaking English. The idea of going to the East Coast just seemed like way too much to take on. In those days—this was the early sixties; I went to college in 1963—girls who went to the teas for East Coast colleges for women, in particular, wore white gloves. So I think I had a very good sense that was pushing the envelope a little too much. The other option was to go to Macalester, which was six blocks from where my parents lived, and I thought that was a really bad idea, because I'd be very close to home. Interestingly, my mother, who had never gone to college, was completely opposed to my going to the University of Minnesota, because they had fraternities and sororities, and she considered them undemocratic. So I was not encouraged to go to the U of M, as we called it, even though it would've been much cheaper. So when I was accepted to Carleton, that seemed like the right compromise: a serious liberal arts college that wasn't right there. I would live at Carleton.

Lage: How far did you say it was?

01-00:10:55

Hunt: Thirty-five miles. But in those days, the highway wasn't very good, and the professors didn't commute in those days. Now they do commute from Minneapolis-St. Paul; but at the time, everyone was there. You were required to live in the dormitory. When I was there, you couldn't even live off campus. And you couldn't have a car. So it was very much a kind of complete experience.

Lage: I've always heard about Carleton, that it has tunnels underneath, to travel in the snow.

01-00:11:23

Hunt: It did. In those days, of course, because it was the early sixties, there were women's dorms and men's dorms; there were no mixed dorms. And there were tunnels between the women's dorms.

Lage: But not between the women and—

01-00:11:34

Hunt: Well, the men's dorms were more spread out in different parts of campus, but there were certainly no tunnels between the women's dorms and the men's dorms, because in those days, there were huge fights about whether men would be even allowed to visit in the women's dormitories.

Lage: Well, that was kind of the time of change, for those social—

01-00:11:48

Hunt: Oh, it was a huge time of change. It was a fantastic time to be in college. There were endless fights. I remember the dean of students particularly well, but I can't come up with her name right now. It was a while ago. I used to go into her office. There were student organizations, and we were constantly fighting what was called in loco parentis; that the college was supposed to represent the obligations of parents. So we were constantly fighting about the rules for dorm visitation. Boys could visit the women's dorms, as long as the door was kept open and three feet were on the floor.

Lage: Now, could they go in the girls' rooms?

01-00:12:30

Hunt: They could go in the girls' rooms, as long as three feet were on the floor. That was the rule, literally. There were certain hours in which there could be visitation. The other thing we fought was that freshmen had to be in at, I think, ten, and sophomores had to be—women; the men had no hours. Sophomores had to be in at eleven, and juniors and seniors could stay up till midnight. Of course, there was nothing to do in Northfield, Minnesota, except see someone of the opposite sex or the same sex or whatever. But there were these rules, and we were fighting those rules at the same time as there was civil rights and the Vietnam War. So it was wild.

Lage: Yeah. How much was civil rights an issue at Carleton?

01-00:13:19

Hunt: Civil rights was big everywhere. This is what I think people don't really know, if they weren't in school at that time. There were all kinds of people being recruited to go to the South on freedom marches. Now, I did not do that. But there were marches on campuses, and there were especially marches against the war, on campus. Everyone knew about what was going on in the South, and some of the people were actually going to the South. I spent my summers in between college years working to make money, because I was on scholarship, somewhat— I was a work-study student, I had a partial scholarship, and I needed to make money in the summer to make up some of the amount of money. Other people were going to Europe or to the South or doing various interesting programs, but I was working for 3M, which was one of the big companies in Minnesota.

Lage: Did that impact you at all? Did you feel a sense of—

01-00:14:12

Hunt: Well, it had a huge impact on me, in that it gave me no desire to work after college in business, because what women could do in those days in business— Between my senior year of high school and my first year of college, I spent the entire summer working for the St. Paul Insurance Company. There were no computers. I typed addresses on 750 envelopes a day, with a break for Coca-Cola in the morning and a break for Coca-Cola in the afternoon—we had our beautiful Coke machine—and a break to eat my lunch, that I brought with me. That was enough to convince me that it was better to get a skill.

Lage: Or you have to get a PhD.

01-00:15:02

Hunt: I could type very well. I could type very well. But a skill in the sense of something that I could really do afterwards. So it was pretty clear that if I didn't want to have a menial job, that it would be better to get a higher degree.

Lage: Yeah. Of course, teaching was always an option, for women.

01-00:15:20

Hunt: Yes. Yes, but at Carleton, there were not so many people who did high school teaching. People went on and did either MAs or PhDs, or they went to law school. Huge numbers of people went into the Peace Corps first. Not that many people went to business school. A lot of people went to graduate school, as I did, immediately.

Lage: Were there particular mentors? You studied history, I'm guessing.

01-00:15:38

Hunt: I had studied history and I had great history professors. Actually, when I first went to Carleton, I thought I was going to be in the sciences. Then I realized I

was kind of average in the sciences. The first major I had in college was actually German, German language and literature, because I'd studied German in high school because my grandparents spoke German.

Lage: Did you speak with them in German?

01-00:16:12

Hunt: No. No. They were peculiar. They didn't speak in German with each other; they went to a German-speaking church, the whole time I was growing up, in St. Paul. They still had that. But I never actually heard them speak German to each other. I'm not sure they didn't speak English to each other, because they may have spoke— My grandmother grew up in the United States, so she was very confident in English. My grandfather was less confident in English. So no, I didn't speak German with them, but German was an obvious thing for me to do when I went to college. So I first started in German, and then I switched to history when I realized that it was more interesting and more challenging.

Lage: Okay. Now, tell me about the decision to go to grad school in history and why you decided to go to Stanford?

01-00:16:56

Hunt: I had great teachers as an undergraduate. Actually, I would say almost of them were really fantastic, in different ways. It was a sufficiently small school, but we had some big history classes because history was very popular. I still remember taking American intellectual history with Carlton Qualey, who was an elderly gentleman who was the brother-in-law of E. E. Cummings. His course on American intellectual history was so popular that he held it at eight a.m. on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Lage: And people still came.

01-00:17:33

Hunt: There were eighty-plus students in the class, which for Carleton was immense. I did sufficiently well in that, that in my senior year— This was, I think, another thing that got me oriented towards graduate school. In my senior year, there was a special seminar—held, I believe, in the fall quarter of my senior year—on Thorstein Veblen, because it was the 100th year anniversary, I think, of the college, and Thorstein Veblen was its most famous graduate. So if you were accepted into this class—which had twelve or fifteen students, to write a major research paper—the summer before, you had to commit yourself to reading the entire works of Thorstein Veblen before you came back in the fall—which I did. We all had to write a major research paper, and we had all these famous people, including John Kenneth Galbraith, who came and gave a speech and met with our seminar. It was quarter system, so it was ten weeks.

I wrote a long paper, I remember, on the machine process in Thorstein Veblen. My professor, who was Carlton Qualey, from whom I had had

American intellectual history, thought I should publish it as an article. But I thought, I'm an undergraduate; that's ridiculous. That can't possibly be true. So I did not do it. But that got me going on the idea that I could go to graduate school. I knew I wanted to go in European history, because of my grandparents. So I went to graduate school in twentieth century German history, actually.

Lage: That was your original subject area?

01-00:19:11

Hunt: My original. And I went to Stanford because they had a very famous professor in twentieth century German history, who not coincidentally, was the teacher of one of my teachers at Carleton.

Lage: Ah. And who was that?

01-00:19:21

Hunt: My teacher at Carleton's name was Diet Prowe. He had studied with Gordon Craig, at Stanford, who was a very famous German historian. So I applied to Stanford to do German history, and I applied to Wisconsin to do nineteenth century German history, and I applied in various different things; but I was also really interested in the French Revolution, because the most charismatic teacher at Carleton was in French history. His name was Carl Weiner, and many people who have gone on in French history from Carleton College studied with him. He just really got people incredibly interested.

Lage: When you say charismatic, what was his style?

01-00:20:02

Hunt: Mainly, it was that he was an incredibly enthusiastic and passionate lecturer. It was actually not seminars. I had great seminars with Carlton Qualey, this Thorstein Veblen seminar was great, and I had other great, really small classes. But Carl Weiner could tell a story in the way that very few—including myself—professors could tell a story. I still remember, he taught a course on the French Revolution, so that was my other big interest. He taught this course on the French Revolution, which I must've taken with at least thirty or forty other people. He would literally march back and forth across the stage. His wife was the theater director at Carleton. So on the day that Robespierre fell from power and was arrested, he would come into class with a sword, and he would slam this sword down on the stage. We were just kind of like, *wow!* He was fantastic. He made it come alive.

So that was my other big interest, the French Revolution. So when I got to Stanford, Gordon Craig was older and he was perfectly nice, but I could see—When I went to graduate school in 1967, there were women in graduate school, but there were no women professors.

Lage: Right.

01-00:21:30

Hunt: I could see that having somebody who was perfectly nice, but was going to spend approximately three minutes discussing my program with me, was not going to work for me. The guy who did the French Revolution was very young; he was an assistant professor. His office was in the basement, and he was always there. When I would go in and talk to him, I would talk to him for an hour. I thought, this is what I have to do. I could sense somehow that it wasn't going to work the other way. So I switched to doing the French Revolution.

Lage: And forever since, there you've been.

01-00:22:09

Hunt: And forever since. I had never been to Europe, but I understood that there would be an attraction to going to Paris. Because if you grow up in Minnesota—I grew up in Minnesota, a few blocks from F. Scott Fitzgerald's house. I had read every single novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald, every single novel by Ernest Hemingway, every single novel by Gertrude Stein, so I was totally into the Paris scene. In St. Paul, Minnesota, Paris was like this kind of magical place that you knew about.

Lage: And people didn't just fly off to Europe.

01-00:22:49

Hunt: No, no, no, I had never been to Europe. When I went to do my dissertation, I had never been to Europe. Never.

Lage: Doesn't surprise me.

01-00:22:57

Hunt: Right. The first airplane trip I took was either in my junior year or my senior year in college. Between my third and fourth year, I spent the summer in Chicago. I may have flown there or I may have taken the train; I can't remember. When I graduated from college, before I went to Stanford, I spent the summer in Boston; and there, I know I flew. But it was not before then.

Lage: Times have changed.

01-00:23:44

Hunt: Flying was not something that everybody did.

Lage: No, no. Not at all. Did you see a career for yourself as a professor? Here you were at Stanford, where there weren't any women professors. Did anybody talk about that, your future in the field?

01-00:24:01

Hunt: No, no. No. Now, my father was fairly sophisticated; he'd been to Europe. My mother had never been to Europe, when I was growing up. The advantage of being relatively unsophisticated was I didn't have a kind of overall view. So in

some ways, I was very focused. In ninth grade, I wanted to become a ninth grade teacher. In tenth grade, I wanted to become a high school teacher. When I got to college, I thought, well, maybe I should become a college teacher. But it wasn't the kind of, I'm going to get a PhD and become a professor. It was more, obviously, I love school so much I should become a teacher; the question is, which grade should I teach. So it was more that I kind of moved along. Because when I first went to graduate school, having gone to Carleton, I thought, maybe everybody else knows way more than I do, and maybe everybody else is way more smarter than I am, and maybe I'm in over my head. Do I know?

Lage: But what did you discover?

01-00:25:17

Hunt: Well, so then I went to Stanford, and it was at the exact moment—I was extremely lucky—when people were getting concerned about whether there were going to be enough college professors.

Lage: Good timing.

01-00:25:31

Hunt: Because there was a big expansion, right about that time. Unfortunately, it was a little before I finished. California built a huge number of campuses in the late sixties, and I went to graduate school in '67. So at exactly that moment, I think it was the Ford Foundation that decided it should start giving out fellowships for graduate students for three or four years, so that they would actually stay in graduate school. That was not true my first year. I had a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship my first year, which I could go anywhere. Then the minute I got to Stanford, this program came in and I had money for the next three years. There was one woman who was a Western Civ instructor at Stanford, who was incredibly brilliant, who worked on eighteenth century France. She taught lecture courses in the history department—Margot Drekmeier—but she was not a regular faculty member; she was kind of a permanent adjunct, a permanent lecturer.

Lage: And was that discussed? Why was she a permanent lecturer?

01-00:26:34

Hunt: No. No, because— Okay. So then I was also very lucky, because I go to graduate school in '67—height of the Vietnam War, staggering moment of politicization; also the civil rights movement is still going on. My first year of graduate school—of course, I thought this is what graduate school is like—Johnson resigned, Martin Luther King was assassinated, JFK was assassinated. That was my first year of graduate school.

Lage: Not JFK, but Bobby.

01-00:27:06

Hunt: I'm sorry. Bobby. I'm sorry. Yes, RFK was assassinated. My sister was getting married, back in Carleton, and this was the period in which he was in the process of dying, just when she was about to get married. But there was this massive number of things going on.

Lage: And lots going on on the campus.

01-00:27:36

Hunt: That was my idea, that was graduate school. There was a massive amount going— The only time anything ever happened at Stanford was between '67 and '70.

Lage: Right. The university president resigned.

01-00:27:49

Hunt: It was just wild. It was wild. There were massive demonstrations. We were marching on Hewlett-Packard, and the Rand Corporation in Menlo Park, and so there was a staggering amount of mobilization.

Lage: Did you take part in this, the demonstrations?

01-00:28:04

Hunt: I went to the demonstrations. I was usually not in the front getting tear gassed, but I definitely went to the demonstrations. Graduate students were boycotting their classes, there were fist fights in the history department. Faculty meetings—

Lage: Between faculty members?

01-00:28:19

Hunt: Between faculty members. There were incredible amounts of tension between graduate students, those in favor of boycotting and those opposed to boycotting. But I didn't have anything to compare it with. So I was like, graduate school is really intense. [Lage laughs] Meanwhile, all the young men were being drafted and trying to avoid the draft; and it was also the beginning of women's liberation, and it was also the beginning of gay liberation. So all these things were going on, and so no, we weren't discussing why it was Margot Drekmeier was a lecturer, because that was kind of like in the given.

I remember very clearly, in about '68, something like that, the English department started hiring women professors, who were not that much older than I was, as a graduate student. I saw these young women professors coming. I remember my first thought was, women's liberation; I don't think that has anything to do with me, because everyone's always been extremely supportive. Somehow, when I started thinking about it, it was like, oh, yeah, it actually does have something to do with me. I didn't experience any, you're not going to go anywhere because you're a woman, because there were other women graduate students, and they seemed like they were going to go places.

The fact that there weren't any women in the department meant that there was no comparison point.

Lage: But no role models, either.

01-00:29:52

Hunt: Well, there were no role models, but no one was sitting around saying, there are no role models, because that would imply that there could have been. So it was just beginning to dawn on me, very slowly, that this might actually matter. But when I first went to graduate school, there were so many things going on at the same time.

Lage: And the war protests were maybe the strongest.

01-00:30:23

Hunt: And the war. By far. By far. By that time, it was not even civil rights so much. Civil rights was much more important when I was at Carleton. But when I got to Stanford, the war thing was huge, because all of our male friends or boyfriends or whatever were being drafted.

Lage: Except they were students, so they had student deferments.

01-00:30:35

Hunt: No, no, no, they did not get out of it because they were students, because they reached a point, when you got towards '70—well, '69, '70—when they started drafting everybody. So they were all frantic. Could they get out of it by saying they were gay? Could they get out of it because they'd been sick when they were young? I knew one guy in philosophy who was totally crazy; could he get out of it because he was totally crazy? It was not at all clear what was going to work. All the young men were so anxious.

Lage: For many people I've interviewed, it affected their path completely, what they would do to try to avoid the draft.

01-00:31:19

Hunt: Yeah. Oh, absolutely. For the young men, it was unbelievable. It was very intense. My first year, I was living in graduate student housing, with somebody who was assigned to me. She moved out pretty quickly and then somebody else was assigned to me, who was actually a history graduate student, a woman history graduate student, who was very fragile, when I look back on it. After Martin Luther King was assassinated, I was convinced she was going to kill herself. It was that kind of atmosphere. People were kind of going off the deep end emotionally, if they were at all fragile to start with, because there was so much tension about everything.

Lage: Is there a connection between this and your intellectual interests?

01-00:32:11

Hunt: Well, absolutely, absolutely.

Lage: You already liked the French Revolution, but is there something in the context of the times about revolution?

01-00:32:14

Hunt: Right. For me, it all fit together, because I had grown up in this house in which my mother was extremely interested in politics and was an activist. When we were twelve, we were canvassing the neighborhood with little brochures about why people should vote for the charter amendment for schools, or why people should vote for a bond issue for schools. My mother was head of our local PTA, and then she became head of the St. Paul PTA. She was in the League of Women Voters, and then she became head of the St. Paul League of Women Voters. She gave us lectures at home, literally, about the difference between strong and weak mayoral forms of municipal government.

Lage: This was a dinner-table talk?

01-00:33:06

Hunt: She would say, “Now, you have to understand the difference between—” Then, because she was so into these things, she was asked to run for office and she became a city councillor. That was after I’d graduated from college. But we grew up with this constant political discussion, and I could see— She was having meetings. This is when I was sixteen, seventeen. We’re upstairs in our rooms and she’s having meetings downstairs, of the Urban League or the League of Women Voters or the PTA or whatever. Because she was actually also getting involved in the sort of antiwar thing. She was McCarthy Democrat, being in Minnesota. I used to discuss politics with her quite frequently. We’d have big fights, because I considered myself left-wing, and she was too bourgeois. She was, of course, infinitely more liberal than most people’s parents.

So then I’m interested in the French Revolution, I go to graduate school between ’67 and ’70, and it seemed pretty straightforward that I should study why some people become revolutionaries and others don’t.

Lage: It makes sense.

01-00:34:12

Hunt: There was a way in which how could I not do that? Because given that I was in this situation, in which some people were taking one side and some people were taking the other, so it was the obvious thing to [do].

Lage: Interesting. The times do make a difference.

01-00:34:25

Hunt: Oh!

Lage: And your background.

01-00:34:27

Hunt: Oh, yeah. Yeah. So literally, I ended up in my dissertation, studying two towns at the beginning of the French Revolution, why one had a violent revolution, why one did not, and I wanted to do a local thing, because I had grown up with this local politics.

Lage: Did US history ever cross your mind, having lived in such a historical period?

01-00:34:51

Hunt: I liked US history when I was an undergraduate. It's actually what I kind of specialized in, as an undergraduate. But because my grandparents had this German background, I thought it just seemed obvious that I had to do European history. I, in the end, felt I didn't have to do German history, which was, after all, kind of depressing. I thought I could do some other kind of European history, but it seemed to me inconceivable that I wouldn't do European history. Plus, also I had studied German already, and French, as an undergraduate. Because if you were going to be a German major, you had to also study French.

Lage: So you had the French language?

01-00:35:30

Hunt: I had German and French before I went to graduate school. So it was like, well, why would you not do something with that?

Lage: Very good. Now, let's see if there's anything else we should say about Stanford. Well, maybe more about the women's movement. Where you were, whether you got involved in consciousness-raising groups and things like that.

01-00:35:54

Hunt: No, I don't think I was in a consciousness-raising group. The main thing I remember was that when this first came up, I thought, this has nothing to do with me because I have never been discriminated against. Then the more I thought about it, it really was a kind of veil-before-the-eyes issue of thinking, oh, it actually isn't about whether somebody has explicitly said you can't do this because you're a woman; it's more structural than that. But I think one reason why I didn't instantly understand was that I had only sisters and I had grown up in a household, therefore—I don't know if it would've been different if I'd had a brother. But I was the oldest and my father was always incredibly supportive of the fact that I should go to college; that was pretty straightforward. And yes, going to graduate school, that would be great. He would have talks with me about, well, you should never think about getting married until you have your PhD. So I always felt that this was something that he in particular, because he had the experience of that, thought was what I should do. So I didn't feel that I had a dad at home saying, well, really, why would you do that? It was exactly the opposite.

Lage: What about professors?

01-00:37:23

Hunt:

Well, the same thing. At Carleton there was only one woman professor, who was older, and actually retired, I think, when I was there, who was the medieval professor. But there was one woman professor in the history department, which is more than could be said of Stanford, or for that matter, Berkeley or any of the other places at the time, for the most part. I did have one woman professor, so that mattered, although she was much older. The male professors I had, as far as I could see, were— I never felt a gender bias. I always felt—again, maybe it was partly my naiveté, but I never felt that they were sort of like, well, obviously, you're going to not do that. On the contrary. I applied to basically all the schools that my professors had gone to, that's where I decided to go. So obviously, there was some way in which I felt they were being very much supportive. They were all, for the most part, men, after Catherine Boyd retired as the medievalist, so when I got to Stanford, I was never feeling like people had been somehow holding me back. On the contrary, starting with my father, I felt like these men had always been incredibly supportive.

Lage:

But looking out at the job market, I guess it was the time when it was opening up, right at that time.

01-00:38:44

Hunt:

Oh, yes, I was very lucky. I was very lucky. The only thing that was difficult about it was— So I was in graduate school from '67 to '70; then I was in France from '70 till the end of '71. I went on the job market already then, even though I had only written one chapter. The job market was already beginning to get constricted in absolute terms, but people were beginning to feel that they should hire women, to make up for the fact that they didn't have any. So I went on the job market with one chapter of my dissertation, the first—

Lage:

In '70 or '71?

01-00:39:22

Hunt:

It must've been in '71. Well, it would have been in January of 1972, I went on the job market.

Lage:

Now, what does that mean, to go on the job market?

01-00:39:26

Hunt:

I applied for jobs.

Lage:

Okay. That's easy enough.

01-00:39:39

Hunt:

I applied for jobs and I got job interviews at good places, and I was interviewed on campus at Dartmouth and Indiana. I'm trying to think if I was interviewed on campus anywhere else. That's what I'm remembering right

now. I was actually offered both of those jobs. But I was also offered a three-year postdoc, which over the advice, as we said, of my advisor, I took.

Lage: He did not want you to take it?

01-00:40:12

Hunt: Well, it was the beginning of the constriction of the job market. He was like, why would you turn down a job at Dartmouth or Indiana? These are fantastic jobs. And they were fantastic jobs. I'd already decided I would go to Indiana, if I hadn't gotten this postdoc, which was in the Society of Fellows at the University of Michigan. But I was very clear in my mind. By this time, I obviously understood the picture, because I remember very clearly saying to myself, I go to Indiana— Which is the one I had chosen, because Dartmouth was about to go co-ed, but was mainly boys and was, I thought, a slightly peculiar atmosphere—I was going to go to Indiana, a major research university, and the people were very nice. I'll go to Indiana and I'll spend the first two years teaching and frantically trying to finish my dissertation. I will, therefore, be under staggering pressure to get a book that's publishable. I will be lucky if I can barely scrape through getting tenure. So having gotten this job partly because I was a woman, not being that very far along, I'll be completely screwed, frankly.

Lage: You were very wise, career-wise.

01-00:41:21

Hunt: I did say to myself, this is not a good picture. I thought, this is really going to be terrible. I'm going to be having to be get used to a new environment, start teaching—at that point, I was twenty-six—I'll just be under such pressure. Whereas if I take this Society of Fellows at Michigan—

Lage: Three years.

01-00:41:43

Hunt: It was a three-year thing. But that was the other thing; it was not a one-year thing. I don't think I would've given up the job for a one-year fellowship; but a three-year fellowship?

Lage: They must be few and far between.

01-00:41:55

Hunt: They were. That was also extremely lucky, that I ended up getting it for really quite haphazard reasons. They would never take somebody now who wasn't done with the PhD; but in those days, they did. As a result, I got to meet all these new people. It was a hotbed of French history, because Charles and Louise Tilly were there at the time, and they were big specialists in my field, specifically. I spent the first year finishing my dissertation. The second year, I wrote two articles out of my dissertation; also went back and forth to France. And that year, they allowed me to go on the job market, which is when I got

the job at Berkeley; and they allowed me to go to Berkeley for a year and come back for my third year, as my second year at Berkeley. And my life was transformed from frantically trying to make the grade to, unless I was a complete idiot, basically being set up; having a year off to turn my dissertation into a book, in my second year of teaching.

Lage: That's really remarkable.

01-00:43:07

Hunt: Well, it was lucky, too.

Lage: Yeah. Luck does play a role in people's lives.

01-00:43:12

Hunt: It does. But I give myself a certain amount of credit, because people were not saying, this is what you should do. I just knew that I should take my chances on what would happen later. And then I was unbelievably lucky to get the job at Berkeley.

Lage: And it was a hotbed of French history, you say, at Michigan?

01-00:43:29

Hunt: At Michigan. Oh, at Michigan. The Tillys were kind of like the center of a certain style of French history. I didn't know them, but that meant they had a group at their house every single Sunday, of all their graduate students and visiting people. So I had two years, really mainly the first two years, of an incredible amount of stimulation. Plus I was in the Society of Fellows, which had fantastic people in all these different fields.

Lage: Not just history.

01-00:43:56

Hunt: It included the sciences; it was in every field. And there were only like, I don't know, eight or ten fellows. The head of the Society of Fellows was John D'Arms, who then became head of the American Council of Learned Societies. And because of that, I knew him when I was twenty-six and I knew him until he recently died. I got to meet incredibly interesting people that I would never have had the chance to meet otherwise, in this situation. I didn't have to teach; I could just do whatever I felt like doing.

Lage: How did you get the fellowship? You must've had a great start on your dissertation.

01-00:44:35

Hunt: Well, no, I didn't. It was completely serendipitous. Here's what happened. The absolute truth is, this was new. I think this was actually only the second year of the Society of Fellows. The first year, they had picked a graduate student who was younger than me, from Stanford, in the history department, working on sixteenth century German history, who then went on to become,

more recently, the president of St. Olaf College. They picked him. Frankly, I think what happened is that the people who knew us both wrote and said, well, if you're going to take him, why would you not take her? Frankly, I think it was that he was there somehow paved the way for me, because my dissertation was not that great, truth be told. I think I was smart and talented and had potential. My advisor was not a well-known person. But the fact that Mark Edwards had been picked before had a big influence, I think, on the committee.

Whatever the reason, for me, it was unbelievable because like I said, I got to know John D'Arms, who was in classics. One of the big senior fellows at the time was Donald Hall, who was already a very famous poet and prose writer. Donald Hall, as a senior fellow, would let us give him a chapter of what we were writing and he'd go over it with us and tell us how we could improve it. He wrote books on how to write, so it was like having some incredible master give you hints. Actually, his book on writing, I still recommend it to all my students. I learned more from it than I've ever learned from anything else, in writing. So there were poets and prose writers. One of the nation's best-known prose writers was a fellow alongside me, Richard Ford; recently published *Canada*, Pulitzer Prize winner. He was writing his first novel.

Lage: So this really was interdisciplinary. It wasn't just all academic.

01-00:46:45

Hunt: Oh, so you got to know these incredible, just incredible people of your own age, and then also the older generation, that you would never have met otherwise. Especially not being in a history department.

Lage: Right.

01-00:47:00

Hunt: So I got to know Richard Ford. There was a whole set of poets, because Donald Hall was a senior fellow; he sort of favored poets. There was a guy in classics, who then ended up being my colleague at UCLA, who was a sort of boy genius in classics, became one of my closest friends [Bernard Frischer]. I just got to know the most amazing people. And to think about other things, to think more broadly. So it was an incredible advantage to me, in terms of the way I thought about my own field.

Lage: Now, did the world enter in, in that setting?

01-00:47:32

Hunt: Not as much. It was interesting, because I was there between '72 and '74, and then '75-76

Lage: Things were quiet now.

01-00:47:39

Hunt: So the war was over, or it was most certainly winding down the first year; the civil rights movement was no longer such a big thing; the women's issues were still very big issues, obviously; but things were in a very different place in the seventies than they were in the late sixties. It wasn't nearly as kind of tumultuous. So for me, the timing couldn't have been more perfect, in terms of actually finishing my dissertation and thinking about how to write about things for the future. That was an unbelievable stroke of fortune, and it truly was, I have to say, luck.

Lage: Luck and good judgment on your part, it sounds like.

01-00:48:21

Hunt: Yeah, I give myself some credit because everyone else was sort of like, how can you turn down a job at Dartmouth?

Lage: But you had feelings about that, about Dartmouth itself.

01-00:48:29

Hunt: Yeah, I had already picked Indiana. I was definitely going to go to Indiana. But I just knew, I somehow sensed very clearly, that this was going to be a turning point. Now, once I went to the Society of Fellows, it was not guaranteed that I was going to get a job.

Lage: No.

01-00:48:51

Hunt: By any stretch of the imagination. Who knew that there was even going to be a job at Berkeley?

Lage: Did it, aside from your writing and your time, affect how you approached your dissertation?

01-00:49:03

Hunt: It's so hard to write a dissertation. I'm not sure. I certainly didn't— [sighs] It was enough for me to just get all those pages down, keeping in mind no laptops. I wrote my dissertation, the first part of my dissertation— No, I think it was after I had gotten some time off from the Society of Fellows to go back to Paris. I was writing my dissertation on an IBM Selectric. Renting it, because they were so expensive. In Paris, I was renting an IBM Selectric with an American keyboard, in order to write my dissertation, with White-out little thingies that eliminate the mistakes you've made. I didn't see myself as having wonderfully capacious thoughts, but I was able to go off in a lot of different directions at the same time, that had an impact later, more than, I would say, on the actual writing of my dissertation, which I thought was pretty limited. My first book was pretty limited, compared to what I was then able to do.

Lage: We'll get into that later. I'm thinking we'll take a little break now. Then we'll get to Berkeley. [audiofile stops, restarts]

Okay. Let's talk about how you happened to end up at Berkeley.

01-00:50:47

Hunt: Well, I was in the Michigan Society of Fellows. The first year, I finished my dissertation; and the second year, I did a couple of articles, one that went beyond my dissertation. There, my very, very first article did show the influence of being at the Michigan Society of Fellows, because it was much more general than I would have done otherwise. It wasn't *that* general. My dissertation was on two towns at the beginning of the French Revolution, why one had a violent revolution and why one did not, even though they were towns that were quite similar, in certain ways. After I finished my dissertation, I decided that I should look at all the big towns in France. So I was looking at all thirty of the biggest towns in France and trying to see what kinds of patterns there were. I had both more statistical work, which was the influence of the Tillys, and also more philosophical work, which was, no doubt, the influence of having more time to think about those things. So probably, there weren't that many people doing the kind of topic I was doing, who were able to do a first article that wasn't a part of their dissertation, but a further expansion statistically.

But also I'm talking about Jean-Paul Sartre and ideas about what makes for open communication, how do people change their ideas, consciousness. It was clearly right out of my experience in the late sixties, I was interested in the question of how do people change their minds so quickly? It's 1788; and then it's 1789, and all of a sudden you have a revolution. How are people experiencing this incredible seismic shift in their thinking? So being at Michigan gave me a little more time to think about sort of philosophically, how does that work? Sartre talks about it, but it wasn't really a philosophical analysis; it was an analysis about what is it about people meeting together that gets them to think things none of them thought before they entered into that conversation?

Lage: That's very interesting. It's interesting that you also tie it to the times and what you saw happening.

01-00:52:57

Hunt: Yeah. But it was like a perfect example of consciousness raising. But not just in terms of women's issues, although that was extremely important, but just how people could change their minds so quickly. I was interested in how it's the social interaction that gets them to change their minds. Michigan was perfect in that sense; it would give me a chance to think about these kinds of problems in a whole variety of different ways—anthropologically, sociologically, philosophically, whatever.

Lage: Was this something that was a topic of discussion—

01-00:53:29

Hunt: Not necessarily.

Lage: —or more just your mind?

01-00:53:30

Hunt: It was more in my mind. I would discuss certain things. I certainly never discussed the Sartrean part of this with anybody. No, it was more sort of bringing together different [aspects]—

[Begin Audio File 2]

Lage: We're back on, after a break and a change of tape. This is tape two of our interview with Lynn Hunt. We just had a little aside, unrecorded on last night's debate, and now we're going to go to coming to Berkeley in '74.

02-00:00:19

Hunt: Coming to Berkeley. Yes. So I decided that I should go on the job market in my second year at Michigan, because it was already getting to be a difficult job market; it seemed crazy to try to do it all in one year. Plus I had already turned down previous jobs that were really, really great jobs. So I was a little worried about my future. There were jobs; I don't remember how many and I don't remember exactly how many I applied for. I applied for the Berkeley job and came out and did my interview. That was in itself, an incredible moment in my life.

Lage: Tell about that.

02-00:01:00

Hunt: Oh, well, it was a combination of staggeringly exciting, with a certain number of bizarre, moments, which I suppose there probably always are in job interviews. First of all, they couldn't put me in any of the faculty clubs because they were all booked up, so I was staying in an actually not wildly nice motel on University Avenue, which wasn't the best impression of Berkeley that you could get. It all right. So I was picked up by the wife of the chair of the search committee, which is the wife of Richard Herr, Valerie. She's an extremely nice person and she picked me up. I had a three-hour time difference, because I'd come from Detroit because I was in Ann Arbor. Then I was going to be going out to dinner at seven, I think, and then after dinner, my interview was going to take place at Richard Herr's house, over dessert.

Lage: An actual formal interview?

02-00:02:01

Hunt: Well, that was actually going to turn out to be my formal interview. I didn't, of course, entirely understand what the schedule was going to be like. But the wonderful thing about those days was you didn't have to give a job talk. Now

my students have to do a job talk, they have to give a lecture and a class, they may have to meet a seminar, they have to meet various members of the department. There's just an endless number of things at which you have to appear. This was much more informal, because we were going from a situation that had obtained until the end of the sixties, in which people got jobs by somebody calling your advisor and asking who was good and the person would get the job, sight unseen—this was still happening in the late sixties—to this much more elaborate thing that occurred in the late seventies. Well, we were in this intermediate period. So I was being picked up by Valerie and I was taken to a Chinese restaurant, where I was going to meet the rest of the committee. So we sat down and there was no one else there. So she said, "Well, let's have some tea." So a certain amount of time went by and she was like, this doesn't seem right.

Lage: And you didn't have a cell phone.

02-00:03:16

Hunt: There was no cell phone, needless to say. This must've been in maybe the early part of 1974; probably would be February or March of 1974. Time goes by. I said, "Well, should we order?" And she said, "No, I don't think we should order." She said, "I think I better go next door, because there's another Chinese restaurant next door." Next door was the search committee, well into their first bottle of wine, at least, wondering where in the world the candidate was. So then we joined them. This is my first meeting ever with Natalie Davis, who was an extremely well-known person already, in my field, one of my idols, a very close friend of Charles and Louise Tilly from Michigan. I'd heard about her endlessly, and this is my first meeting with her, having waited next door for twenty or thirty minutes, while they're drinking white wine and beer or whatever, waiting for me to show up. So there was Richard Herr and there was Natalie and I can't remember exactly who else was there. Two or three other people were there. We had a perfectly nice Chinese dinner, a little rushed at this point, because a whole bunch of other people were coming to Richard Herr's house for dessert at like nine. So I get to Richard Herr's house—

Lage: It's midnight for you.

02-00:04:38

Hunt: —at nine, which is midnight for me, and there's literally a kind of semicircle of chairs, like this or like this, and then me, and we're supposed to be having dessert and having an informal chat. I can't even remember eating dessert. I would've been insane to have eaten dessert in this situation.

Lage: Balancing on your knee.

02-00:05:00

Hunt: Right, exactly. I'm a little nervous about exactly how this is supposed to go. Basically, what's happening is I'm having an oral exam with eight examiners, because I'm being asked one question after another from each—

Lage: About French history?

02-00:05:17

Hunt: About everything. Now, it's midnight. It's about my dissertation, it's about what I think about this. I do remember at one point, Richard Herr turning to me and saying—for some reason, this stuck in my mind—because I had worked with Charles Tilly at Michigan and he was a sociologist, did I consider the French Revolution an example of something? Or was it, by implication, interesting in itself? So I thought, hmmm, I'd better be careful with the answer to this question. I do not remember what I said. I think I probably said both, it is both. But I remember being asked incredibly interesting questions. But tock, tock, tock, tock, tock, one after another.

Lage: It wasn't like it was a conversation.

02-00:06:04

Hunt: As I remember, Natalie was not free to come to that, so it was all men. And by the force of circumstances, every single one of them was older than me. So I'm sitting around with all these single members of the department asking me one question after another.

Lage: I wish you remembered who else was there.

02-00:06:22

Hunt: I can't remember who else. Reggie [Reginald] Zelnik was there, but I can't remember who else was there. Bill Bouwsma was on the search committee too, and so he may very well have been there. It was, in fact, fantastic. But I thought, wow, it is midnight for me. And that turned out to be my job interview.

Lage: That was it.

02-00:06:43

Hunt: Then the next day I met, I think individually, with Fryar Calhoun. He may have been on the committee, also; I can't remember what the situation was with Fryar, who did modern French history, but was about to withdraw from the department because he didn't— No, he was still there, so I think he was on the committee, too. So the next day I met with Bill Bouwsma and I met with various other members of the department. Then for some reason, I think I was driven down to Stanford for something. All I remember was going down in the car to Stanford. I can't remember exactly who was there, except that I know that Tom Laqueur was there and it was the first time I ever met Tom, who was going to become, basically, my best friend in the department.

Lage: He was just recently hired.

02-00:07:32

Hunt: He had been hired the year before. So we were talking, because he'd been hired the year before, we were exactly the same age, and he did something that is of course, never allowed on search committees—he wasn't on the search committee—he said, "Are you married?" I said no. But he was being friendly. He was my age and he was kind of like, so what's your story?

Lage: He wasn't judging.

02-00:07:55

Hunt: Right. He wasn't married, either, but he wanted to know what the story was. Somehow that stuck in my mind as, I think, we were driving down to Stanford; I can even remember where we were going.

Lage: But you think at that time, even then, it wasn't allowed, to question marital status?

02-00:08:12

Hunt: I remember being taken aback when he asked me that. I thought that was probably not considered entirely kosher to ask, because it would imply that if you— Because especially for women, not for men—for women, if you were married, that that was going to be a negative.

Lage: Oh, I see.

02-00:08:27

Hunt: See, I knew when he was asking me, it was not meant at all in that way. But if an older member of the department had said, are you married? it would've meant, do we have a problem, in terms of getting you? I knew that with him, because it kind of just came out, that that was not at all the implication. So I wasn't here that long; I didn't have to do that many things. Basically, after that one night, I just had to have various meetings. This would be the most wonderful thing in the entire world, to have this job, because the questions I was asked were so interesting and so pressing, intellectually, that I went home thinking, I don't know what I'm going to do if I don't get offered this job.

Lage: Had they read your dissertation?

02-00:09:10

Hunt: I assume some number of them had. Frankly, my dissertation was not that great. I think I was better on my feet, at that point, than I was in writing. So I'm sure members of the search committee had at least looked substantially at my dissertation. I think it's entirely possible, frankly, that the dissertations of the other people being interviewed were actually better written than mine was. My strength, I'm presuming, was that I was able to engage.

Lage: You fit.

02-00:09:45

Hunt: I didn't think of it in those terms; I just thought, oh, these people are so interesting. I can't stand it, if this doesn't happen.

Lage: That's interesting. So then what did happen?

02-00:09:54

Hunt: They called me up, actually very quickly, and offered the job to me. What happened is that the other two people had been, I suspect—I didn't know. They didn't tell me who they were, they didn't tell me who else they were interviewing. I had no idea what the actual setup was. I just remember being called, actually, quite soon after I had been there, being offered the job.

Lage: And did you know how few women were—

02-00:10:18

Hunt: In the department?

Lage: —in the department at that time?

02-00:10:20

Hunt: Well, I knew that Natalie was in the department. So of course, for me, there was an incredible attraction, because Natalie did sixteenth century French history, social and cultural, and I was doing eighteenth century French history. So the idea of having Natalie Davis as your senior colleague would make up for a lot of other problems. I didn't ask about how many women there were in the department. I didn't see anyone other than Natalie, and she was not at this evening event. I remember that quite distinctly, that she said she could come to the dinner but she couldn't come after.

Lage: It's kind of surprising she wasn't on the search committee.

02-00:10:59

Hunt: I think she wasn't on the search committee. I think she came to the dinner to meet me, because that was the one chance she had to meet me, because she'd heard about me from Chuck and Louise and knew about me generally, and she just wanted to sort of see what I was like.

Lage: Interesting. So you were hired.

02-00:11:16

Hunt: So I was offered the job.

Lage: Did you ever have any sense that gender mattered, in one way or another? Or did they have any sense about your sexuality preference or anything like that?

02-00:11:26

Hunt: No. No. I was certainly not talking about my private life to anybody at the time, because it was 1974 and people were nervous about this, so I didn't say

anything about what my life was like. These were people, in this session, who were just engaging with me in the most engaging possible fashion.

Lage: Intellectually.

02-00:11:52

Hunt: So I had no feeling of, oh, is she really going to stand up to this? They were basically sort of, let's see what she does. Then they were sort of like, oh— I gather.

Lage: You could tell that—

02-00:12:04

Hunt: They were engaged. I wasn't really in a strong position to gauge exactly what their reaction was. All I knew was that I had a great time. I didn't really know what they thought. All I knew was that I had a great time. Then I met Tom, who, it became clear, was sort of exactly my contemporary, and there were other people—Marty [Martin] Jay was maybe a year older—there were people in the department my age. And that it was Berkeley. What can I say? When I came here, I arrived literally in '74, right after the Patty Hearst abduction, I think it was. Or was it already after SLA? Now I'm not remembering all the exact dates. The week I arrived was when Nixon resigned. I think it was August of 1974, when I arrived, and I remember watching him on TV, resigning. At Ira Lapidus's house, or somebody's house, where there was a kind of gathering. Berkeley had been through a huge amount, with People's Park and Patty Hearst, and I think the SLA thing had actually already occurred. I was at the end of the whole set of things.

Lage: Things were quieting down.

02-00:13:39

Hunt: Yes. Oh, except for Nixon being forced out of office, which was kind of a big thing. That was kind of the inauguration of my arrival. So the women's thing, when I was actually being interviewed, I didn't— But again, I hadn't had a strong sense of that throughout my life, so—

Lage: You weren't sensitive to it. You weren't looking for—

02-00:14:02

Hunt: They were interviewing me. Like I said, I wasn't in a position to say what they thought; I just knew I had a good time.

Lage: Now, tell me, as you settled in at Berkeley, how you find the department? Paula Fass talked a really strong social community. Did you have that same experience?

02-00:14:32

Hunt: Well, I would've said that, to me, it was a much more age-differentiated community. That is, when I got here, there were the people my age. And of

course, Paula was one of them. Paula, Tom and I were almost exactly the same age. Tom and I are a couple of months apart, so I know we're the same age. So there was a kind of younger group. Then there was a very large group of incredibly well-known historians, in a wide variety of fields. There was Bill Bouwsma and Gene Brucker, in my field, and Natalie Davis, of course; and Peter Brown and Bob Middlekauff. There were just an endless number of—Henry May and Nicholas Riasanovsky and Martin Malia, all of whom were in this kind of older generation. Reggie Zelnik was kind of in an intermediate spot. Then there was a new group of us who were just arriving, who, I felt, were in a very different place from these others. The more senior people—Gerry Feldman, Tom Bisson—there were just endless numbers—

Lage: It's a huge department.

02-00:15:40

Hunt: But they're also incredibly accomplished. And they were incredibly nice to us, because we were the sort of young people. So I felt there was a strong sense of community; but I also felt, not that there was a hierarchy, but I felt—before I had tenure, anyway; I got tenure, I think, in my fifth year—When we were untenured professors, the socializing with this incredibly luminous older group in the department was a little bit stressful.

Lage: Yeah, yeah. I see what you mean.

02-00:16:13

Hunt: I still remember the year that I actually came up for tenure, I was invited to dinner to Nick Riasanovsky's house. Nick lived in a kind of time warp, even then. Because this is the seventies. I got tenure in '79, so this is like '79. I'm invited to his house, and he and his wife were extremely nice people, and you sat there and you had exactly one choice before dinner, and that was sherry. That's what I mean about the time warp part. Those days were very different. I wore, on occasion, I remember quite clearly, long dresses to dinner parties at senior colleagues' houses. Senior colleagues had very elaborate dinner parties, with themes—there would be a Greek dinner or a Lebanese dinner or a Russian dinner or whatever—and that the socializing with the sort of older group was interesting—I loved talking to people—but also a little bit stressful before you had tenure, because it was a little bit like, exactly what was at issue here?

Lage: You were kind of wondering if you're still being judged at something?

02-00:17:24

Hunt: Oh, absolutely. I was still being kind of like—Not judged, but looked over, still, a little bit.

Lage: Well, five years of that—difficult.

02-00:17:33

Hunt:

So I didn't feel that was entirely relaxed, as a community. The community much more, to me, was around Reggie, who was older. I came out here with somebody—the person I was involved with at that time was a woman in Russian history—who immediately was very involved in Reggie's circle, became very close to Reggie. I had met Vicky [Victoria] Bonnell, actually, in Russia, because I had a boyfriend at the time, when I was in graduate school, who was doing Russian history. I went to visit him in Russia. Vicky was just getting involved with her husband, Grisha. He was in Russia; she was doing her research. I met her when I went to see John [Ackerman], and then she ended up, at some point, coming to Berkeley; actually, a little bit after I did. She came, I think, from Santa Cruz. So there was a very vibrant younger group. There was an incredibly luminous older group. Vicky, who's in sociology, and I also were very involved with a group with Neil Smelser and Reinhard Bendix and people in sociology.

Lage:

So was it through Vicky that you got interested in sociology? Or was that all—

02-00:18:44

Hunt:

Yes, it was through Vicky that I got interested in the sort of Smelser-sociological side. But then it was with Tom, who was extremely good friends with Steve [Stephen] Greenblatt, that I got involved in the representation side. So I was actually doing both of those things. So intellectually, it was incredible. But I would say there's a strong difference between the younger people and the old— There was no sense of antagonism, and they were incredibly helpful, but I knew I was not in that group.

Lage:

Yeah, yeah, generational.

02-00:19:14

Hunt:

That was, for me, something of an issue. One reason why I left was that I felt I was the dutiful daughter, for a very long time. Because this same group of incredibly distinguished people was there from the time I got here. Actually, most of them were still here when I left.

Lage:

And were there for quite a long time after you left, really.

02-00:19:42

Hunt:

In many cases, were there for quite a long time after I left.

Lage:

That's interesting.

02-00:19:46

Hunt:

So that was a way in which, for me, I felt there was an issue about truly being grown up. I don't mean intellectually, so much as professionally.

Lage:

Now, is this more generational, and not male-female? It does so happen that those luminous people were all men.

02-00:20:05

Hunt: Yes, they were all men because by then, Natalie had left.

Lage: Yes.

02-00:20:09

Hunt: In fact, when I became full professor, I was the only woman.

Lage: You were the only woman.

02-00:20:14

Hunt: I was the only woman full professor at that point.

Lage: You did get promoted to full professor quickly.

02-00:20:20

Hunt: I did get promoted to full professor quickly. Although actually, they made me wait a year longer than I wanted to. I have no complaints about that; I'm just saying in a sense, I didn't like the fact that there was one woman full professor. I was also the youngest full professor. The thing is, for me, I was always feeling like everybody was very happy with how I was doing, they thought I was just great, and I felt it was very hard to break out of the situation in which there were all these extremely distinguished older men. Who were perfectly nice, with whom I got along fantastically.

Lage: Natalie called them—let me see if I can find what she said—like a group of samurai. A brotherhood, she called them. Egalitarian brotherhood.

02-00:21:21

Hunt: Yeah.

Lage: When she talked about that, it was in reference to what went on during your promotion to tenure, which I'm sure you must've—

02-00:21:32

Hunt: Right, right, right.

Lage: Would you tell me how you experienced that?

02-00:21:36

Hunt: Right. Well, actually, I'm not sure she's quite right about that, because the real scene actually occurred at what was called my fourth-year review. This is the famous incident with Wolfgang Sauer. That was actually my fourth-year review, and I think Natalie had just left or something, maybe.

Lage: No, she was there.

02-00:21:58

Hunt: No, she was still there. She was still there, because she was not here when I got tenure. So she was there for some review, and that was the occasion on

which Wolfgang Sauer put in everybody's mailbox—I think including my own, because he wasn't good at making distinctions—the statement that he was never voting for another woman again, because they're getting unfair advantages. Right, because there were, after all, three or four of us at the time. So this seemed to be directed at me.

Lage: What does the fourth-year review involve?

02-00:22:33

Hunt: The fourth-year review is kind of like, is this person on track to get tenure or are they not?

Lage: I see.

02-00:22:39

Hunt: So I think it was my fourth-year review that this was the issue, not at my tenure review. One thing I would say that's very positive about the Berkeley department—and I've been in two other departments and I know that it just does not go on in most places—is they were very good—part of it's the brotherhood thing—about not breaking confidentiality. So I, in fact, know nothing about what was said at either my fourth-year review or my tenure meeting, or for that matter, my full-professor promotion. I have no idea. Of course, that may have been partly that I was a woman. No one ever said to me, oh, everyone was incredibly enthused or, there were only three people who said anything negative, and they were— Other departments I've been in, people are perfectly capable of saying, this person tried to stab you in the back, but we prevented it. I never got any information of that kind, which is, frankly, better. I did know about this Wolfgang Sauer piece of paper.

Lage: From the stories a couple of people have told me, which you'll read when you go online, perhaps, it wasn't really directed at you.

02-00:23:49

Hunt: No, it was a kind of outburst of some kind.

Lage: Yeah .

02-00:24:54

Hunt: I was a little pissed off that the department hierarchy did not basically sanction him in any way, not that it had to do with me. But frankly, I felt that if he had put this letter in the box saying, I'm never voting for another Jew, he would've been in deep trouble.

Lage: Yeah.

02-00:24:15

Hunt: I did feel he got away with it because it was about a woman, and it was thought to be a psychiatric problem of some kind, a psychological problem, as opposed to a political problem. Because it was transparently idiotic to do this,

because first of all, it was drawing attention to himself and it made him look like a jackass, frankly.

Lage: Yeah, I'm sure.

02-00:24:34

Hunt: So it's not like I felt— But my memory is that Natalie took me aside and said, “If there is a problem with your tenure, let me know, because I have the goods on this.”

Lage: Interesting. Yeah. Okay. After you became tenured, how did you experience being on tenure committees and decisions about promotion and hiring? Was it different from the other campuses you've been on?

02-00:25:16

Hunt: Well, yeah. Like I said, I think Berkeley has many extremely positive qualities, compared to other places. One advantage of this particular system that they had at the time, which I suspect is not so true anymore, was that confidentiality was kept, and it's much better for that to be the case. It was, frankly, much better for me not to know what people— I didn't even know what people said in my tenure letters, because you weren't allowed to see your tenure letters in those days. It was much better not to see these things, and just to know that you'd gotten tenure. Berkeley was also extremely good—and I suspect still is extremely good—at spending a lot of time thinking about who should be hired. There was virtually never any discussion, frankly, at the tenure level. There was on some occasions, but hardly ever because the assumption was you hired the best possible person, you gave them a fantastic environment, so how could things not turn out well? So the energy that was put into the hiring process was actually really intense. And the biggest fights we'd have in the department were over hiring people.

But another thing that was good about the department—again, despite the fact that I felt that I was the dutiful daughter for too long and that there was kind of this group of wonderfully distinguished people, who were sort of always going to be there—the other side of that coin was that I was made the chair of a search committee the minute I got tenure. There was a kind of trust in your abilities that was really quite striking, that I thought was incredibly helpful. From the minute I arrived here, I felt I got nothing but positive encouragement. The Wolfgang Sauer letter perhaps aside, I got 100 percent encouragement. People sent press representatives to see me about my book. They were incredibly encouraging. The minute I got tenure, I was made the chair of the search committee. Actually, practically the next year, I was the chair of the search committee that hired Susanna Barrows.

Lage: Oh, really?

02-00:27:28

Hunt: The other two members of the committee were Roger Hahn and Nick Riasanovsky, who were incredibly senior to me. The department considered it perfectly reasonable that I should be the chair of the committee, because I was in French history. We had meetings that were totally straightforward. That was the thing that was the good side of this sort of overweighted towards an incredibly distinguished older faculty.

Lage: Well, it a little bit contradicts the dutiful daughter—

02-00:27:55

Hunt: Well, no, but then see, I was the perfect dutiful daughter.

Lage: Oh, you were playing a role.

02-00:27:59

Hunt: No, because I was such a dutiful daughter and had proved myself to be so helpful, then I could be trusted. No, no, this was exactly part of the problem. There were times when I was the only female full professor, which fortunately, was not all that long, in which I got on my high horse and was extremely upset, in one hiring case. It was nineteenth century American history, in which we didn't even consider anyone in African American history. I made a very strong statement that I thought this was totally unacceptable, to have a department that had no African Americans, and to have a position in nineteenth century American history and not be able to come up with somebody. They were kind of like— They went ahead and did exactly what they wanted to do, but they said, "You're right." Then they actually began thinking about how they maybe should have to do that.

Lage: And then Waldo Martin came, not until 1980.

02-00:28:58

Hunt: No, I think he came a little later than 1980, because I got to be full professor in '84, and he came after that.

Lage: After you had tenure.

02-00:29:11

Hunt: This was after I had tenure, and I caused quite a scene, because Larry Levine and Leon Litwack were a little sensitive on the fact that I was saying, hello? Do we have to have a special position before we can do this? This was absolutely classic. They went ahead and hired the guy—he didn't come, but they went ahead and made the offer to the guy they wanted to make the offer to—and then they said, "You're absolutely right. You're right. We should do something."

Lage: How could they not?

02-00:29:41

Hunt: So the point is, I could get agitated about something, and as long as I made a good case— There was never the slightest hint of derision or ridicule or, we don't care what you think. It was very much sort of, ah, yeah, I think you might be right. But that still fits in with the dutiful daughter thing, which is, ah, yes, the children can speak the truth.

Lage: Now, when you hired Susanna—I don't want to cast this wrong—did you yourself try to bring more women in? Not just when you hired Susanna Barrows, but was there an effort being made?

02-00:30:25

Hunt: I think there was. There was definitely an effort being made; but it was not because I was particularly spearheading the effort. This was, I think, something that I felt strongly about, Paula felt strongly about, but many male members of the faculty also felt strongly about. So it's true that some of the women that we hired, there were particularly vexed sort of cases about it. It was because of the way the department was—and this was, I thought, always a very good thing about the department—the department really wanted the best possible person.

So that in the case of hiring Susanna, I was probably the most torn about whether this was the right thing or not. I remember that Bob Middlekauff, who was chair of the department, was extremely helpful to me in thinking this through. I remember that. Susanna was hired in 1981, I think, but I remember that as if it was yesterday. There were three final candidates, one of whom was our own graduate student, who was extremely brilliant and who was a very good friend of mine, because he had gone to grad school a little bit later, so he wasn't that much younger than I was. He's now at NYU. The third candidate was very good; he wasn't as impressive in person. He's a full professor at Princeton. These were not minor people. And then there was Susanna. I had never met Susanna before; I didn't know her at all. I had heard about her, but I'd never met her. She was extremely impressive in person. I thought her book was extremely good. There was a worry in my mind, and I'm sure other people's minds, about how productive she would be, because it took her a fair amount of time to do her first book. So I was generally torn between her and one of the other two candidates, about what was the right thing to do. In the end, Bob was extremely helpful to me. I sat in his office and he helped me think it through.

Lage: Can you describe what his reasoning was?

02-00:32:40

Hunt: I remember the bottom line; I don't remember everything about it. I remember the bottom line, because I thought it was so amazing. Somehow this came up; I can't remember exactly how we got to this point. It was not at all a reflection on Susanna, because I was saying to him, "This other guy seems to be incredibly energetic and is going to do really great work. Really, is Susanna

really on a trajectory to do— How is this really going to work? This is a big decision.”

Lage: Wasn't she being hired with tenure?

02-00:33:16

Hunt: Yes, she was going to have to be hired with tenure, because she had just gotten tenure. The other was going to be an assistant professor. Bob said, “Well, women have the right to be mediocre, too.”

Lage: Oh, that's interesting.

02-00:33:33

Hunt: It was something along those lines. Basically, what he was saying, there are plenty of men in the history department who have not been that productive, who have done this kind of thing well and maybe not done the scholarship part so well. So women are supposed to be held to a higher standard? He could've also said, well, you can't tell what's going to happen. But he was saying, it can't be the case that women have to be that much better than men to get hired.

Lage: In fact, I think I've heard that there were later struggles, as more women— maybe after you left—about hiring, and very sensitive issues about hiring women; were they good enough? That the women themselves were asking that.

02-00:34:21

Hunt: Yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. That the women themselves felt— Yeah. There were other issues. When I was here there were other fights about women, although the women were usually on the side of hiring the women candidate. When I was here, anyway, there was never a woman candidate that I was not in favor of. Not to say that there weren't male candidates that I was also in favor of. So I didn't experience so much division about that. But I'm saying in the Susanna case, I was the one who had, I think, probably the greatest hesitations. If I had said to Roger and Nick, I don't see it, I'm sure they would've been perfectly happy to go the other way. I'm just saying that Bob was really crucial in helping me sort of figure out— to get away from my own feeling, but women have to be ten times better than men, and then they can have a job.

Lage: And have to prove that they're going to be productive.

02-00:35:14

Hunt: Yes. Exactly. Because she'd already published a book; it's not like it was nothing.

Lage: How did she turn out as a colleague? Since we're not able to interview her, can you talk about her as a colleague?

02-00:35:27

Hunt: Susanna is a totally, totally sui generis case, in the sense that when she came— I just loved Susanna. She was incredibly charismatic, as a friend and as a teacher. She was fantastic with graduate students, even though Susanna had many failings, in the sense of— She would be great at inspiring graduate students, and then she would not write their letters of recommendation. She was notorious for that. In all honesty, she was one of the reasons I left, even though she was one of the reasons I loved being here, in the sense that I was doing eighteenth century French history, she was doing nineteenth and twentieth century French history. We were meant to be a team, and I felt I was picking up a lot of the slack.

Lage: A team in teaching?

02-00:36:26

Hunt: Not in teaching, but that the graduate students would work with both of us.

Lage: Oh, I see, the graduate students.

02-00:36:30

Hunt: There were just too many cases where I had graduate students in my office that she hadn't written the letter of recommendation, that she didn't follow through on something she said she was going to do. Students who didn't work with her because this was true—

Lage: She had the reputation.

02-00:36:46

Hunt: —and who were working with me instead. It was difficult because I would have to explain to them, “You cannot work with me if you are doing a topic that is in her time period. It's just not going to be possible.” So they actually had to change their topics. This was painful. So I loved Susanna, I thought she was an unbelievable person, I loved every minute I spent with her as a friend; but I thought as a colleague, it was a little mixed, because she was both galvanizing for the students, but then— I also felt my very existence was painful for her. It was easier for her if I— I didn't leave because I thought it would make her happier, but I was not having the same problems, in all truthfulness, producing articles and books and going along. Then it was becoming difficult to have a conversation about what you were working on.

Lage: Oh, I see what you mean.

02-00:37:46

Hunt: Because she was working on the same thing that she'd been working on in the last conversation and the conversation before and the conversation the year before that and the conversation the year before that. There was a way in which there was a certain feeling that there were wheels spinning.

Lage: So the feeling you had about, is she going to be productive—

02-00:38:03

Hunt: I was correct.

Lage: —was right.

02-00:38:04

Hunt: I was right. I was right. I was right. But she had this other quality, which I seriously did not understand at the time, because I didn't know about her as a teacher. She *made* the graduate program in European history, in the sense that there were huge numbers of students who were incredibly brilliant, who came here to study with her, because she just was so charismatic. Then they would come to me for advice or letters, or even to talk to them about, well, what should you really be thinking about? I became very good friends with many of her students. We had a great setup, but I didn't like that—there was something about it that felt problematic to me.

Lage: That's very interesting. Also I hadn't realized that your colleagues associated in your field have a lot of effect on your own work life.

02-00:39:05

Hunt: Oh, yeah. Oh, absolutely. Especially since, like I said, basically, all of the students who came to work with her would work with me; and all the students who came to work with me would work with her. She was a fantastic— It's hard to state strongly enough how much fun she was to be around. It was very, for me, in some ways a deeply ambivalent situation, because I loved spending time with Susanna; on the other hand, there were things about it professionally that I thought in some ways, didn't work. Frankly, I thought it was better for her when I was not here.

Lage: That's very interesting.

02-00:39:45

Hunt: Truth be told.

Lage: Was she a good teacher and a lecturer?

02-00:39:47

Hunt: She was a great teacher, in the sense of getting students enthused and inspired.

Lage: I don't mean grad students.

02-00:39:58

Hunt: No, no undergrads. So I think she was. I think she was. She had a particular kind of style. It didn't work for all students, but I think there were a lot of students— It was especially graduate students who gravitated towards her because she was an incredible Francophile. Susanna always knew the latest great bargain on a bottle of French wine or the latest great place to eat in Paris. She insisted upon having a French car, long after they didn't belong in

the United States anymore. She was an incredible Francophile, and she was just effervescent. She was just a huge amount of fun.

But there was this other side. The work side, for her, was a subject that was becoming—even when I was here, because she came in '81 and I left in '87. By the time I left, it was clear—because by then I had finished my second book, I had become a full professor; she was still an associate professor, even though she was a little older than me—it was clear that she was spinning her wheels, to a certain extent. After I left, it became, I think, a much bigger problem. The one thing in the Berkeley department is that if you're disappointing from the point of view of scholarship, it's a terrible situation to be in.

Lage: It's a hard place to be?

02-00:41:17

Hunt: It's a very hard place to be, because the department is a very serious, high-rated, intellectually superior place, where there's a long history of people who have published a lot, a lot that's changed the field. So to be somebody who hasn't even finished their second book, the more time goes on, the more this become very painful. So anybody in the department—this would apply to other people, as well—who sort of weren't able to go to the next step and the next step and the next step—

Lage: Well, Diane Clemens might've been someone like that.

02-00:41:57

Hunt: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Lage: She was hired as an associate professor, too.

02-00:42:02

Hunt: Exactly. After a while, whether it's true or not, you begin to feel disdained. And that's extremely painful. You begin to feel that people are thinking not such great thoughts about you.

Lage: Well, I've heard not just that aspect, but also that at Berkeley, it's not too good to be a star.

02-00:42:26

Hunt: Oh, I don't think that's true.

Lage: You wouldn't say that?

02-00:42:29

Hunt: No. No. I don't think that's true. I don't think that's true at all. I mean, Larry Levine, Leon Litwack, Bill Bouwsma, Gene Brucker—these were the leading people in their field, in the whole country, if not the world. That makes no sense to me.

Tom Laqueur, my dear friend. That was the other thing that was great for me here is that there we were— With Tom, there wasn't the same kind of issue, because he was not spinning his wheels. So we were both competitive and supportive, and competitive and supportive. And sometimes I was jealous of him, and sometimes he was jealous of me. But I felt that we spurred each other on, in a way that was, in some ways, in many ways, incredibly helpful. He was an amazing intellectual influence. And he's a star. I was just telling him today, I taught a graduate seminar yesterday, in which a visiting student from Utrecht University in the Netherlands said, "I'm doing the history of science because I read Thomas Laqueur's book. I can't remember the title." And I said, "*Making Sex?*" She said, "Yes." I said, "Well, I'm going to see him for lunch tomorrow and I will tell him that. He'll be glad to hear it." The point is that he's an international star. I don't think he feels that this is disliked in the department in the slightest. No. I think the big thing that went on was that there were so many stars in this group that was there when I came, that it was basically sink or swim. You had to really kind of want to be like that to be treated as a true equal. But they were incredibly encouraging.

Lage: Did you experience a lot of sharing of your work? Would people read your chapters?

02-00:44:43

Hunt: Yes. Certainly, as much as I would have wanted. I think in terms of my own style, because I tend to be fairly close to the vest, most people don't see what I'm doing. Not because I don't care; it's that I'm reluctant to ask people to read things because I have to read so many things from students that I hesitate to ask anybody else to read anything. But yeah, definitely. Tom and I were already doing that. But once *Representations* started, *Representations* not only met as an editorial board every week, but we had a meeting once a month, at least while I was here, to discuss each other's work. So there was a huge amount of interchange.

Lage: So it was not just a journal.

02-00:45:24

Hunt: No, no, it was not just a journal. We decided, after a certain amount of time, that we were spending too much time discussing other people's work and we weren't having enough intellectual exchange amongst ourselves, so we had a once-a-month meeting, at night, for dessert and the discussion of a paper by one of the people. So it's not that we were reading each other absolutely all the time, but I felt that Berkeley had a fantastic level of intellectual exchange, from that point of view. Tom and I were talking constantly, and I met a lot with Svetlana Alpers. This was after Natalie left. So there were certain people that you would have— You wouldn't necessarily even read each other's work, as you would just talk about it.

Lage: Let's talk about *Representations*, because that really seems to be a very important kind of gathering point.

02-00:46:10

Hunt: Oh, yes. Yes. Yes.

Lage: Were you in on the genesis of it?

02-00:46:15

Hunt: Yes. I was one of the people on the founding board. What people on the outside don't really understand about these things— Then *Representations*, after a while, sort of became something. It stood for something.

Lage: It represented something.

02-00:46:35

Hunt: Exactly, it represented something. So when it first started, we didn't know that it was going to represent something. I suppose maybe Steve Greenblatt and Svetlana Alpers had some notion that it was going to; I'm not even sure that that's true. When it started, it was Steve and Svetlana, is my understanding, sort of talking to various people and saying, "Well, who should we get together? Wouldn't it be great to have a journal that would sort of emphasize these kinds of things across fields that we're all sort of interested in?" I was lucky enough to be asked to be part of that group. But there wasn't a lot of organized thought, was my feeling, about, well, who was going to be on the board and who wasn't? It turned out to be— We were young.

Lage: So this was the younger group.

02-00:47:25

Hunt: *Representations* started in— What year did it start in?

Lage: Was it '81?

02-00:47:32

Hunt: '82 or something around the early eighties. [first organizational meeting, 1980; first issue of the journal, 1983] Well, in '82, I was thirty-seven. People were sort of around forty. We weren't the age we are now. I hadn't published my second book yet; I was about to. We were at the beginning of something.

Lage: But did you know what you were at the beginning of? Why did this group get together?

02-00:47:59

Hunt: Well, I think there was a sense that there are people in different fields who are interested in similar issues that had to do with being interested in theory, but not necessarily one— It could be psychoanalysis, it could be post-structuralism; it could be Foucault or it could be Derrida, or it could be both; or it could be theory— That all of us were interested in theory in our fields,

not just doing our fields. So as it impacts on feminism in history or psychoanalysis in history, in literature, in political science. That we didn't necessarily all gravitate to the same theoretical positions, but we all believed that you could get something by reading things that weren't in your field, but that were in the sort of theoretical domain that was becoming important in anthropology, in literature, in all these various— So we had a similar interest, in that sense; but there was no theoretical unification. There was no one theoretical position.

Lage: No one framework that you all—

02-00:48:56

Hunt: We became associated—partly because of Steve and also because of Cathy, and partly because of the historians—with a kind of more historicist understanding of theory; not straightforward post-structuralism, but a more historicist understanding. This is also true of Svetlana. So we were all gravitating in that direction, but we didn't know that we were gravitating in that direction. I didn't even know Cathy [Catherine] Gallagher was working on then.

Lage: Did you know her socially?

02-00:49:25

Hunt: Yes, of course, I knew her socially, because she was married to Marty. That's why I knew her socially. But Marty wasn't on *Representations*. So I didn't really know what Cathy was doing until all this began to come out, from being on the board. I knew what Steve worked on, but Steve had not published as much as he later was then going to publish. It wasn't as clear what his position was going to be, either. So it was a process. We were all just getting together, and it was fantastic.

Lage: And Randy Starn was on it. He was a little bit older.

02-00:49:59

Hunt: Yep. He was a little bit older, and Mike Rogin was a little bit older; but there weren't that many— Oh, and Svetlana was a little bit older, and Paul Alpers was on it, too. There was kind of really younger people and slightly older people. But Randy had always been somebody in the history department who was interested in the theory question, unlike most of the other people in the history department. So it was great. What can I say? I was, again, incredibly lucky. First, to get the job at Berkeley, and then to be here at a time when there were just incredibly exciting interdisciplinary things going on, and in which we all actually got along incredibly well together.

Lage: Did it become a social group, as well?

02-00:50:48

Hunt: Steve was extremely close to Tom; Tom was extremely close to Steve and to Cathy; and Cathy was extremely close to Mike Rogin. There were these personal relationships. I was very good friends with Randy, and so was Tom. But we were very good friends with Reggie, and he wasn't on *Representations*, and we were very good friends with Susanna, and she wasn't on *Representations*. I played tennis with Paul Alpers and Walter Michaels, who were both on the board, and Howard Bloch, who was also on the board. We all played tennis together. So there was a certain amount of socializing; not necessarily everybody in the same group, but sort of overlapping social circles.

Lage: Very interesting.

02-00:51:34

Hunt: Oh, it wasn't just interesting, it was so much fun. Again, who knew? We didn't know that I was going to go to Penn and Steve was going to end up at Harvard and Walter and Frances [Ferguson] were going to go to Hopkins and then to somewhere— No one knew that was going to happen. Howard ended up at Yale. We were at this moment together.

Lage: Or that the interest in theory and—interdisciplination, I was going to say—interdisciplinarity, whatever, was going to become so much a bigger thing.

02-00:52:09

Hunt: Right.

Lage: Did you have that sense?

02-00:52:11

Hunt: No. It partly became a bigger thing because of things like *Representations*. Also because Steve's work and Cathy's work and Mike Rogin's work and Tom's work and my work, frankly, and Walter's work and Frances' work ended up having a big influence. When I published my second book, which was when I was already on *Representations*, it was a kind of *Representations*-style interpretation of the French Revolution. People in French history kind of saw it as the exemplification of this kind of thing. Similarly with Tom's *Making Sex* or various of Cathy's books, and certainly, various of Steve's books. We then ended up having a much more defining role in our disciplines; but we didn't know that in 1982. My book didn't come out until '84.

Lage: I was going to ask you this tomorrow, but can you kind of trace how these ideas worked their way into how you were thinking about the French Revolution?

02-00:53:12

Hunt: Yeah. Now, I was obviously thinking in these terms already, about the French Revolution, because the book came out in '84; I obviously didn't write it in '83; I wrote it between '79 and— I published my first book in '78, and

between then and '84, I was obviously moving in this direction—in part, under the influence of being at Berkeley—in which my already existing interest in philosophy and theory was being encouraged by the people I knew with similar interests, like Tom. That got even more solidified by being in *Representations*, where the lingua franca was our common interest in theory. I'd been interested in it since I was a graduate student doing my dissertation, because I worked on the French Revolution, which is already a sort of hot Marxist topic. But when I was in France doing my dissertation, I went to Foucault's inaugural lecture at the College de France. So I knew that Foucault was already a big deal; when I was a graduate student in the late sixties, I had begun reading him.

Lage: Was he a big deal over here? Or was it more in France?

02-00:54:23

Hunt: He was certainly beginning to be a big deal, yes, absolutely. That's why I went to his lecture. So I was following his lectures at the College de France. I was in France at the beginning of the true high-powered influence of French theory. All these people, after all, are French. Barthes, Lacan. So I was reading Lacan and Barthes and Derrida and Foucault and Kristeva and whomever, while I was also doing my research. So I was always doing kind of both those things.

Lage: It's only natural that a French historian would bring this into history.

02-00:54:59

Hunt: Right. Well, yeah. Okay, so one would think it was only natural, except that truth be told, I was one of the few French historians who was interested. The other person of my generation who was really interested was Joan Scott, from a especially feminist point of view. So yes, it gave me an access to it; but frankly, none of the other historians of the French Revolution had the slightest bit of interest in these questions. But to me, it seemed natural. I'm sure that was one of the reasons why I got the Berkeley job, was that I was interested in these sort of broader questions.

Lage: And yet, I'm just thinking of somebody like Gene Brucker, who expressed in his oral history that he doesn't care anything about theory.

02-00:55:47

Hunt: I know. I know. I know.

Lage: And I don't think he's the only one who thought that way.

02-00:55:50

Hunt: No, no. So that older group of incredibly distinguished historians tended to be utterly and totally indifferent to theory. Utterly and totally. So the distinctiveness of our generation, in part— Not of everybody, obviously, in the department, but certainly for—and this was also true for Tom— The

distinctiveness of Steve Greenblatt, Cathy Gallagher, Tom, me, Randy, from the older generation—these were things we were interested in. The great thing about Berkeley was that there were enough of us to constitute a critical mass. Because if I'd been someplace else, I would've been the only one.

Lage: A critical mass, and also it appears that the older generation accepted you.

02-00:56:32

Hunt: Exactly. Well, they were indifferent to theory, but they weren't hostile. They weren't like, who do you think you are? So I remember with Vicky, having things with Neil Smelser, where we— And Paul Rabinow was part of that group; he was also part of *Representations*. We would discuss Foucault and Smelser and the older generation would be sort of like, what is this? But they wanted to do it. So in Neil's case, he said, "I want to know why you care about this?" So we were not discouraged. This was an extremely helpful, encouraging atmosphere, from that point of view, of pursuing things and seeing where they would lead.

Lage: Openness. Natalie describes an openness.

02-00:57:11

Hunt: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, absolutely. And then having people my own age who had similar interests was just--. It was absolutely fantastic. We didn't spend a lot of time sitting around feeling it was absolutely fantastic, because we were worried about getting tenure, we were worried about doing the next book, we had all our teaching to do, we had our graduate students, we had departmental fights about hiring new people. So it's not like we were sitting around thinking we were just having the greatest time of our lives all the time. But looking back on it, it was like, oh, man, we were so fortunate.

Lage: That's interesting. What would you think about stopping for today, on that note?

02-00:57:48

Hunt: Fine. That's fine. Okay, that sounds perfect.

Lage: I'm going to turn this off.

Interview 2: October 5, 2012

[Begin Audio File 3]

Lage: This is our second interview with Lynn Hunt, and I'm Ann Lage, from the Oral History Office. Today is October 5, 2012, and this is tape three. We talked about a lot of things yesterday; we never brought up teaching. I'd like you to talk about first, your initial experience. I don't know if you had a big lecture class or—

03-00:00:30

Hunt: Yeah. Yeah. Pretty early on, even before I got tenure, I had a big lecture class. I can't remember when exactly it happened that Tom Laqueur and I got together and decided that we should be offering a big survey of modern Europe. It was called then, History 5, and we started taking turns doing that. But even before then, there were some big lecture classes. Not huge, huge. My remembrance of the lecture classes was that at the beginning, my French history classes were only about forty-something, and the more general European history courses were maybe a hundred-something. Then when we got to History 5, then it was at least a couple of hundred, is my remembrance.

Lage: I remember taking 4A and B in Wheeler Aud, several years before.

03-00:01:23

Hunt: Yes. I never taught in Wheeler, but I did teach in— It was some kind of big lecture room; it was either in Dwinelle— But I don't think it was Wheeler. It was somewhere across from [the] Wheeler part of campus.

Lage: Paula Fass tells a funny—sort of funny, or sad. Arriving as a very young, new professor and having a lot of trouble with her male TAs—being disrespectful, goading her.

03-00:01:58

Hunt: I have to confess I had none of that. I had none of that. That was maybe a question of personality, character. Or maybe it was a sexuality question, because as a lesbian, maybe I came off as tougher. I don't think I was wildly tough, but I don't remember an issue with that. My main concern that I remember with the big lecture classes— First of all, there was just the fear of teaching a big lecture class. But I used a lot of slides. I made my own slides. I photographed my own pictures out of books, maps out of books, because I felt that having slides really was important for me. It gave the students something else to look at. So from the very first lecture course I taught, I used slides in every single lecture. That was very helpful to me, in terms of teaching. The one thing I remember being anxious about, besides having to stand in front of a group of students, was that Berkeley in the seventies, there were a fair number of homeless people. There was always the concern about what would I do if someone comes into the back of the class and starts shouting? This never happened to me, but it was something that was on my mind, I know,

because there were a lot of people, especially on Telegraph Avenue, that were obviously having a lot of trouble. Then plus—this is not actually related to teaching—I did have one incident on campus that, in a sense, confirmed my worries. That was, one day I was taking money out of the Wells Fargo ATM right across from campus, right next to Telegraph Avenue, when out of the corner of my eye, I saw somebody jump off the building across the street.

Lage: Oh, my goodness. Off the Student Union building?

03-00:03:59

Hunt: Off the Student Union building, exactly right. I was not looking there, but I saw out of the corner—and then I heard it. I remember exactly when it was, because—I don't remember the day, but I know exactly when it was, in the sense that I was on my way to a meeting of the search committee in French history, with Roger Hahn and Nick Riasanovsky. So I remember in my mind, that this was on my way to that meeting, because I told them about it, because I was really pretty upset when this happened. Because it wasn't late at night, or even late in the afternoon. I was on my way to this meeting, so that was the year at which it happened, which I guess must've been the fall of 1980, then. It was more that, frankly, that worried me in terms of teaching, about what would I do if something really problematic happened? Interestingly, I worried much more about that than a major earthquake during my class.

Lage: [laughs] Which we think about a lot.

03-00:05:00

Hunt: No, one does think about that. It's just that I have to say, my anxiety was focused on the street person, who I was supposed to deal with and would not know what to do, much more than it was [on the big earthquake]. My experience of teaching was that it was not super difficult to get the students sort of, as it were, on your side, as long as you projected to them sort of a clarity about where this was going and an enthusiasm about what they should do. I found the students, in that sense, very receptive.

Lage: You mentioned the professors you had had and how kind of inspiring they were, sort of as performers, in a way.

03-00:05:50

Hunt: Yes. Yes.

Lage: Was that a style that you took on?

03-00:05:52

Hunt: No. No. No. There was no way that sort of the performance part was going to be part of my style. My thing in teaching was, and always has been, I think, those two things that I just mentioned. Which is to be very clear about what the structure of the lecture is going to be. So that in the seventies, before Powerpoint, before laptops—in fact, before personal computers—I handed out

mimeographed outlines of my lecture. So I went in, typed it up, had it mimeoed and brought in fifty, a hundred, 150, however many students there were, a one-page outline of my lecture, so they'd know exactly where I was.

Lage: Each day, so they knew—

03-00:06:39

Hunt: Each day. Then I also showed a lot of slides. So a lot of maps and a lot of images from the period, because I've always been interested images. So clarity, on the one hand; and secondly, then, enthusiasm of saying, this is incredibly interesting. So it wasn't performative in the sense of getting them to sort of throw themselves into that moment. I was actually not very good at—frankly, I was pretty bad at—storytelling, which history is usually very good at. I was much better at analysis. It was, let's talk about the causes, let's talk about why it happened the way it did, let's talk about the consequences, and sort of clearly laying out the kind of analytical questions. I was not nearly as good as many of my colleagues were at sort of the flavor of the times.

Lage: Interesting. Do you feel that way still today?

03-00:07:34

Hunt: Absolutely. I think that at UCLA, which is pretty similar to Berkeley, I have big lecture classes I teach there. I teach Western civ to between 150 and 250 students each year. I'm about to retire; I used to teach a jointly-taught lecture course on the foundations of modern thought, to 150 to 250 freshmen. There again, I thought it was the clear way in which the course was laid out and each lecture was laid out; but also enthusiasm about why this is really important to know and really interesting, and let's see how that works.

Lage: I just want to get a sense of what you thought about your students, here in this public university.

03-00:08:23

Hunt: Yes. Yes. Yes.

Lage: Did they respond to this approach?

03-00:08:27

Hunt: Oh, I thought they did. Yes, because it was clear, since I won a teaching award even, I think, before I got tenure, it was clear that they responded well to that. What they liked about me—because when I came here, I was still in my twenties—was the projection of, this is interesting; that I knew what I was talking about. Not that I was so knowledgeable, but because it was laid out in a certain way, they felt that they could follow, but also that I was somehow leading them, I guess.

Lage: Did you have a lot of interaction with students? I'm thinking undergraduates, and maybe we'll get to graduates after.

03-00:09:06

Hunt: Right.

Lage: Did they come to your office hours?

03-00:09:09

Hunt: Yes, they came to my office hours. The clearest memory, I have to confess, that I have of interaction with undergraduates is more in the seminar context. So I taught, for example, the seminar for honors students. In one particular year I remember, this was particularly striking, I taught sometimes the 101 that was the undergraduate thesis writing seminar. I taught these lecture courses that only had forty-five, for example, in French history in the old regime and the French Revolution. I always felt that the students were very receptive. I wouldn't say that they were trailing in long lines at my office hours, so much as they would come and talk to me when they had something in particular on their minds. But if I had a student who was doing an honors thesis with me, or were in one of these smaller seminars, I got to know them much better. In fact, the one especially striking undergraduate honors thesis writer, I am still friends with to this day.

Lage: Did he or she go on to—

03-00:10:17

Hunt: She. Well, she was an amazing person. All I knew about her was that she was Swedish. She came to me when she was a sophomore, when she was nineteen, and wanted to be in my senior seminar for honors students. I said, "You can't be in the senior seminar because you're only a sophomore." She sat there and said, "No, no, really, I have to be in this seminar, and I've already taken classes with [Paul K.] Feyerabend on campus; I've read a lot of theory in history, and this is exactly what I want to do." And I relented and I said okay. She was, of course, fantastic. Then she went on to write her honors thesis with me, even though it was in Swedish history, about which I knew literally zero. I pointed this out to her. I said, "This is crazy, to do it with me. I don't know anything about this."

Lage: But who did?

03-00:11:11

Hunt: Exactly. She said, "So who is it in the department who's, in fact, going to be better at advising my honors thesis?" Then she went on to become a graduate student at Harvard. I essentially tried to dissuade her from going to Harvard. I said, "Well, you should only go to Harvard if you get a big fellowship. There are lots of places you can go and you should go wherever you get the best fellowship." She said—this is when I understood that I had not understood something important about her—she said, "It does not really matter whether I have a fellowship." It turned out that she came from an extremely well-off family, because she's now a major world philanthropist.

Lage: Oh, really?

03-00:11:54

Hunt: Has given a considerable amount of money to Berkeley and to UCLA. As irony would have it, she is now married to one of my colleagues at UCLA.

Lage: Oh, what a story! You didn't introduce them, I'm assuming.

03-00:12:08

Hunt: No, no, no, no. So she went on to Harvard and I visited her on occasion, when she was at Harvard, and we were sort of sporadically in contact. But then when she ended up divorcing the guy she had married, whom she'd met at Berkeley, and marrying somebody who she had met many, many, many years ago, who was a graduate student at Harvard, and he ended up coming to UCLA— She lives in London, and so they commute between the two.

Lage: Oh, what a story.

03-00:12:33

Hunt: So she was the undergraduate, in a sense, that I had the strongest memory of, because she was the only one who had actually come to me and said, "I have to be in this seminar."

Lage: And was an outstanding student.

03-00:12:43

Hunt: And was a truly outstanding student. My memory of Berkeley was that there were large numbers of incredibly fantastic students. One didn't get to know that many undergraduates that well. So I ended up having as a graduate student, when I went to the University of Pennsylvania, someone who had been in my classes as an undergraduate and who really liked those classes, but who's now a professor in Arizona. But Victoria, I didn't know her that well when she was an undergraduate. She was in my lecture classes.

Lage: That's normal.

03-00:13:19

Hunt: Right.

Lage: How about grad students? It looks like you have an endless list of them on your CV.

03-00:13:25

Hunt: Well, the grad students here, in general, I was incredibly fortunate to be at Berkeley, because Berkeley attracted just fabulous grad students. In all fields, I'm sure, but certainly in the field I knew best, in European history. We just got amazingly varied kinds of students. Not so much ethnically varied; they were mainly white. But they came from everywhere in the country, every kind of school, with every imaginable kind of interest. Some came not terribly well

prepared and did extremely well; others came from very sophisticated undergraduate programs. They were very different, but it was a wonderful intellectual environment. The grad students were really wonderful in class together, and they were extremely interesting and satisfying to work with individually. I have to say, it was amazing.

Lage: Was that a different quality than you found in your later places?

03-00:14:35

Hunt: Not so much different. I would say that Berkeley's program was much more— There were quite a large number of students in European history, and there was, at least when I was here in the seventies and in the eighties, much more of a sense of an intellectual project together, I would say, than at Penn or at UCLA. The students at Penn and UCLA were often just as good; there weren't as many. There wasn't the same kind of synergy, which I felt there was here, with me and Tom Laqueur and Gerry Feldman and Susanna and, before they retired, Bill Bouwsma and Gene Brucker, Randy Starn. Just amazing students came here, between early modern and late modern, and they were just— Many of them are my friends today. Certainly, every student that worked with me, I was in touch with, basically ever after.

Lage: What was your way of guiding the people for whom you were the major professor?

03-00:15:42

Hunt: Well, my situation here, frankly, was a little strange, I think, in the sense that— Both undergraduate and graduate. I did the French Revolution. So undergraduate-wise, there were lots of different things that I could conceivably teach, and I ended up being, I felt, something of the utility infielder. So when I first arrived, I was told there was no one to teach nineteenth century Europe, so though I was a specialist in sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, would I please teach nineteenth century Europe? So my very first class, practically, was nineteenth century Europe. So I was always teaching something, a survey course that no one wanted to teach or a nineteenth century history course that no one wanted to teach.

Similarly, with the grad students, it wasn't that there were so many students, frankly, who came to work with me specifically, although there were some, as much as people would get here, they didn't know quite who to work with. They would come for advice, to talk to me, and whatever there was about the advice they got from me, they decided it was good advice and they decided that they should work with me. So it was more that people came here. In some cases, the people who came to work with Tony Judt—who was here quite briefly—when he left, they had to work with me because— Well, they could've, I suppose, worked with someone else, but I was kind of the fallback

person, okay? So I ended up with a lot of students, frankly, who didn't have anybody else to work with.

So I had students who worked on the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century, and the twentieth century. I had a student who did his thesis, who was supposed to be a Tony Judt student, who worked on rural communism in France in the 1930s. I had a student, one of my very first students, who was supposed to work with Natalie Davis; and Natalie left and he did his thesis on seventeenth century France. So I ended up with the people who Natalie left behind, the people who Tony Judt left behind, and so I had students who worked on, literally, everything from the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

Lage: That doesn't sound like the usual.

03-00:17:51

Hunt: That's what I'm saying, is that my situation was— It was a little strange.

Lage: You didn't have to take all those students, I'm assuming.

03-00:17:59

Hunt: Well, I suppose I didn't have to, but who wouldn't? They were fantastic people. I even had a student who was supposed to work with Fryar Calhoun, when he then withdrew from his position. So I had a fair number of students who thought they were going to work with somebody else and ended up working with me. It wasn't just *faute de mieux*, but it was partly *faute de mieux*. They were supposed to do something else, and that was not a possibility, and they worked with me. I don't mean to say that they felt disappointed that they were working with me; I think they, in the end, were very pleased about how that worked out. It's not that I had some sort of steady pipeline of students who wanted to work on the French Revolution or the eighteenth century and they were coming to work with me and that's how it worked out.

Lage: Coming here specifically.

03-00:18:49

Hunt: They came to Berkeley, because Berkeley was great. In those days, because it was pre-Internet, people were much less clear about why they were going to where they were going. We had people who had studied with somebody as an undergraduate who had gone to Berkeley, in some totally different field; but they loved Berkeley and it was Berkeley. So they came here. Then when they got here, they were sort of like, well, now, who am I going to work with? I think I got students because I was relatively accessible. It's not that I was wildly friendly, but I was accessible. I was at my office hours when I said I would be at my office hours, and I listened to what their issues were. Even if they weren't working with me, they would frequently come to me to talk about, well, do you think I should take courses in this, or should I take courses

in that? Do you think this is a good dissertation topic, or should I think about it differently? They felt they could come and lay out the problem to me, and that I would somehow come up with a good solution.

Lage: Did they tend to take an approach that you were taking?

03-00:19:54

Hunt: Oh, no. No, no, no.

Lage: Or you had all— Tony Judt had a very different approach.

03-00:19:57

Hunt: Yeah. No, no, no. No. This is, I think, part of the reason why people kind of gravitated in my direction, is that I would be helpful, reliable, give good advice, and they could do whatever they wanted to do. So I had students who worked on the counter-reform in seventeenth century France; I had students who worked on, as I said, rural communism in twentieth century France; another student who worked on industrialization and the labor movement; I had a student from Kuwait, Mansour Abu-Khamseen, who worked on the colonization of Algeria. It really was more what they wanted to do.

Lage: I'm thinking, though, did they embrace the cultural history approach?

03-00:20:45

Hunt: No. Not necessarily.

Lage: You'd have a whole range of approaches?

03-00:20:47

Hunt: Laird Boswell, who went off to be a professor at Wisconsin, who did twentieth century communism, I said, "Laird, if you want to talk about why certain parts of France became communist and others didn't, you have to learn quantitative methods. Therefore, you have to go to Michigan in the summer and go to a quantitative methods institute." So he had a very elaborate statistical side to his dissertation; but I had done that in my second book, as well. My third article was done with two of my first grad students here. We did it together. I sort of set it up and they did—in those days, no laptops—they did the keypunching data entry, and we had a very elaborate quantitative project. So I was perfectly into—

Lage: Working with the little cards?

03-00:21:31

Hunt: Exactly, key-punched cards, and then they had to go, at three o'clock in the morning or whatever, when you can get computer time, and enter— The program had to be key punched, everything. So they mastered all of that and then we wrote an article together. So some students did quantitative things, some students did cultural things, some students did very much history of politics, other students did history of medicine. Again, I think one of the

attractions that people had working with me was that I myself was interested in a lot of different things. Though I was going to be associated with cultural history, my second book, when I became full professor, was partly quantitative and partly cultural. So I think they felt that—

Lage: They could do it all.

03-00:22:21

Hunt: —I wasn't going to say, oh, you can't do that because I don't think it's worthwhile to do quantitative history or, you can't do that because I don't think it's worthwhile doing history of religion or whatever.

Lage: How do you think that teaching interacts or doesn't interact with your research and your writing?

03-00:22:40

Hunt: What I find is that with teaching, one of the things that's so valuable is— Well, two things that are valuable. One, by forcing you to articulate, let's say in a lecture class, how you think something works, you get much greater clarity in your own ideas. Similarly, in a seminar, you're reading a text; maybe you've even read the text before. But just the process of trying to articulate things about it, you develop a clearer idea. Then also if you're in a seminar with students, you learn things from them. The students here were extremely talented. So especially graduate seminars, but even in undergraduate seminars, they would see things in the reading that you couldn't see. So this would get you to think about things.

But I think in terms of my own work, I have to say I think my colleagues probably had more of an influence on me than the students did, because I didn't have— I was not associated with a kind of approach or a school, so I didn't have a bunch of acolytes doing various things that I thought were worth doing, and that they were then coming up with sort of new ideas about how it should be done. They were really doing their thing. I would learn things from that, but I'm not sure it directly influenced the directions I was going in, as much as being in *Representations*, for example, influenced the way my work was going.

Lage: Yeah. You did a lot of co-teaching, it looks like, or at least some co-teaching.

03-00:24:11

Hunt: Yes. No, I did a lot, I think, compared to most other people, yes. Tom Laqueur and I developed a comparative English-French history course. That was a lecture course, in which we actually gave each lecture together. You'll do ten minutes, then I'll do fifteen minutes. Which was, I thought, a great format, because we were able to sort of ask each other questions and go back and forth and really develop explicit comparisons. The students seemed to like it.

Lage: Did you see that happening right there on the stage?

03-00:24:39

Hunt: Oh, absolutely, because that was very much improvised. We said, well, you're going to give a ten-minute introduction, then I'm going to give fifteen minutes on the background of eighteenth century French peasant society, and then you're going to talk for fifteen minutes about why England is less of a peasant society. So we would specifically respond to each other. I really liked the fact that we actually did each lecture together. It was not that I lectured one day, he lectured the next day. There was tension about who was going over their time limit, but—

Lage: This sounds like the [recent presidential] debate.

03-00:25:10

Hunt: Exactly. But it gave us a chance to really go back and forth in front of the students, so we could really develop ideas right there—

Lage: Yeah. That sounds fascinating.

03-00:25:19

Hunt: —in the classroom. That was very instructive. I taught an undergraduate seminar, a sort of senior seminar, with Beth [Mary Elizabeth] Berry, on violence in history. That was a really interesting back and forth, because she works mainly on Japan, I work mainly on France. We went back and forth about sort of what you learn about, doing that comparison. I did a graduate seminar jointly with Vicky Bonnell, in sociology.

Lage: In sociology.

03-00:25:51

Hunt: So half sociology students and half history students.

Lage: And what was the topic of that?

03-00:25:55

Hunt: I think the topic was probably revolutions. She did the Russian Revolution, I did the French Revolution. I'm pretty sure it was kind of on social theory in revolutions and reading a little bit about the revolution. The truth of the matter is I can't remember exactly what that course was about. But again, that was very much a kind of on-the-spot developing interchanges. I found those kinds of collaborative environments— That was really exciting, in terms of being able to actually think new thoughts right there and then.

Lage: Yeah, that must've had its payback in some way.

03-00:26:30

Hunt: Oh, no, no, it absolutely had its payback. All the teaching had its payback. It's usually, though, more long term, having to do with rethinking, as opposed to developing a new approach specifically because of the teaching. The new approach part, I think, is a much more diffuse process that has to do with

things that are in the air, the people who are coming to visit Berkeley. We had great speakers. Just sort of thinking, and it's not even self-conscious thinking. Often, these things happen unconsciously; you don't even know they're happening.

Lage: You mean bringing new ideas into your way of doing things.

03-00:27:08

Hunt: Yeah. I think new ideas develop—. You don't say, oh, I think I'll develop a new idea. It's more, huh; oh, that's really an interesting way of thinking about it; I wonder how that applies in my field and how you would think about that. So for example, I read a huge amount of Foucault in the sixties and early seventies. I taught Foucault all the time in my classes. But it's not like I was doing a Foucaultian history; it was more that it influenced the way I was thinking about the problem. But in a more unconscious way, not in a kind of, oh, that's going to be the method.

Lage: I don't know how to get you to think further on that. Maybe when we talk about your other books, you'll bring some of that in.

03-00:27:54

Hunt: All right.

Lage: Let me just ask, did the history department curriculum evolve? History was changing so much during these years, in terms of approach. Did the curriculum change, or just the—

03-00:28:08

Hunt: I don't think the curriculum changed that much. In general, my experience in history departments, having been now in three, is that history departments are extremely slow to change their curriculum. I remember very distinctly when Tom and I decided that there should be this survey course on modern Europe, kind of Western civ in the modern period— Because we had very wonderful courses on the ancient period and the medieval period, but there was no modern course. We decided we should do this, but there was actually opposition in the department to doing it, on the grounds that surveys encourage the wrong view of history. It's too superficial. Really, it was much better to focus in on something than to you have the sort of broad thing. But we insisted upon going ahead, and then we had hundreds and hundreds of students who wanted this survey, because they didn't understand how the whole picture worked. So no, I think that the curriculum was very slow to change. But not specifically here; I think it's been slow to change everywhere. Partly because in history, you have these very kind of anodyne titles. French history from the 1550s to 1815, let's say. Well, you could do that any way you wanted to do that.

Lage: True. The same curriculum, but maybe different approaches.

03-00:29:29

Hunt: So the rubrics would accommodate many different kinds of things, so I think people were able to do— The reason why we didn't change the curriculum was that they could do the things within the old system. We would occasionally do a new course, like Tom and I did this France and England course, this comparative course. And in your seminars, you could do whatever topic you wanted to do, so it was more in the seminar context that things would be developed in that way.

Lage: Did you find yourself mentoring women graduate students at all? Natalie Davis seems to really have taken that on—

03-00:30:06

Hunt: Yes. Yes.

Lage: —as her mothering role.

03-00:30:08

Hunt: Right. No, no, I think in general—I don't think it's 100 percent true, but in general; I know I talked about this a lot with Svetlana—that women professors had— Or at least when Svetlana and I talked about it, we certainly felt we had a slightly different view of what this was about than some of our male colleagues.

Lage: Of what history was about or what—

03-00:30:32

Hunt: No, about what it was to be a woman professor, than to be a male professor. In other words, we were not there as gatekeepers, to make sure somebody who wasn't competent somehow slipped through, that our job was to sort of judge and winnow out; but instead, our job was to get people to do the best work they could do, and then see what happened. I guess you would describe that as a nurturing role, but much more as a role of trying to get people to do their best, rather than just spending all of your time judging how good they were.

Lage: I wonder if that's generational, as well.

03-00:31:09

Hunt: Well, but Svetlana was older, so I'm not sure. And Natalie was certainly older.

Lage: True.

03-00:31:14

Hunt: So I think that did come in more. I think actually, the whole profession has changed, because there are now women. I think there has been much more of a move away from a kind of British style attitude, which is, we're here to see who's going to make it and to see if you can jump through the hoops correctly, to a more— I think almost every graduate program now has much

more of an attitude of, let's see what you can do. We want to be as encouraging as possible, and do your best.

Lage: Interesting.

03-00:31:47

Hunt: So I think there has been a shift, but it has to do with sort of the way graduate school has shifted.

Lage: But maybe it is connected with having a lot more women in the profession.

03-00:31:56

Hunt: I do think that has had an impact. What I'm saying is I think the men have changed, too. It's not just that the women have this attitude; I think the men have changed, too. We just had an orientation for all of our incoming graduate students, for example, at UCLA. The chair of the department, who's a man, got up and gave a speech about how he was thrilled that they were there, he hoped they were going to have a really great time studying, that he thought they would probably go on to many different kinds of things. Some of them would go on to be academics, some of them might work in museums or do public history, some of them might teach in the schools; that he was sure they would all find something they really enjoyed doing. One of my new senior colleagues, who we just hired in a chair in American history, who had been a UCLA graduate student herself, twenty years before, said, "This is a very different tune than was sung when I came here as a graduate student," when they literally said to her incoming class, "Look to your left and look to your right. One, at least, of the three of you is not going to make it.

Lage: That's what you hear law schools did.

03-00:33:01

Hunt: Right. So she said that was much more the attitude, that they were told when they came in, they weren't all going to make it.

Lage: Also I think that if you didn't want to be an academic—

03-00:33:12

Hunt: Forget it.

Lage: —that this was not the place for you.

03-00:33:13

Hunt: Right, right. Right, right. Right. So clearly, things have changed. I do think part of it has to do with women coming into the profession and not really resonating to the triage idea, or the idea that if you don't do what we do, we think you're ridiculous. So the profession is very different, from that standpoint, now. In part because there just aren't enough jobs.

Lage: The job market, I was going to say, has something to do with it.

03-00:33:39

Hunt:

It does. The job market has been hard since the time I entered it, and that's forty years ago. So that's actually never changed. It may be more towards catastrophic now, because of the recession, than it has been; but it's been a problem for a long time. There's just a much greater sense of, if we're going to continue with this, there's got to be other options that are available, and that we valorize, as you were saying. That we don't say, if you don't want to do the academic route, then we don't think you're really good enough. But there are many reasons why people might want to do it that wouldn't just be the academic route.

Lage:

I don't know that that goes for all departments.

03-00:34:22

Hunt:

No, perhaps not. But I think that's a move that is underway, that's more general than just UC.

Lage:

Just continuing along in the women's line, did you find yourself drawn into women's groups on campus, discussions about women's studies, the kinds of things that were going on in the seventies?

03-00:34:43

Hunt:

Well, I certainly found myself gravitating towards the other women who were being hired on the faculty, getting to know them. I'm not sure it was so much through women's studies. I may just not be remembering that very well. I myself was, increasingly am, interested in sort of feminist approaches. First of all, that was Natalie when I got here. I immediately got to know Natalie and Svetlana Alpers, who didn't necessarily do feminist topics all the time, but who were certainly interested in that. I think it may have been the first time I ever went to dinner at Natalie's house, was with Svetlana, just the three of us, and we spent the entire night talking about feminism. So it was more that. It was more through connections with people. We certainly discussed this on *Representations*. But by the time we got to the early eighties— Susanna, when she came in '81, that was a big kind of subtheme in her work. It was increasingly a subtheme in my work. I'm not sure it took place in that particular context. I was friends with a lot of women faculty, but I may just not even be remembering that we had a group that sat around and discussed this. I just can't remember.

Lage:

I think Natalie talks about, I don't know if it was formal or informal, but women on campus getting together, I think more informally, to discuss the status of women on campus.

03-00:36:19

Hunt:

Right. I don't remember participating in any committee, for example, on the status of women. But certainly, this was an unending subject of discussion. But it was my sense that on the contrary, there was not a gender bias, there was not a sort of, you're somehow going to have to be even better because

you're a female. I felt the atmosphere was very encouraging of the women. So the women that I was friends with—Carol Clover, Vicky Bonnell, Cathy Gallagher—I felt that we were all being treated quite fairly. I didn't think any of us were being held back. On the contrary, I felt if anything, they were definitely not not thinking about us. They were thinking about us.

Lage: But were they thinking about increasing the numbers or encouraging the women graduate students?

03-00:37:14

Hunt: Well, women graduate students, we had quite a few. As far as I could remember, we had a lot of women graduate students. I certainly felt they were being encouraged, especially if they were working with me. I certainly felt that if they were working with Susanna or Tom or any of the younger faculty, I thought this was a complete non-issue. There were a lot of women graduate students, and they were amongst the best students. That's my main memory. But there were male graduate students, too. I did not have more women graduate students than male graduate students, so it wasn't like I only wanted to work with women students. Quite the contrary. But I felt the situation for them was good. I didn't get a strong sense from the women graduate students that it was somehow a problem for them. Because things have been changing. By the time I got here in '74, there was already a pretty strong sense of these issues. We had fights in the departments about hiring people, but it was never crystal clear that it actually involved gender. They were sometimes about hiring specific women; but it was hard for me to say exactly how much the opposition was a gender opposition.

Lage: [The] women's studies program here was evolving at that time, and there was lots of discussion about making it more academically grounded. Did you get involved with that? Or do you have feelings about, should there be women's studies, gender studies, LGBT studies? Or should it be embraced by the various departments?

03-00:39:03

Hunt: Right. I confess that I'm ambivalent. I have two feelings about this. I don't think I was particularly involved with women's studies. Not that I was hostile to it. On the one hand, I think these things do serve a positive purpose, in getting people to think more systematically about a particular subject. I have been reluctant to be, for example, part-time in a women's studies department, although I've always been affiliated with the ones at the campuses I've been at. I have a sort of ingrained resistance to the idea of it being entirely separate. I don't like that. Because I think it gets the departments off the hook.

Lage: The core departments or traditional departments off the hook?

03-00:39:53

Hunt: Yes, they can basically say, well, we have women's studies, so what else do you want?

Lage: Right.

03-00:39:59

Hunt: And you have LGBT studies and you have Chicano studies. I think it applies to all of them. I was on the college executive committee, at a particularly low moment in the life of African American studies here, where there were more professors of it than there were majors. There were like twelve professors and ten majors. This seemed to me to be a deep problem. So frankly, now, I'm actually not in favor of separate departments for these things. I can see the point of having the separation at a certain moment, so that you can encourage the study; but then the more it becomes institutionalized, the more I think it really does say to the other departments, well, you don't really need to teach women's history, because it's being done somewhere else.

Lage: Right. Or you don't need to consider women in this course.

03-00:40:47

Hunt: Right. That, even worse, yes, because I think all courses should have women in them. In fact, for younger people, I think that is, in fact, the case. So then having a separate women's studies department seems to me to be something of a problem, because then it's just people talking within the same discourse, without really confronting the sort of need to convince other people or remind other people who this works.

Lage: But it is interdisciplinary, so it institutionalizes the interdisciplinary approach.

03-00:41:20

Hunt: Yes. No one's going to get rid of their women's studies departments or the LGBTs or the Chicano studies or African American. We're too far along for that to happen. I have to say personally, I'm ambivalent about it.

Lage: Yeah, yeah. Well, that's important. Okay, now let's see where we should go next. I want to talk a little bit more about your historical work.

03-00:41:46

Hunt: Sure. Sure.

Lage: We talked about your first book and the kind of broadening of your vision at Michigan and here, and you mentioned the French theorists. When did you read Hayden White and Clifford Geertz, and did that reading have a—

03-00:42:02

Hunt: Oh, sure. Sure, sure, sure, sure. Sure.

Lage: Or maybe more than reading.

03-00:42:08

Hunt: No. All those things. I was always interested in the theory question and in philosophy of history. I was reading philosophy of history when I was an

undergraduate. At Carleton College, you either had to do an honors thesis or take a comprehensive exam, and I took the comprehensive exam. One section on the comprehensive written exam was on philosophy of history. You were basically given a reading list that, over the summer, you should read these books. So I had read, actually, a lot, compared to most undergraduates, on philosophical questions of history, and I was always interested in that.

Lage: Your mind works that way, it sounds like.

03-00:42:47

Hunt: So I was always drawn to that and I felt that it was a useful thing to spend some time doing. I don't write philosophy of history, but I'm interested in it. It's helped me, over time, in terms of thinking of ways of conceptualizing projects. So I was always reading that. Natalie had a big influence, I think, on all of us younger people, because at the time that she was here, she was extremely interested in anthropology. So even before she went to Princeton and then was there when Geertz was there, she was especially reading Mary Douglas and Victor Turner; and because of her, we were all reading Mary Douglas and Victor Turner. Then after Mary Douglas and Victor Turner, and also other anthropologists we would read, then Geertz came on the scene. [*The Interpretation of Cultures*, I think was published as a collection in the early seventies, so it would've been right before I started here. So we were discussing that. So there was that. And Hayden White was at Santa Cruz when he published that book, the *Metahistory* book [1973]. So I read that also very early on. I taught at Berkeley the undergraduate seminar on historiography, frequently, which would include a certain amount of that kind of reading. It would include Foucault, it probably included White; I don't remember whether I actually assigned it or not. So I was very much interested in that. That is really obvious in, not so much my second book, but when I edited the collection called *A New Cultural History*, it's obvious that that has a big role to play in the way I thought about those things.

Lage: In your second book, you say that the book evolved from social history to cultural history.

03-00:44:40

Hunt: Right, and had both.

Lage: I assume it evolved during this time.

03-00:44:43

Hunt: Yes, it evolved during this time. So at Michigan, I had been very much introduced [to] this kind of quantitative, very sort of causal explanation-oriented form of social history, influenced by sociological theory. But I had already done that in my first book, because that was kind of what people were doing. So I did that in my first book. Then in my second book, I was continuing along that vein.

Lage: This is *Politics, Culture, and Class*.

03-00:45:08

Hunt: *Culture and Class*. I had developed a huge database of who held office in four major French cities. So similarly to what I had done in my first book, everything I could find out about them. A northern city, a southern city, a western city, and an eastern city. So I had all this data about them.

Lage: Was this computer work?

03-00:45:27

Hunt: No, this is this people work. Then I added to that. When I got here, the first two graduate students I had, Paul Hanson and David Lansky, I got them to work with me to develop a database that compared all the departments, the regional groupings in France, all the quantitative data that could be gathered about the departments of France, on the eve of the French Revolution. We gathered all of that together, and then we used maps of electoral results. They went out and found a technique that we could do to link this correlation analysis with the geographical maps. It was call discriminate analysis, and they learned about that. We developed all this data, and then we ran these programs.

Lage: It'd make a great GIS presentation today, right?

03-00:46:17

Hunt: Now, it would, yes, right. It was so hard to do then. I basically wrote the article and they helped me with it. We they kept redoing the data and asking different kinds of questions. So I was still doing that in the seventies, absolutely. But at the same time, I was getting interested in this anthropological, the symbols and ritual side, and also the linguistic turn side, coming out of Foucault, coming out of Hayden White, coming out of Geertz, coming out of a lot of different voices.

Lage: The kinds of things Natalie Davis was interested in, too.

03-00:46:54

Hunt: Right. But she was more on the anthropological end than the linguistic turn end, I would've said right then. So then I got interested in the rhetoric of the French Revolution, the symbols of the French Revolution.

Lage: Then your sources change completely.

03-00:47:06

Hunt: Then my sources change. I had been interested in visual things, but what happened was, I was in France doing research, some summer. I can't remember now; it was maybe like '77 or '76. There was a big exhibition at the Musée Carnavalet, of engravings of the French Revolution, and I went to it. Again, this is pre-Internet days, pre-widespread circulation of images. I had no idea that there were all these prints that had been done during the French

Revolution. I went to this exhibit and I was like, wow! Then about that time, a little bit later, somebody published a major book on the figure of Marianne, the figure of the French Republic, from the French Revolution well into the Third Republic. Maurice Agulhon published that book, *La Marianne au Pouvoir*. I thought, well, this is a fantastic subject. So the visual part was kind of by accident, that I went to this exhibit; and then I tried to relate the visual part to this more linguistic, anthropological turn. So then I had done various different kinds of articles, and at a certain point I literally said to myself, in the early eighties, there has to be a reason why I've been interested in these different things. So I've got to figure out a way to put them together. That's what *Politics, Culture, and Class* was; it was an attempt to bring the social and the semiotic or symbolic together.

Lage: It's so interesting, the interaction between discovering sources—sometimes in archives, sometimes at an exhibit—and the theory.

03-00:48:57

Hunt: Right. Right. Ever since then, I've felt that I always go to a lot of museum exhibits, because I find out that it gets me to think about something that I have never thought about before. So now I actually write a fair amount about visual history over time. But it really started with that one exhibit, back in the mid-seventies.

Lage: It's interesting that you say these weren't in books that you might've—

03-00:49:23

Hunt: Well, it was expensive in those days. If you had an illustration in a book—I had, I think, thirteen illustrations in *Politics, Culture, and Class*, of which a certain number were maps. It was expensive, because it required a different process. That is no longer true. Images are no longer expensive. But it makes a book more expensive, to have more pages. So then you had usually a very small number of images, if you weren't in art history. And none of them could be in color. So my first book had no images. I didn't even think about that. In my first book, I didn't even really think about culture, because that wasn't on my mind.

Lage: Now, how was that book received, the 1984 book?

03-00:50:14

Hunt: The *Politics, Culture, and Class*?

Lage: Right.

03-00:50:15

Hunt: Oh, it was extremely well received, in the sense that it got a couple of major reviews—one in the *New York Review of Books*, by Bob Darnton, which made a very big difference. It brought its attention to a lot of people. Frankly, it relatively quickly got a lot of attention. Because it was '84, it was

five years before the bicentennial. It's never been translated into French, but it was—

Lage: No! Really?

03-00:50:42

Hunt: No. Well, there was a project to do it, and they lost the funding. It was almost immediately translated into German, Italian and Japanese. It still continues to be translated into other languages, since then.

Lage: But not French.

03-00:50:57

Hunt: But not French.

Lage: Is there any other reason for that? Is it not accepted by the French?

03-00:51:01

Hunt: It's like with Americans and people who do American history; there's kind of like, what could you possibly know that we don't already know? My next book was translated into French. It did not do that well in French. It did not sell a lot of copies. Now another one of my books is being translated into French; but it's being translated in Switzerland, into French, not in France. So it's not easy.

Lage: So is there a certain nationalistic point of view?

03-00:51:31

Hunt: It's just not easy. Somebody's actually given a talk on why I haven't been translated into French, a French colleague of mine. His theory—and it was an interesting theory; I had never thought of it this way—is that I don't fit into any of the major schools in France. So I wasn't taken up by the publishing houses of either of the major schools. So that was his theory.

Lage: History's organized differently, then.

03-00:51:58

Hunt: Very much. Very much. But in this country, in the Anglophone world, and then, like I said, in Germany, Italy, Japan, the book was quite well known very quickly, because those translations all came out, actually, very soon. And since then, it's been translated into yet other languages. So yeah, that book was a really hard book for me to do because, like I said, there was this big quantitative side, and there was this big cultural side. I actually changed the order of the chapters. Between the time it was accepted for the publication and [when] I sent in my final version, I completely changed it. It was a huge mental struggle to try to figure out how this actually fit together; how you go from political geography that's generated by a computer analysis, to an analysis of Hercules as an image during the French Revolution and what it means. Was not obvious.

Lage: But that didn't seem to trouble any of your readers.

03-00:52:58

Hunt: Well, no. Actually, interestingly, the reception, in truth, had to do with the fact that everybody read one half of the book, the cultural half of the book. Very few people read the sort of political sociology part of the book. They all read the cultural part of the book, and that's what really got a lot of attention.

Lage: Because that was new.

03-00:53:15

Hunt: That was new, right. There are many people who think that's what the book is about. It's actually about the relationship between the two.

Lage: And that's what you wanted, wasn't it?

03-00:53:24

Hunt: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. No, I did want it. But the fact is, we went through a long period, in which people became interested in culture, and now there is a revival of interest in the connection between them. So I suspect the book will now attract people for the other reason. People are using it in classes all the time.

Lage: That's very gratifying, I'm sure.

03-00:53:40

Hunt: Yes. Yes. Very. Very. This was the great thing about Berkeley, though. What I felt changed my career about coming to Berkeley was not just that I had that extra time. What I felt changed my entire scholarly career, being here, was being here, from the minute I walked in the door, I got the distinct impression—not that anyone said it to me—that we were here to set the agenda. We were not here to figure out what the agenda was that someone else was setting; we were here to set the agenda. That was an almost invaluable, incalculable advantage.

Lage: It set the sights very high.

03-00:54:28

Hunt: That's the advantage of being at one of the truly great research universities. If you're a truly great research university, you're not trying to figure out what's the new thing. You're supposed to be doing the new thing.

Lage: And the new thing was *The New Cultural History*, your next book.

03-00:54:45

Hunt: Right. Right. It's not that we knew what the new thing was; but it's that we weren't looking for it somewhere else.

Lage: Yeah, that's very interesting. It's important.

03-00:54:56

Hunt: The thing that's really striking now is that now, those of us who were young then are so senior in our careers—we're like that senior group that was here when I first arrived—that now young people are writing about us as kind of the opposition, what they have to overcome.

Lage: The dutiful daughters.

03-00:55:22

Hunt: Right. That they now have to overcome sort of what we've set in place. So we're getting a lot—at least I am—a lot more sort of blowback on the kinds of positions that we took in the eighties, and even the nineties, as sort of, well, you're holding us back. There are literally articles being written about how, you're holding us back from being able to do what we really want to do.

Lage: And what do they really want to do?

03-00:55:49

Hunt: Well, interestingly, in this case—this has to do with the cultural history thing—it's that the new generation feels that what we're saying is, well, now it's time to go back to the relationship between the social and the cultural; or there are defects with just focusing on the cultural. Because I then did a subsequent book with Vicky Bonnell, that we edited, that other people had essays in, called *Beyond the Cultural Turn*. This has now led to a kind of resistance of, well, why do we have to talk about *Beyond the Cultural Turn*, when we're still doing that?

Lage: Still doing the cultural turn?

03-00:56:27

Hunt: This is like delegitimizing us. Right.

Lage: That's interesting.

03-00:56:33

Hunt: But this is all part of the point about the great thing about being at Berkeley was you weren't waiting for somebody else to figure out what was happening.

Lage: You were the ones. Yeah.

03-00:56:44

Hunt: It isn't that we were so great; it was just more that there was this feeling of, you're supposed to be the leader in the field. You're not supposed to figure out who's the leader in the field, you're just supposed to go out there and do it.

Lage: Right. I want to stop, because we're about ready to run out of tape here, and take a little break—

03-00:57:02

Hunt: Okay. Sure.

Lage: —and come back to that thought.

[Begin Audio File 4]

Lage: This is tape four. It continues to be October 5, and we're still interviewing Lynn Hunt, interview number two. Let's see. We were talking about Berkeley and how it—

04-00:00:29

Hunt: The sort of intellectual influences on my work, yes, and how it developed.

Lage: Right. I want to talk about the *New Cultural History*. I also want to talk about the UC Press series. Which comes first?

04-00:00:43

Hunt: Yes. The series comes first, because actually, *Politics, Culture, and Class* was the first book in the series [Studies on the History of Society and Culture].

Lage: Oh, it was?

04-00:00:53

Hunt: Yes.

Lage: And that was '84.

04-00:00:56

Hunt: Yeah. It came out in '84. It was through Vicky Bonnell that I made the contact with Sheila Levine—

Lage: And she was at the press.

04-00:01:04

Hunt: —at UC Press. I think she's still at UC Press. She was an editor at UC Press and at that time, was very friendly with Vicky and was very interested in the kinds of things that Vicky was doing in historical sociology. Vicky introduced me to her and I decided to submit the *Politics, Culture, and Class* book to them. My first book had been published with Stanford, where I had done my PhD. So I wasn't quite sure what I should do with my second book, but it seemed like a great idea to have the press be right there, because it would be easier to deal with them. So I remember meeting with them first about my book, and then the idea of the series came up. Not from me, but Sheila proposed it. I think she may have proposed it first to Vicky, and Vicky proposed that we do it together. So we had a series that was on society and culture. It wasn't just on cultural history, but it had a pretty strong inflection in that direction.

So it started in '84, lasted from '84 to 2004. A book came out after 2004, that had been in the works before; but after twenty years, we all sort of decided that this may be good, to have a series for twenty years and then stop, rather than just keep going and going and going. So that worked out well. That was very interesting. We had a combination books; most of them were about Europe, I would have said, Russia and Eastern Europe, and then some Western Europe. Lots of great books by great people. I don't think the series sold massive numbers of copies, because they were often first books—not always, but often first books. But I thought it was a very good series, and working with the press was really great.

Lage: What was your role, yours and Vicky's?

04-00:02:52

Hunt: Well, as editors, when we met somebody who we thought was interesting, we asked them what they were interested in. It was still really pre-email period, so it was more writing to people, letters, or meeting them at conferences. Then once the series got going, people of course came to us because they heard about the series. Then they would ask us if we would be interested in having their books in our series. So it worked in a kind of informal way. Then if we thought we had something interesting, we would ask for a proposal. We'd go to Sheila and see if she was interested. Usually, we had a whole book manuscript.

Lage: In hand.

04-00:03:29

Hunt: So for the press, it was really a way of generating interest by having it sort of attached to a kind of, well, this would be a likely place to publish, because it's a book that's like that.

Lage: I like the way it was described here. Where did I see how it was described? Someplace, I've quoted it in my notes: "social and cultural modes of analysis, in an empirically concrete, and yet theoretically informed fashion."

04-00:03:54

Hunt: Well, that was a good way of saying it. I don't know who came up with that.

Lage: Isn't that good?

04-00:03:57

Hunt: I don't know who came up with that, but it was great. Yes, that was very much the sort of thing we were looking at. So not unlike *Politics, Culture, and Class*, and not unlike Vicky's book that appeared in the press, which was on poster art during the revolution.

Lage: Was the empirically concrete part important? I'm thinking that I've heard criticisms made about cultural history, that it's too soft.

04-00:04:22

Hunt: Yeah. Yeah.

Lage: I don't see that at all in your work.

04-00:04:26

Hunt: No. And in Vicky's case, she came from historical sociology and so she had a very strong background in social theory, of the kind that we both grew up with as graduate students. So we wanted something that brought together the two kinds of things. But actually, we were more worried, frankly, about getting things that were too just theory, just kind of trying to develop a new perspective, based entirely on a theoretical position, and not on enough original research. So we really wanted the combination of original research and a theoretical relevance. So we wanted to have the two things, social and cultural. I think the books in the series were really, really, really great books.

Lage: Do you think the series itself had an influence, in terms of promoting a certain type of history?

04-00:05:17

Hunt: Yes, I think it had an influence, yes. Especially in terms of making this cultural move more acceptable, frankly, in sociology, because sociology was a little bit more resistant to the cultural turn than history was, on the grounds that it was soft and was not going to lead to theoretical breakthroughs. So I think it did have a certain impact in getting sociologists to feel more positively about it. Yes, I think it did have an influence.

Lage: Now, let's talk about *New Cultural History*, how that came about. And then the later one, I think we should talk about, even though it was so much later.

04-00:05:57

Hunt: Right. Yes, *Beyond the Cultural Turn*. Well, *The New Cultural History* ended up, I think, having much more influence than anyone thought it would have. This is the thing that people have a hard time understanding in retrospect. It's the same thing as with the founding of *Representations*. We weren't really sure what was going to happen. We didn't know it was going to have any kind of influence or get people to think in certain kinds of ways; we just kind of did it. Similarly, *The New Cultural History* grew out of a conference that was held at Berkeley, what turned out to be my last year at Berkeley, in 1987. When we held the conference, people knew I was going to leave. We had a regular visitor from the École des Hautes Études, and I think Roger Chartier was the visitor that semester. He was only here for a month, maybe, or so; we had a short-term visitor. I decided I would have a conference organized around his being here, and bring together people giving papers that would be in this kind of vein.

Frankly, I approached it as I have always approached things since, in a rather haphazard fashion. I thought, well, what are the things we need to discuss?

What are the influences that we need to discuss? So there's a chapter on Natalie Davis and E. P. Thompson. I got one of my graduate students from Berkeley, who was by then already a tenured professor at Wisconsin, Suzanne Desan, to write that essay. Then I thought, well, we have to have something on Geertz. I gave a talk at the University of Oregon and I met an anthropologist at the University of Oregon, who I had never met before, who was interested in this, Aletta Biersack. I thought, well, okay, so that would be great; I'll ask her if she'll do this. She said, "But I want to do it on Geertz and [Marshall] Sahlins," and that was great. So it was kind of like that. Tom did this absolutely spectacular piece, Tom Laqueur, on autopsies as narrative, which has had a very big influence as a piece on its own, and I've taught it many times. Mary Ryan was here—I think was a recent arrival—and was working on parades, so I got her to do a piece. So it was really a bunch of people who, for whatever serendipitous reason, I brought together for this conference.

Lage: They came to the conference, also?

04-00:08:38

Hunt: We had a conference here, and those people came and gave those talks.

Lage: I see.

04-00:08:42

Hunt: They were talks. That was 1987. Then the book appeared in 1989, so a certain amount of time was— They had to redo them, based on feedback. It had to be submitted, there were comments—it takes forever to get these things actually published. So it was actually published in 1989.

Lage: And then you actually wrote the piece that talks about the new cultural history.

04-00:09:01

Hunt: And I wrote the introduction, ["History, Culture, and Text"]. So then I wrote the introduction, and that was something of a challenge. I wrote the introduction, actually, while I was at Penn. I had by then gone to Penn, and I wrote the introduction, trying to sort of figure out— We also didn't have a title.

Lage: How did the title come about?

04-00:09:16

Hunt: Well, I was the one who came up with *The New Cultural History*. The marketing director at the press was violently opposed. He said that if I called it *The New Cultural History*, it would be out of date in a few years. I said, "I'm sorry. I really think this is what we should call it." I think I was right. I see problems with calling it *The New Cultural History*, but that kind of did stick in people's minds.

Lage: It became quite a term.

04-00:09:48

Hunt: It became a term.

Lage: Were you referring to an old cultural history?

04-00:09:54

Hunt: Well, yes. The point is, there had always been cultural history, so it couldn't be just called Cultural History. You could have said cultural history reframed, I suppose, or something. But for some reason, I was intent upon calling it *The New Cultural History*. I don't even remember the discussion about the title, except that the guy at the press opposed it. But when I insisted, they let me do it that way.

Lage: So this thrust that was in *Representations*, and in many of the people that you drew in, didn't have a term.

04-00:10:28

Hunt: It did have a term. Insofar as it had a term, it would be the linguistic turn.

Lage: Oh, okay.

04-00:10:33

Hunt: So there was the term, the linguistic turn. I didn't want this to be the book on the linguistic turn in history, because it seemed to me we were talking in a broader frame, about other things. Tom's essay on autopsies as narrative, one could say, fits into the linguistic turn; but the parades essay by Mary Ryan, I didn't think fit into that. The people we were talking about, Geertz was associated with that, Sahlins was not. Thompson and Davis, not so much; that was a really much more cultural— And Thompson had been sort of explicitly against this kind of linguistic emphasis.

Lage: Interesting.

04-00:11:11

Hunt: Maybe it occurred to me and I've just forgotten to call it the linguistic turn in history, but that was the term that people had started using. I didn't want to use that term, specifically.

Lage: I don't see jargon in your work. Was that deliberate? Or do you think other people who adopted the new cultural history got into jargon?

04-00:11:36

Hunt: Yeah. I did grow up in Minnesota, where jargon is really not a very big thing, it has to be said. I always felt that my role more was— I was certainly interested in the people who were writing with jargon, but I— First of all, it's a terrible way to teach. There was always something off-putting to me about what seemed to me to be a kind of, we're smart and specialized and we're the

inner group, because we all know what these terms mean; and you are hopelessly out of it. I wanted to do something, in the first place, that was going to bring this to students. And also professors, who are kind of like, I don't have time to read all of Foucault, Derrida, Geertz, whomever. I kind of want to know what it adds up to. So I saw the introduction as trying to explain, why are people interested in this? What does it have to do with? What does it represent? How can we think about it as a phenomenon? And where is it going? This is the thing. I love it, now, that there are articles attacking me, partly for that introduction and partly for the introduction to the next one on, *Beyond the Cultural Turn*. These are very short pieces.

Lage: You mean your—

04-00:12:58

Hunt: The introduction. The introduction is only, I don't know, it's maybe twenty-five pages. At most, it's thirty. It's an incredible compression of all these different things, because it's also a description of what's in the book. So it's actually quite a short statement about this.

Lage: Now, when you talk about people attacking, talk more about that. What's going on?

04-00:13:21

Hunt: Well, that's sort of recent. That's very recent. So for a very long time, *The New Cultural History*—which after all, is not even that long ago; it's more than twenty years, but it's just barely more than twenty years.

Lage: '89, right.

04-00:13:35

Hunt: Yeah, '89. So it's twenty-three years. It's not that long. For a very long time, people just read it and referred to it. It's not like it was the only thing they referred to, but it was a part of explaining to people kind of where this fit. I think that was the thing that people liked about it, was being able to sort of get a brief introduction to what this was about. So I don't want to in any way suggest that this somehow had some kind of massive influence. It's more that it became kind of something that people could refer to in shorthand, you know, "as in *The New Cultural History*." I think it's the kind of work that people did that had the really big influence. It wasn't just *Representations*, it wasn't just *Critical Inquiry*, it wasn't just something like *The New Cultural History*; it was the kinds of work that people did, like Cathy Gallagher and Tom Laqueur and Steve Greenblatt and Svetlana Alpers, and a whole host of other people—

Lage: And not all at Berkeley.

04-00:14:37

Hunt: —not at Berkeley. It eventually had a huge influence on the historical profession. So that cultural history actually became, by the end of the nineties, the beginning of the 2000s, the thing that most historians—the largest thing, the largest sort of identification point.

Lage: Yes. And I understand—this is what Paula Fass said, at least—that at Berkeley, it’s becoming very, very dominant.

04-00:15:04

Hunt: Yeah.

Lage: To the exclusion of—

04-00:15:06

Hunt: So in many places, it’s what historians now do. But that isn’t because of me or Berkeley or *Representations*; it’s because there was something going on that people got interested in. Then Vicky and I, we were still doing our series. Sort of in the nineties, Vicky said, “Well, don’t you think we should do something that would be kind of the next thing?” So we organized a conference at Berkeley. I was, by then, at Penn. We organized a conference at Berkeley [“Studying Culture at the Linguistic Turn: History and Sociology,” April 1996]. This time we had Jacques Revel come over, because I had been doing a lot of work with him, so he came to this conference. We invited a different group of people, half of them sociologists, this time, and half historians, to talk about, well, the issue about how are we bringing the social dimension into this? Or how are sociologists relating to the cultural turn? We called it *Beyond the Cultural Turn*, precisely because we saw that there was kind of beginning to be a certain amount of criticism of what were some of the things about cultural history that were problematic.

Lage: You refer to that conference as being lively, animated, and intense—which sound like code words for controversy.

04-00:16:25

Hunt: The conference was great. Those are just the paper givers who were there. Tom Laqueur was there, I think Susanna was there, people from sociology were there. Now, there were as many people from Berkeley, from other fields, who were not going to be in the book. It was an interesting format that Vicky came up with, is my memory of it, which was people circulated their papers ahead of time. They actually said virtually nothing, and we went around the room and everybody sort of said what they wanted to discuss about it, and we had a discussion about the piece; and then the person responded, after hearing what all the reactions were.

It was very animated, because again, we were in this situation—I think even more so than with *The New Cultural History*—where people were just sort of doing exemplifications of it, and also talking about the forerunners, if you

will. In this case, it was more sort of, well, where is this going? Is there a problem here? Two of the most important opening papers in that book are about the problems in this. [William] Sewell wrote a piece that then went on to be part of his most recent book, which is seen as part of the critique of cultural history. Rick Biernacki wrote a fantastic piece that was definitely a critique. So there were some serious critiques.

Lage: Did they come more from the sociologists than the historians?

04-00:17:57

Hunt: Yes. Well, yes, it came more from the sociologists than the historians, but they were really interesting critiques. Bill had been in a political science department, but he was basically trained here as a historian, so he was really a historian, but influenced by political science and sociology. Rick is a sociologist, but he was a student, I think, of Vicky's, and very much a historical sociologist. So it's not that they were hostile to the history part. So they raised really great questions. Then we had all kinds of, again, interesting exemplifications of how to bring the social and the cultural together. But the very idea of calling it *Beyond the Cultural Turn*, I think, got some people agitated.

Lage: Like there's someplace else to go.

04-00:18:38

Hunt: Right. Or that there needs to be a change of direction. We did not suggest a particular change of direction; we simply suggested that there were issues that were on the table. The main issue was it's a very important move to say that culture is not just a kind of product of the social and economic world. The issue is, once you've said that and you say that culture really matters, well, you can show that culture really matters in this environment and this environment and this environment and this environment, in Indonesia and China and Africa and Australia and wherever; then what does it add up to? The advantage of Marxism or modernization theory was that it had a clear narrative. You have a change in the mode of production, and things change. This is like, okay, culture matters, but why does anything change? What does it add up to, as a picture? So that was the critique. That was the basic underlying critique, and that's still on the table, it seems to me.

Lage: Then you talk about the critique. Was there a critique of your critique?

04-00:19:47

Hunt: Not immediately. Now Bill Sewell has published a book called *The Logics of History*, that has a much more wide-ranging critique about how we've lost sight of the problems of capitalism, we've lost sight of the macroeconomic; we need to get back, to get engaged in those kinds of things. Not giving up the cultural, but get more engaged in, how does this work together? So there's been more critique.

I think now there's been a reaction, as far as I can tell from the pages of the *American Historical Review*, which had a big forum that was basically on the question of "turns," but basically on the question of the linguistic turn. There, there were some critical articles about even talking about *The New Cultural History*—it's not really new—or especially talking about *Beyond the Cultural Turn* as if the people who are still doing cultural history are somehow not doing the right thing.

So one of those pieces, interestingly, was written by a Berkeley graduate student, but from a later epoch than from when I was here, and by someone in US history, which was a little slower to pick up, perhaps, the cultural emphasis than Europeanists. So it was a kind of, what we're doing is just fine, thank you. We don't need to be told that somehow this is passé. So that *Beyond the Cultural Turn* made some people feel that it was like saying, well, you shouldn't be doing that anymore. I don't think that's what we said, but this is part of the way that historiographical discussion works.

Lage: Right. Moves on.

04-00:21:31

Hunt: Right.

Lage: And retracts.

04-00:21:33

Hunt: Right. That was so interesting about the criticism, which I just read, which is why it's on my mind. Because I was asked to discuss the criticism at Willamette University, when I went last week to give a talk there. They said, "Well, we'd like to have a session where you discuss this essay that criticizes *The New Cultural History* and the *Beyond the Cultural Turn* book." I said, "Fine." So I read the essay. What was interesting about it was that from a younger person's perspective, they see it as this older generation that thinks they're so great. They think they invented this thing, which they didn't invent because it actually already existed, and that now that they're getting older, it's no longer the going thing. So they're telling a story as if they were the great generation, and now we're not going to be the great generation.

So I think it is about a generational issue. Whereas our perspective, when we look back on it is, we didn't know what we were doing. We were not kind of like, we're fighting World War II, we're going to be the great generation, we're going to take the historical terrain. It didn't seem like that to us. But in retrospect, one can see how, to other people, it might not seem that way.

Lage: Yeah. Well, it's interesting that you're able to reflect on your perspective as a younger person coming here, and now you're the standard in the field.

04-00:23:00

Hunt: Right. Right. But when you start out, you don't know that.

Lage: No.

04-00:23:07

Hunt: At least I certainly didn't know that.

Lage: When you're studying history, often we think of observing people as if they knew what was happening.

04-00:23:18

Hunt: Exactly. Exactly. So that's actually what one of my current interests is; I'm much more interested now in how much thinking goes on unconsciously, in which people don't really understand what's happening. All kinds of really important things happen for reasons that it's a mistake to think about in terms of conscious decisions, because you make certain kinds of decisions and they're unconscious, but they have nothing to do with actually, the real stakes of what is going on. They have to do more with a kind of intuition about something. So with *Representations*, there was a kind of intuition that it might be a good idea to get together and do this, but not particular clear plan of action.

Lage: Or where it might lead.

04-00:24:02

Hunt: Exactly. Exactly.

Lage: How much did your book, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*— Was it nurtured in this atmosphere at Berkeley, or did this come from your later life?

04-00:24:14

Hunt: Oh, it was absolutely nurtured in the atmosphere of Berkeley, because I had started it while I was still here. Again, it's the way I usually work. I started by doing some essays to work out some issues. Then I thought, well, surely, these must go together somehow into a book. So then I wrote another couple of chapters, to kind of fill out an argument. So I didn't know what my overall argument was going to be; I just knew that I needed— There was, first of all, the issue of Marie Antoinette, which was something I had felt I had never really dealt with, which is related to women in the revolution, but in a very specific way. I had been interested in that already when I was here, and then I did a conference at Penn that was on eroticism and the body politic, that was related to that issue. I was, at the same time, because I got interested in Marie Antoinette while I was still here, I was also starting to get interested in the issue of pornography in the French Revolution. When I went to Penn, I also then had a conference on pornography and did a book on pornography. So those were ideas that started here.

The second thing I was interested in was this sort idea of the band of brothers and Freud. Again, psychoanalysis was one of the possible things that one

could find relevant. I had always been interested in theoretical psychology and psychoanalysis. So I sort of was exploring that kind of issue, within this kind of cultural context at the same time, because it had to do with images and representation. But in that book, I talk a lot about painting and novels, more than about engravings. So it was working out some interesting issues. But they had all, in a sense, started here, and then I finally brought them together.

Lage: Did that have a good reception and a lot of influence?

04-00:26:14

Hunt: That is interesting, because it didn't have as enthusiastic a reception, I would say, as *Politics, Culture, and Class*, for a very simple reason, which is that most historians find the idea of psychoanalysis utterly and totally ahistorical, therefore anti-historical, and therefore inappropriate for historians. I knew that that would be true. So yes, there was a lot of interest. That was translated into French.

Lage: Oh, it was?

04-00:26:47

Hunt: It was translated into French very quickly, and it was translated into Italian and to a variety of other languages, over time. There was a big forum on it. There was a lot of resistance to talking about the collective unconscious or talking about its political meaning, to using psychoanalytic language. And that was fun. I had an interesting time with it. Actually, there was a forum in Italian on it and a forum in English on it, relatively quickly.

Lage: So it was controversial.

04-00:27:19

Hunt: It was controversial. It was much more controversial than *Politics, Culture, and Class*, ironically, and it's still a subject of discussion. In some places I go to, people say, oh, I really love *Politics, Culture, and Class*; and in other places I go to, people say they really love *The Family Romance*. So different people relate to different things.

Lage: Why did that get translated into French and not the others?

04-00:27:42

Hunt: I don't know. I had French friends and they were able to talk some editor into doing it. It didn't do that well, so it's going to be hard for me to get other things translated.

Lage: Do you get invited to speak a lot in France?

04-00:28:00

Hunt: Yeah.

Lage: So it's not a complete resistance to American historians.

04-00:29:04

Hunt:

Oh, no, no, no. And it's not all a complete resistance to me. No, no. I don't mind at all to say that. When Antoine de Baecque was saying that I didn't get translated because I fell between two stools, I think that's true. But it's also true, frankly, that I get asked to do stuff all the time in France—not every single minute, but very often in France—because I'm seen as *the* person working on the French Revolution in the United States who's the most interested in gender issues, and *the* person in the United States working on the French Revolution who's the most interested in symbols and language. So for example, in December, I'm going to preside in the opening session and be one of the roundtable wrap-up speakers in a conference on iconography in revolution, from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century, because my work is obviously associated with iconography. I have been frequently asked to go to give lectures or seminars, either at the École des Hautes Études or at the University of Paris, to various places. But part of that is because I'm known at this point; but part of it is also I can speak French well enough to give a lecture in French.

Lage:

That's important.

04-00:29:24

Hunt:

Not all French historians actually can do that, or are comfortable doing it.

Lage:

Did you put a lot of effort into it?

04-00:29:30

Hunt:

Yeah, we should talk about that, because I've got to say, that was one of the greatest—hurdle's not the right word—one of the greatest mountains to climb, I would say, in my career. I'd already studied French as an undergraduate, because I was a German major originally, so I'd done French one, two, three, and four. I'd never been to Europe, when I went to do my dissertation. Like many people, I became obsessed with the issue of French the minute I got there, which was I felt my French wasn't good enough. People couldn't understand exactly what I was saying, at the library. So after my first experience, when I stayed for fifteen months, which is quite long, I went almost immediately back, after another three or four months. I think it was then that I got a friend to find me a tutor. So I worked with a tutor once a week. For the next couple of years, every time I went there, I would work with a tutor once a week because I really wanted it to be better. And it got better. I was able to speak in French, actually, quite soon. I could speak French; I just didn't think it was good enough.

Lage:

And the French seem very demanding about their language.

04-00:30:46

Hunt:

Oh. Yes, I think that's fair to say. It's kind of like if you don't speak it well, especially in terms of accent, it's like you're kind of a loser. So I really didn't want to be one of those people. I think I'm reasonably good at languages, but

I'm not fabulously good at languages; so I worked at it and I worked at it and I worked at it. I went to movies; I read French newspapers; I only read French novels, when I was in France; I went to as many talks as I could go to. You didn't usually rent an apartment that had a TV, when I was first there, because that was way too expensive. But I just worked at it and worked at it and worked at it. And it paid off, in the sense that then I got invited to do things, because I could talk in French.

Lage: I'm so glad that came up.

04-00:31:22

Hunt: Yes. Oh, but the humiliation one can feel in France when you say something and someone says, "*Comment?*" [sorry?] You're sort of like, I thought I just said it totally clearly. What is the problem?

Lage: Well. Let's talk a little bit more about feminism and historical perspectives, since this general rubric here of our interview has to do with gender. One of my interviewees in the series talked about boy history and girl history. Do you think there's a female cognitive style?

04-00:32:16

Hunt: Female cognitive style?

Lage: Right.

04-00:32:20

Hunt: Well, I'm not, I suppose, 100 percent hostile to the idea; but basically, I don't think there's a female cognitive style. I think that women, because of their experiences, relate to different things. When I wrote *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, I seriously doubt that a male historian would have written this book. Not that they couldn't have, but I think somehow it just would've been not something they would want to— They wouldn't want to go there. Whereas for me, talking about how you can explain the way the French Revolution works because of an underlying sort of gender drama, I thought this was a deeply attractive idea. It's not like it was the only thing that I thought you could say about the revolution, but I thought it gave you a certain perspective on it that you wouldn't have otherwise. So for me, obviously, I was attracted to the subject because of that. But I was using lots of male theorists, starting with Freud, while doing it. So I'm not sure I would say it was a female cognitive style. The whole question of psychoanalysis probably has slightly more attraction, theoretically, for women scholars; maybe that's possible. But there are plenty of men, there are *mainly* men psychoanalysts. So it's not as if it's such a clear distinction.

Lage: I'm going to quote Natalie here. I think she said this in her oral history, talking about women as historians. And she includes you. She says, "All four of us did it. A moment when a woman will stop and reflect that there's something special about being a woman historian. A self-consciousness," and

I think she used the word self-reflexiveness, “and a conversational style, that some men have, also.”

04-00:34:18

Hunt: Well, I think that’s absolutely true. I would just separate that from the cognitive style. So I would absolutely agree—

Lage: That the conversational style and the self-consciousness—

04-00:34:27

Hunt: Oh, absolutely. That is totally, totally true. Okay. Now, that has to do with several things. I don’t know that it has to do with anything inherently, in terms of sexual identity, insofar as there is such a thing as sexual identity. It has to do with concrete social and cultural and political circumstances, especially when you’re at the beginning of this process, in the seventies, when there are very few women. How could you not be self-conscious? Because it’s perfectly obvious that there aren’t that many of you. Therefore, you are instantaneously self-conscious, not always in a positive sense. Secondly, you realize that part of the reason you got there was that you got a lot of support. So the whole notion that we were talking about before, of nurturing, of being supportive, of being encouraging, if it’s not in your DNA—that is, in your cultural makeup, really—then you’re not going to help the process.

So it’s not that all women were, but in this case, the women definitely— And Natalie, above all else, was incredibly— It’s not nurturing in the sort of classic sense; she was just incredibly encouraging, even when she wasn’t being explicitly encouraging. In other words, everything about her was encouraging, because she was so effervescent. Again, she was encouraging because she made it seem like what we were doing was fun. It was exciting, it was adventurous. So she just exuded effervescence about it. So it wasn’t even that she had to say, this is great; she just made it seem like it was great.

Natalie didn’t sit down with me and say, all right, Lynn, now, as a woman in the department, you need to think about X, Y, and Z. That’s not the way it was. She was encouraging just by— She would ask me about my work and she would ask me how things were going. Her role was not to kind of prop me up; her role was to say, this is great. So she was a fantastic role model, in that she was always looking for what was good in what someone did. Now, she wasn’t the only one. On *Representations*, Mike Rogin was famous for being able to see what somebody was trying to say in the article they’d submitted to us, even when they hadn’t been able to say it.

So in that sense, it’s not that it was just a female conversational, or even intellectual style. I’m not sure it’s a gender thing, as much as it, in this case, had to do with the circumstances. Understanding that your situation was a little peculiar, you were both—

Lage: It would make you something of an outsider.

04-00:37:22

Hunt: —lucky and lucky. You were lucky and unlucky. You were lucky to get in, and you were still an outsider. So you couldn't help but sympathize with outsiders, because you were in outsiders. Yet you wouldn't have even been able to have that feeling, if you hadn't been sort of admitted to the club. So it was definitely a complicated situation to be in. It was just a much more pleasant situation to be in, if you felt mutually supportive about it.

Lage: Right, right. But that's more about being supportive of a person in the profession. But how about what it does for your writing and your historical work? Is that pertinent?

04-00:38:02

Hunt: Well, I'm sure it's pertinent to some extent.

Lage: Well, like the girl history, boy history thing.

04-00:38:14

Hunt: Well, but I would put it slightly differently. I certainly emulated Natalie's desire to speak to everyone, and not to take on a, I'm superior, I know more than you do, you should look up to me. She had, I felt, a very egalitarian writing style, that was elegant and interesting, but that was dedicated to drawing people in, not impressing them with what she was like. Now, it's not just women who do that; but I was very drawn to this sort of wanting people to understand what she was saying, not trying to impress them with who she was. That was an extremely important example; but it's also related to being brave enough—this is why I don't think of it exactly in gender terms; and I think that is something, frankly, that I have been successful at—at being brave enough to say what you mean, which means that people are going to be able to more easily criticize you.

Lage: Oh, that's interesting. You say it clearly, and then you open yourself—

04-00:39:34

Hunt: Oh, absolutely. The point about opacity is that it's almost always so that people will not be able to say something mean about you. The point about clarity is, it's saying, well, this is what I mean to say. So then if people don't like it, well, it's pretty easy to come down on you, because it's not like you're hiding behind some obfuscation. I thought Natalie was very much admirable in those terms. She was also very much that way in all of her personal relations. She was not coy. It's not that she wore her heart on her sleeve, but she was a straightforward person. You didn't feel like you had to sort of figure out the hidden meaning of what she was saying. Not that you understood everything that she was thinking. Don't get me wrong; I didn't mean that she was somehow uncomplicated. On the contrary. But relating to her was very easy, because she always came at least three-quarters of the distance towards you. And I admired this in her, because it was, I felt, a kind of everyday courage that most people didn't have. And that being a woman in her

situation, it was almost unbelievable that she was this way, because there were many women in her generation who were not like that, who were very defensive and prickly and difficult. Natalie just was an amazing person. So for me, coming here with her as the senior person in, basically, my field, in a field adjacent to mine, it was like a staggering advantage.

Lage: You're implying it had its influence.

04-00:41:13

Hunt: Oh! No, her example was incredible.

Lage: But did she ever talk about clarity and courage? Or you just—

04-00:41:22

Hunt: No. No. No, again, it was not so much that— But life was short, so there weren't a lot of complicated conversations about, you have to think about this, this, this, and this. That was the other thing that was great about Natalie; she was never, I need to help you do X. It was always, you're doing great. It was not, I will help you. It was, wow, that sounds really interesting. That's so much better, because there was no, you owe me something.

Lage: Or, you need something.

04-00:41:59

Hunt: Oh, right. It was, oh, this is great, what you're doing.

Lage: Well, that might've had something to do with what you were doing.

04-00:42:07

Hunt: No, no, no, no, no, no. I think it really was her style of encouragement; that was extremely important. In that sense, she was an unparalleled role model, I think, in the profession. And she still is. It's very difficult for most people, and most women included, to be as consistently helpful, enthusiastic, personable, friendly. Natalie was an amazing—and is still—an amazing person. So I was very lucky. She was not here that long.

Lage: I think she left in '84, if I remember correctly. [Davis was at Berkeley 1971-1978.]

04-00:42:39

Hunt: No, no, no, no, much more before that, much before that. She left in the seventies. I came in '74. She was definitely here in '74-75. I went away in '75-76, because I had my last year at Michigan. I came back in '76-77; she was definitely still here then. I'm not sure if she was here—

Lage: She was here when you had your promotion to tenure, I think.

04-00:42:56

Hunt: No, no. She was here when I came up for my fourth-year review, and then she left, between my fourth year— So she was gone by 1979.

Lage: Okay.

04-00:43:07

Hunt: Because needless to say, this had a rather important— Fortunately, I did not feel completely bereft, because that would've been really sad. I was mainly just really happy that she was here when I was first here.

Lage: Was the interest in cultural history, the way it grew and became, in some ways, dominant, related to there being more women in the profession? Do you think women have a particular—?

04-00:43:43

Hunt: Yes. Yes. No, I think it was related; I don't think it was just that. Because of course, all these great theorists, other than the feminist theorists, were men. It definitely had to do with women in the profession, and it definitely had to do with— You really put it much better than I could've come up with it myself. Because there weren't that many of us at the beginning, especially, there was a kind of self-consciousness about being women. In my case, I probably wouldn't have done women's history, because it's not what I started off doing. I came to see the relevance of women's history because when I was in this situation, then it was like, ah, there *is* an issue about women. There haven't been any, there aren't many. What is this about? How did that happen? So you'd have to kind of be totally out of it not to see that this was a relevant issue.

So there's no question that that, for all of us who were in that situation, the women in that situation, there was much more receptivity, let's say, to feminist issues. Not just personally, but then inevitably, in one's work. But the first women who did women's history took a lot of flak. What was very successful about the move that Natalie and others made at the time was this turning it into gender history. So it wasn't just about women, it was about relations. It was about sexual relations, it was about sexual hierarchy, it was about sexual difference—which was then completely open to LGBT issues when they arrived on the scene, which was much later. But because it was in a relational context—and that's what Natalie had done that was really important; and Joan Scott did, more or less at the same time as Natalie, although she had an influence on Joan, certainly—made it into, instantly, something that anybody could be concerned with, because how could you talk about power without talking about these fundamental power relations? So already in *Politics, Culture, and Class*, it appears in my work. And then *The Family Romance* is basically really going with that. But it's to say, this is how power works, is by these unconscious interrelationships.

Lage: Did you ever get interested in LGBT history?

04-00:46:03

Hunt:

Well, interested in. I was certainly interested in it, in the sense that, first of all, it's an underlying issue in pornography, I think, in general. This has to do with the sort of variability of sexual desire. But in *The Family Romance* book, one whole chapter about the band of brothers is about the homosocial relationship and how crucial that is to the way power works. So yes, I was interested in it; I didn't go, let's say, the direction of Terry Castle, at Stanford in English literature, who writes almost exclusively about lesbian topics. But I was interested in it in a more general way.

But I had already been introduced to that when I was at Michigan, because one of the people in the Society of Fellows when I was there was Gayle Rubin, who would go on to be one of the great queer theorists in the country. So I knew her when she was a graduate student, and we were already discussing these kinds of issues then. She came to the Bay Area when I was at Berkeley, so we had a lot of, actually, fights, especially about pedophilia, which I felt she was rather too positive about. We had a lot of discussions about those kinds of things.

The other thing was that Berkeley's in the Bay Area, and there were a lot of really interesting things going on politically, and in terms of queer politics, and just generally gay politics. I after all, lived here when Harvey Milk and George Moscone were assassinated. There were a lot of things going on, and those other things also had an influence. It wasn't just the people you knew at the university. I was here for Jonestown. There were just a lot of things happening.

Lage:

Like your time at Stanford influenced—

04-00:47:54

Hunt:

Right. So it was a little more spread out at Berkeley, in the sense that it didn't all happen in a three-year period of time, because I was here for thirteen years. But there was a lot of things going on that gave you pause for thought.

Lage:

And did they affect your work? Can you say how they affected it?

04-00:48:06

Hunt:

Well, they certainly affected my work, in that I was interested in the gender issue, to start with. In the course of being here, I was increasingly out about being a lesbian. When I first came, I didn't talk about it. It became clear I was going to have to talk about it pretty soon, because I came with somebody who was my partner, who was also a historian, and we were obviously going to be part of the same circle of friends with people.

Lage:

Was she in the department?

04-00:48:36

Hunt:

No. No, she was finishing her PhD.

Lage: I see.

04-00:48:40

Hunt: So I was out to the people who were my friends, in my generation; and I was increasingly not *out* necessarily, in the sense that I ever talked about it, but everybody knew within X amount of time.

Lage: Well, what about the social parties within the department?

04-00:48:55

Hunt: Right.

Lage: Were you able to invite your partner?

04-00:48:57

Hunt: When I was an assistant professor, I always went by myself to these things. But that was partly because my social life was in a certain amount of upheaval, breaking up with people, getting involved with new people who weren't necessarily here. So I went to those things by myself. After I got tenure, I was then involved with somebody who I then was living with, and so then my social life obviously included her.

Lage: And times were loosening up.

04-00:49:19

Hunt: Times were changing. Actually, also the social scene changed. There wasn't as much of these sort of big departmental dinner parties. My memory of the eighties was much more socializing around Reggie, Susanna, Tom. We had our own social group. We weren't junior faculty going to the senior faculty's houses for dinner anymore; it was more we had these dinners with eight, ten, twelve people at each other's houses, the same group of friends. That was my group, was Susanna, Tom, Reggie, Vicky, various people. We all got together. So there was a big shift between the seventies and the eighties, from that point of view.

Lage: Socially, and also in your own—

04-00:50:05

Hunt: Right. There's a big shift. So then my partner was involved in all those things. Also, plus I had a whole sort of more gay scene of lesbian friends, who I saw separately, who had a kind of life outside the university.

Lage: Which is nice, to have life outside the university.

04-00:50:23

Hunt: Indeed. Especially at Berkeley, which is a little campusy, in that sense. There was a way in which I felt my social life was so dominated by the university. I had these other friends, but it wasn't exactly like living in a big city.

Lage: I'm going to stop.

04-00:50:37

Hunt: Yeah. That's all right.

[Begin Audio File 5]

Lage: Okay, here we are on tape five. We've had our five seconds of silence, and this is winding up the second interview with Lynn Hunt. Is there anything more to be said about being gay and having a perspective as an outsider? For instance, Larry Levine talks about having an outsider's perspective, being Jewish, when it wasn't totally acceptable in American history, and Paula talks about being an immigrant—each of them giving them a way of looking at history that may be different. Do you think you brought some of that?

05-00:00:51

Hunt: No. Part of that is probably characterological, in my case, in the sense of—I'm sure for Larry, when he was first in the department, this was probably a very big issue; whereas by the time I got here, there were a huge number of people in the department—not huge, but there were a pretty substantial number of people in the department who were Jewish. At least a quarter of the department, I would have said, was Jewish.

Lage: I don't think he was really referring to the department, but in the profession.

05-00:01:21

Hunt: Right, no, no. In Paula's case, I think her family background probably was intense, because her parents had either both been in the camps or certainly, one of them had been in the camps, and that was an issue. Tom's parents were German and he was actually born in Turkey, and then he grew up in West Virginia. So in the United States these days, there are a lot of reasons why somebody can feel like an outsider. With being a lesbian, I think the characterological part had to do with the fact that— Well, it's two things. One, I grew up in the Midwest. I was white. So I certainly didn't feel like I didn't belong, in that sense. I had a sort of long history of belonging, if you will. My grandparents were immigrants, but so were lots of other people's parents. My parents were not divorced then. When I was growing up, the big thing that happened to people was that their parents got divorced. They were amongst the only kids whose parents were divorced.

Being gay, I think the way I dealt with it, frankly, was to try not to think about what was happening. I don't mean about my being gay; that was my own personal thing. I first was not into telling people about it when I was first here. I knew that people were not going to be my friends unless I did, in fact, tell them about this. So it took a while for me to do it. But what I mean about not thinking about it was that I just repressed what kinds of consequences this was having on me. I just didn't think about it. I thought about teaching my classes; I thought about getting my book done; I hoped that people would like me.

Obviously, there was some part of me that thought they wouldn't like me, if they knew this. Bit by bit, as I began to understand that everybody knew this— I didn't talk about it that much, except with my closest friends; but there was some way in which because I was repressing this, I didn't— It wasn't like, I'm self-identifying as a lesbian, and so now I have to figure out what people think about this. Frankly, I didn't want to know if they didn't like it. So it was much more that. I didn't come out to my parents until I was thirty-five.

Lage: Oh, my.

05-00:03:50

Hunt: So that would have been in 1980. This was after I got involved with a woman who I knew I was going to live with for a long time, I finally came out to my parents.

Lage: And how did they—

05-00:04:01

Hunt: That was painful, because at first, they were upset, even though there's a way in which one has to ask how they could not have figured this out. But it was a different time. They were not thinking about it, either. So as long as I didn't bring it up, they didn't have to think about it. So when I brought it up—

Lage: But did they bring up, what about having children and—

05-00:04:19

Hunt: I was a total coward. I made my sister tell them.

Lage: Oh!

05-00:04:25

Hunt: My sister lived in St. Paul. She knew. My sister who lived in Portland had known all along, and she didn't force me to talk about it with her. So when I came out to her, she was like, yeah, I knew this all along. My other sister did not have any particular reaction, as far as I could see. I made her tell my parents. My parents were upset. My parents were, however, liberals, and they got over it. So then they kind of fell into line. Because they were liberals, they just didn't have a lot of choice. So they were very nice about it. Basically, I said, "I'm not going to come home with my partner if you're not going to be accepting," and they were totally into it. So this was a change that was taking place in America.

Lage: Right.

05-00:05:13

Hunt: I knew there was a guy in the department who was gay, and I knew that every single person knew that he was gay, because I knew before I came that he was gay, and no one ever discussed it, and I certainly never discussed it with him.

So my sense was, well, if people want it to be that it's not discussed and then they're all right with it, all right. So I was very good into the repression part.

Lage: Yeah. Well, I was going to ask what you meant by repression.

05-00:05:36

Hunt: Well, that's what I meant by repression—

Lage: You mean not discussing.

05-00:05:37

Hunt: —I'm just not discussing it.

Lage: It wasn't like you were—

05-00:05:40

Hunt: Not that I was lying to anybody. It's that I just didn't discuss it with somebody, if I had the sense that this was something they wouldn't particularly want to discuss. So it was only with my close friends that I discussed it. So in that sense, I was not feeling that people's feelings about me were entirely refracted by this aspect. My sense was that was my survival strategy; I just didn't spend a lot of time thinking about it. I don't know how much time people spent thinking about it. I don't know if X thought it was appalling or not. There were two men in the department who were gay, and everyone knew that both of them were gay, actually. I didn't know the other person. He wasn't in my field. I didn't know until I got here, that he was gay. As far as I could tell, no one cared.

Lage: But was it talked about?

05-00:06:36

Hunt: Well, everybody in the profession knew that Martin Malia was gay. All I had ever heard about it was that Martin Malia was gay. I hadn't heard that, as a result, he is a horrible person. I didn't hear that. It was just a fact.

Lage: Do you think it affected your analysis of history, or your historical questions, or topics that you chose? Or did it have any bearing on your history?

05-00:07:08

Hunt: Well, like I said, it's actually similar to the women's issue, which was I think I was more willing—but it had more to do with being a woman, frankly, I thought, than being a lesbian—which was I was more interested in how this structured society's relationships. It was not particularly top on my agenda. In fact, I still believe that there is way more—I don't know how to express this without being misleading. The fact of being a woman is much more problematic, it seems to me, in terms of getting ahead in society, than what one's sexuality is.

Lage: Oh, that's interesting.

05-00:07:53

Hunt: If anything, I think it's harder for gay men. Because most professions are male-dominated, that's more threatening. Whereas I never felt that being a lesbian was perceived as particularly threatening. It was much more of an issue of being a woman. In other words, I don't think that I was seen as more of a problem than Natalie, or more of a problem than Paula.

Lage: And you don't think it affected career steps? It obviously didn't.

05-00:08:28

Hunt: Yeah, it's hard to see that I would be in a position to complain. [they laugh] Like I said, this was the thing about being at Berkeley. But the point, still, I would go back to at Berkeley, that was most advantageous was just that people were encouraging you to think that you could talk about the most important things. That that was kind of your role.

Lage: And the new things, maybe.

05-00:08:54

Hunt: And the new things, and that you could set the agenda. I didn't get the message I couldn't set the agenda because I was a woman, and I certainly didn't get the message that I couldn't set the agenda because I was gay.

Lage: Setting aside the gay and the woman thing, in this sense of doing new things and advancing things, was there a certain careerism in that? How much did you think about advancing your career?

05-00:09:29

Hunt: I think I must have never been as self-conscious a person as I probably think I am, or pretend to myself that I am, because I really think one of the things that helped me, in terms of character, again, was I didn't spend a whole lot of time thinking about these things, at least in the sense of worrying about them. The kind of thing I worried about was when I was a graduate student, I worried that I would be one of those people who couldn't finish their dissertation. So I had a very rigorous routine. When I was a graduate student, I was living in a studio, I was completely anxious. I would stay up until four o'clock in the morning and sleep until eleven o'clock in the morning, and I would work from eleven o'clock in the morning till six o'clock at night, every single day, on my dissertation. I would take a break to walk to the Safeway to buy a can of soup for my lunch. That was it. And I was writing on a typewriter. Because I was so worried that I would be one of those people who couldn't finish their dissertation.

Lage: Because there were a number of those people.

05-00:10:38

Hunt: Right. Exactly. So when I came here as an assistant professor, I worried that I would be one of those people who wouldn't be able to turn their dissertation into a publishable book. Obviously, I was thinking about it in terms of tenure,

because I would like to get tenure; but I was worried about the specific thing. Can I turn this into a book? So because of the lucky situation I was in—I had my second year off—I went to work right away on getting that turned into a book. I finished the book to be sent off, before I went to France, and it was sent off after a few months. That gave me time to do all the research for an article. Because I was so worried I'd be one of those people.

I didn't sit around and worry about whether I'd get tenure, because I thought, look, I've won a teaching award; obviously, they're not going to fault me on that. I've published two articles while I was coming here, my book has been accepted and has already been published by Stanford University Press. And I've done a new article with these two graduate students, so I've obviously started a new project. I thought, I don't think they're going to turn me down. So then I worried about whether I'd be one of those people who only did one book. So I worried about very concrete things. I worried whether I'd be one of those people who didn't do a second book. I didn't really worry about whether the book was going to be great; I just said, "God, now I've got to really get to work." I didn't want to be one of those people.

So I actually finished my second book much faster, probably, than some people would've. Although I must say, it truly was exhausting because I really pushed myself, because I didn't want to be one of those people. Then after that—

Lage: There've been so many books!

05-00:12:23

Hunt: Then after that, I stopped worrying about that. I stopped worrying about whether I was publishing enough. I was not sitting around thinking about—

Lage: You weren't thinking, where am I going to be in ten years?

05-00:12:39

Hunt: No. I never thought I was leaving Berkeley. I never thought of leaving Berkeley. I really seriously thought about finishing that second book; then that got me promoted to full professor. Then I had a period where I was like, I have no more ideas; that's it. Because I truly exhausted myself mentally, doing that. I thought, I'm never going to have another idea. So then I agreed to do a textbook, and I agreed to write an article on something that I had never done anything about before, on private life during the French Revolution. That ended up sending me on this new thing with *The Family Romance*.

Lage: *Family Romance*. And you did *The New Cultural History*.

Hunt: It was a little bit later. So I thought of various other things, and then ideas did come. But there was a moment there when I thought, I'll never have another idea. But by then I was a full professor. I was worried that I would never have

another idea, but I wasn't worried about my career. I was a full professor at Berkeley. What's not to like?

Lage: So why did you leave? It doesn't happen too often, people take off

05-00:13:42

Hunt: True. True.

Lage: You've mentioned a couple reasons.

05-00:13:46

Hunt: Again, I was not looking to leave. This thing at Penn, they contacted me. I did it originally, because I thought, oh, maybe I could get a raise. It was a conjunction of things. Which was, I had really knocked myself out doing this second book. I also had always had, since my twenties, a problem with what is now called anxiety disorder. That is, I called it, because I'd read an article about it, agoraphobia. So I actually had a period in the mid-eighties that was quite difficult, in which I thought I might have to quit, because I was so anxious.

Lage: That's fear of the marketplace?

05-00:14:36

Hunt: It's, yeah, fear of being in public, i.e., it was very difficult for me to lecture, it was very difficult for me to give seminars. Everyone thought I was great at it, but I was feeling panic-stricken. I had a sort of increasing fear of having a panic attack. I'd had a panic attack when I was a graduate student. This had been a kind of ongoing issue and it got suddenly very bad, right about the time I finished the book. Actually, the book was finished, and I was promoted to full professor. I had this theory; this has gotten bad because I'm afraid of success.

Lage: You were reading on psychoanalysis at the time.

05-00:15:12

Hunt: Right. Tom helped me find a psychiatrist to go see, and I had a very successful treatment, from this guy in Berkeley, in the end, which really cleared up a lot of— It helped me get past a really quite difficult period in my life, because I was seriously thinking I was going to have to quit. Which was not making me happy. So it was very difficult.

That was at the time, actually, I was co-teaching with Vicky, this graduate seminar, which had about twenty-five people. I told her about this and— [chuckles] It was a wonderful moment, actually, because she sort of burst into hysterical laughter and said, "This cannot be true. You cannot have having trouble teaching the seminar, because I'm sitting next to you and you're fantastic!" She's like, "This can't be!" I said, "But it is." So once I got this treatment, then I went, in 1985— Which was a fantastic moment for me—I

finally got accepted to do the Berkeley exchange in China, and I spent five weeks teaching in China. Well, four weeks teaching in China, and then my partner came over and we traveled for ten days. It was just fantastic.

Lage: What do you mean by finally accepted?

05-00:16:27

Hunt: Well, because we had set up an exchange only two years before. Bill Bouwsma went on it, Steve Greenblatt went on it. I applied and they turned me down. But I had met the guy in China, in my field, who helped set up the exchange, and he wanted me to come. I just kept applying. It was supposed to be for people in Chinese studies.

Lage: I see.

05-00:16:44

Hunt: So there weren't that many people going. I just kept applying and they said, "Okay, you can go." So I went, and it was just an incredible moment. I would've had a much harder time going, if I hadn't had these previous therapy sessions to get over the agoraphobia, China not being a place known for its small crowds. So I was very apprehensive about that. I thought, I'm not going to be able to do it. But so I was able to get over it, thanks to this guy's treatments. But the reason I bring up the anxiety disorder is that I think it was actually crucial to my decision to leave. I don't know exactly how. I broke up with my then partner, with whom I had lived, actually, for a number of years. I felt like I had spent a lot of years being incredibly anxious. I think there was some part of me that just wanted to do something new.

Lage: Was that part of the dutiful daughter thing, too, your anxiousness?

05-00:17:45

Hunt: Yeah. Yeah. Well, no, I don't think—I think this is some kind of biological thing that can get exacerbated in certain circumstances. He was, frankly, not that interested in figuring out exactly why this had happened to me, because it's a well-known problem and it seems to have a biological foundation. When I read the literature, I was the exact age at which people report having their first attack, and I was at the exact age and gender—because it's mainly women—that people report going to see somebody about it. I was thinking, oh, it's my fear of success. Then I'm thinking, that doesn't explain so much why it's the same as everybody else, including the bank tellers and the supermarket clerks and the stay-at-home mothers, so this must be something else.

And it was right about then when the Penn thing came up, so it was my way of breaking up with this person and getting away from being a dutiful daughter. It was really the dutiful daughter thing, I think. Which was, I sort of felt like I'm going to be forever in this department, in which I'm the youngest this and the youngest that. Whatever. I frankly don't know why I decided to do it. I'm

the kind of person who decides to do something, and then that's just that. And then I find out some good reason for having done it.

Also I'd never lived on the East Coast, and with this, I could be in Philadelphia, I could be near New York. I'd always wanted to be sort of in New York or near New York. I'd never lived on the East Coast, and I thought, do I really want to spend my entire life in one place? Wouldn't it be kind of interesting to meet some people? Then plus, there were these tensions, as I said, about Susanna, about not really being that happy with the situation. I had kind of gotten myself into this situation where I had a once-a-month French history meeting for the entire Bay Area, including Stanford, at my house, in which I made dinner for everybody. It was like twenty-five people. I was like, I'm going to be tied to this for the rest of my life. If I go to Penn, I don't have to do these dinners anymore. They were great, and people still look back fondly on how wonderful it was to have these discussions. So then Susanna took it up, after I left. Maybe we were even splitting it; I can't remember. But there was a way in which I felt chained to the things I was doing. And I had all new friends and I felt I would be able to keep my friends here, and just have a different life. So I did.

Lage: And did it work? Were you happy with the—

05-00:20:21

Hunt: Again, character. I loved Penn. I loved Berkeley. I have never said I didn't love Berkeley; you've heard me just go and on, how great it was. I loved Penn. I love UCLA. I'm the kind of person who does things for whatever reason and likes where they are. Penn was great. Penn was smaller. Still a very elite school, but smaller, so I could do even more team teaching. It had become difficult to do team teaching here. They didn't want to give you credit for it, because you weren't teaching as many students, if you had split the teaching. When I went to Penn, I team taught all the time. I team taught with someone in English, I team taught with someone in French, and I team taught with someone in my own department, who did Chinese history. It was smaller, easier. I lived in Philadelphia. I lived in an apartment, for the first time in my life. Well, I lived in an apartment here, briefly. Had mainly lived in houses. So it was great.

Lage: It was a nice change.

05-00:21:16

Hunt: And I met, eventually, the person I still have been involved with for twenty-plus years. We made a life together. She lived in New York originally, and I lived in Philadelphia. She moved to Philadelphia and commuted to her job in New York. I had a whole different set of experiences.

Lage: And then UCLA. Was there story there?

05-00:21:36

Hunt:

Well, and one reason I went to UCLA— First of all, they offered me a job I could not turn down. And being back in the UC system had incredible advantages in terms of pension, because I had kept my years in the Berkeley system. So I effectively increased my pension, frankly, exponentially, by going back to UCLA. Plus they offered me an endowed chair, and I therefore, had the chance— So I went from being the dutiful daughter— When I went to Penn, they were like, wow. There were senior people who were sort of like, we didn't even know if you'd talk to us or be friendly. I was kind of like, well, that's a change. So I was immediately a senior person. When I went back to UCLA, I had an endowed chair and I had enough money to do exactly what I wanted to do, in terms of conferences, travel, research, whatever. It was impossible to turn down. Because I actually love California. I'm a big sports person.

Lage:

Oh, I didn't know that.

05-00:22:42

Hunt:

I play golf and tennis, and LA is perfect.

Lage:

Good weather.

05-00:22:47

Hunt:

When I was in Berkeley, I played a lot of tennis. My partner here was a fantastic golfer, so we did occasionally golf. But in LA, I can do all these things, and walking and hiking. So in the end, I realized it would be better to leave the East Coast, because these things are all infinitely more difficult on the East Coast. So it was great to come back to California.

Lage:

That sounds like a good place to end our discussion.

05-00:23:13

Hunt:

Okay. All right.

Lage:

Thank you so much.

05-00:23:15

Hunt:

No, thank you, Ann. You've been incredibly patient.

[End of Interview]