SUMMARY

Mary Elizabeth "Betsy" Baptist spent her childhood years, in the 1920's and 1930's, in the small farming community of Nampa, Idaho. She begins the interview by recalling her early schooling, her father's involvement with the Boy Scouts of America, and the pace of life in Depression-era Nampa.

The discussion moves into the period during World War II, and Betsy's college years at the College of Idaho and University of Montana. She recalls a trip to Alaska that she made with her grandmother during the summer of 1943, and describes the farm work that provided her with pocket money during other summer breaks.

Betsy came to Portland to attend the medical technology program at the University of Oregon Medical School in 1945, on the advice of a friend. She talks about her arrival in Portland and her surprise on finding the labs empty on Saturday, the day she was told to report. She describes the curriculum and the system of rotation that took the students around the various lab stations to complete the twelve-month program of certification.

Upon graduation, Betsy was encouraged to remain at the University, and she began work "charting" for the patients in Multnomah County Hospital. Soon, she was a full-fledged medical technician, teaching students and lecturing in parasitology and urinalysis. She describes the curriculum and administration of the program during the 1950's and 1960's, and shares anecdotes about the parasite specimens in her collections.

Other hospitals in the Portland area also had medical technology programs during this period, and Betsy talks briefly about their relationships to the program on the Hill. She also describes some community outreach and recruitment efforts, and recounts a story about her most effective recruitment tool: Herman the tapeworm.

Betsy discusses her actions during the tenure of university president Dr. Leonard Laster, when the future of the medical technology program was very much in doubt. The unexpected appearance of a group of "med techs" at a hearing being held in the Oregon State Legislature may not have influenced the legislators, but it certainly caught the attention of Dr. Laster himself.

There is some discussion about the qualifications that are important for anyone wishing to become medical technician, and about the prevalence of men and minority students in the field. Betsy recalls actually having a list of handicapped students that had gone through the program during her time at OHSU. She mentions the need for "people skills", even though lab technicians do not routinely work with patients; by way of example, she recounts the story of a frightened young boy whom she had to coax into giving a blood sample.

In closing, Betsy gives her advice to people entering the profession, and shares her view on the future of medical technology.

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OHSU Oral History Project

Interview with Betsy Baptist
Interviewed by Heather Rosenwinkel
April 23, 1999
Site: History of Medicine Room
Begin Tape 1, Side 1

ROSENWINKEL: This is Heather Rosenwinkel, talking to Betsy Baptist on Thursday, the 29th of April in 1999. And we're talking about Betsy's reminiscences about being a medical technologist at OHSU, and so this is the beginning of our interview.

The first thing I want to know, Betsy, is where did you grow up?

BAPTIST: I grew up in Nampa, Idaho.

ROSENWINKEL: For all your early life? You didn't move around or anything?

BAPTIST: No. I was born in Missoula, Montana. Then, when I was about five, four and a half, maybe, we moved to Kalispell, Montana, and we were there about a year. That's when my father was considering going into professional Boy Scouting, and so we lived there until I was five—probably six, and then we made a trip back to New York, because he went on a training course back there.

ROSENWINKEL: With the Boy Scouts?

BAPTIST: Yes, for the Boy Scouts. And my mother had some relatives in Honeoye Falls, so we went back and visited the relatives while he was doing that. Then we came back and stayed in Montana for a short while, till he got situated and we came to Nampa.

ROSENWINKEL: You're talking about the Depression years now, the thirties?

BAPTIST: Oh, yes, it was in the thirties. I started school in the first grade, but I was late that year…

ROSENWINKEL: In Nampa?

BAPTIST: In Nampa… because we'd come, and we were late getting back from the trip to the East. Because I and several other children were a little disruptive, as I remember we were put in a row right next to the windows so we could play while the teacher was taking care of the people who wanted to pay attention (laughter).

ROSENWINKEL: So you went to elementary school, then, in Nampa?

BAPTIST: In Nampa, yes, and clear through high school in Nampa.

ROSENWINKEL: And when did you graduate from high school?

BAPTIST: In 1944.

ROSENWINKEL: What was it like growing up in Nampa during the late thirties and early forties?

BAPTIST: Well, as I remember, it was great. There weren't very many people there at that time, there were only about three thousand people in the area, and it was a farming community. Every October they had what they called a harvest festival, and they blocked off about two, three blocks of downtown; and, then, the farmers, the granges, would put their exhibits of their produce and things on the streets. And the thing to do was to go down and visit that, and they had a carnival come to town.

Otherwise, on Saturday nights the thing to do was to get downtown early and find a place—and it had diagonal parking—and then you parked on the street, and the stores were open late on Saturday evening, so then you just sat there and watched the people go by.

ROSENWINKEL: And that was a great entertainment?

BAPTIST: Yes, it was. We lived in a house in a great neighborhood where there were lots of kids to play with, boys and girls, and we did lots of adventurous things.

ROSENWINKEL: Like?

BAPTIST: Well, at Christmastime, after Christmas, we'd collect all the Christmas trees in the neighborhood, and then we had a forest in our backyard. We did this for two or three years and it worked out fine, but one year we really were lucky. A big truck came by that had a whole load of Christmas trees that weren't sold, and we just happened to be there at the right time. We flagged him down and had him dump all of his Christmas trees in my back yard. And then, when my dad came home, here we had this forest set up; and he was weeks and weeks cutting up those Christmas trees and getting rid of them.

Later on, they were building a new road outside of Nampa, and they went right down our street, and they had these horse-drawn—it was during the Depression—horse-drawn sand trucks that would go by the house. So we'd meet the fellow up three or four blocks, and then we'd sit on the back of the cart—I don't know whether they used mules or horses, but one or the other—and then we'd ride down past our house, and then we'd come back. I say "we." I was an only child, but I had this great neighborhood of kids to play with, so it worked out great.

ROSENWINKEL: What was your dad like as a person?

BAPTIST: Well, he was a good leader, and he was the executive for that [Boy Scout] Council. He had five counties in Idaho and four in Oregon to cover, and he was gone a lot at night; he went as far over as Burns, through that area. Actually, he was the first executive of Ore-Ida Council, they called it. Now they named potato chips Ore-Ida. I can remember him saying years later that maybe he ought to patent or copyright or do something with that name, but he never got around to it, so then they named the potato chips Ore-Ida.

And there was a council headquarters in Boise at that time, and they had a camp, and I always spent a couple of weeks at camp at that time. My mother and would go up when camp was about over, and then we helped tie it up at the very end, after the kids were all gone. But they

shared a camp for a while, I think, with Boise; I can't just remember for sure. It was up at—well, beyond Cascade a ways.

ROSENWINKEL: Just outside of Nampa?

BAPTIST: No, that's in the mountains. And then later on they moved up to Warm Lake and built a permanent camp up there.

ROSENWINKEL: But your dad was in charge of all of this?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: What was your mom like as a person?

BAPTIST: Well, she stayed home and in later years she'd help my dad down in the office, because—well, in those days you couldn't afford a secretary, so she'd help him in the office.

ROSENWINKEL: So, all told, you enjoyed growing up in Nampa, then?

BAPTIST: Oh, yes.

ROSENWINKEL: And you had a great time?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Where did your interest in science come from?

BAPTIST: Well, I was always interested in bugs and such things as that, and we always had fish. We didn't always have goldfish, but they had big canals there for irrigation, and in the fall they'd turn off the water, and then there'd be these ponds out in the bottom of the canals, and you could go out and you could catch various kinds of minnows. And so we had aquariums with those, and we had a terrarium where we had salamanders and little turtles.

ROSENWINKEL: At home, you mean?

BAPTIST: Yes, at home. I was always out catching bugs, and black widow spiders were all over, and we knew they were poisonous, but we were careful, and we'd catch them in jars.

It's interesting that twenty-five, thirty years later you had to work hard to find a black widow spider. And I put in a request when I was working in the lab, because I was making a collection for the students of specimens of one kind or another, for a black widow spider, because there weren't any here. People said there were, and I've never seen one in Portland in all the time I've been here.

But anyway, we'd keep them in jars, and anything else we could catch.

ROSENWINKEL: Did you take biological courses and science courses in high school? And, if so, what did you take?

BAPTIST: Yes, I did. We had a biology course, just sort of general biology, and I took that in high school. And then Dr. Lyle Stanford had what he called a "special" biology class, and that was my senior year. The first day of class there were so many people, they were standing around the sides of the room and the back of the room, and finally, when everybody got assembled, he looked around, and he says, "Well, I see some people in this room who I think maybe have a feeling that this was going to be a snap course." And he said, "If there's anybody here who thinks that way, I want to tell you now that it is not going to be and that they maybe should find another class."

ROSENWINKEL: Now, you're talking about high school, right?

BAPTIST: Yes, high school. And the next meeting of the class there were even a few empty seats in the room. It was interesting. And I asked him years later. "Well," he says, "I knew I had too many people and I had to do something." (laughter) We went on field trips, and it was a specialty business. But I'd taken the first year of biology, and I'd also taken high school chemistry.

ROSENWINKEL: So you had a good foundation, then, for med tech.

BAPTIST: Yeah—well, more or less.

ROSENWINKEL: And were you always happy with the quality of the instruction you got at Nampa, at the high school in Nampa?

BAPTIST: Oh, yeah—well, I guess so. I wasn't into too much book learning, so to speak. I'd rather be doing other things.

ROSENWINKEL: What kind of lab situations did you have in high school?

BAPTIST: You know, I can't remember any in particular.

ROSENWINKEL: Did you cut up frogs and that sort of thing?

BAPTIST: Yes, I think we did; I think we had a frog. And we had a special project. Everybody was supposed to do a special project, so I did too; and my special project—I was interested in crickets at the time, especially crickets that would sing, so I built a cage and covered it with screen, and it had a little trap door. And I put dirt in the bottom and planted grass and things and got it growing, and then I went out and stalked any kind of cricket or critter that was making any kind of a chirping noise and put it in this thing, in this little cage.

Then, when we were ready to bring our projects in, I brought it in and set it on the back shelf of the room, and while Mr. Stanford was trying to lecture to the class or talk to them, these darn crickets would chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp. They made so much racket, it sort of disrupted the class (laughter).

But, yes, anything that's creepy-crawly. I'm not so interested in those things anymore.

ROSENWINKEL: But you were at that time.

BAPTIST: But at that time, anything that I could catch and put in a jar and watch was what I did.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, that's an interesting background to lab tech.

BAPTIST: Well, more or less.

ROSENWINKEL: What I was going to ask you was how did the Depression affect your family and your education? Just the economic times.

BAPTIST: You know, I can't remember an awful lot about it. I was thinking about that the other day and thinking of all that we have now and what we managed with at that time. I can remember I always had a pair of winter shoes, and I had a new pair of shoes for summer, and they were sandals, but they didn't last quite so long because I was out running around with them more. So when they got wore through, then you put cardboard in to fill up the hole. Then Mother's uncle came to visit for a while, and he was good at those rubber soles, half-sole things that you could get, and you glued them on some way, and then he started doing that for us.

ROSENWINKEL: And that's your main remembrance of the Depression?

BAPTIST: I do remember we never were hungry. We didn't have a garden, but lots of produce. They did have what they called a sales yard down in the center of Nampa, and every Saturday farmers would come in and bring all of their produce and their animals, cows and horses and sheep and pigs and anything, and it was an auction. So they would sell these things there, and you could buy a hundred pounds of potatoes for a dollar. That I sort of—I don't remember, but I remember people talking about it.

ROSENWINKEL: So many people were hungry during the Depression, and you said you didn't have a garden; and your father was in the Boy Scouts, and he would not have been the wealthiest man in town as a result of being in the Boy Scouts. I thought maybe you'd have other impressions, too.

BAPTIST: Well, I can't remember. I remember when the banks closed, and I can remember going down and standing on a street corner with this big crowd of people, and I don't remember anything more about it than that.

ROSENWINKEL: That was 1929.

BAPTIST: Yes. During those days, too, they had a big hotel in town. It was called the Dewey Palace. It was a beautiful place. And very rarely I can remember going down and eating at the Dewey Palace because that was a nice place to go. The ceilings had all these angels sculptured on the top; gold, you know. Beautiful. And that's when I really had to mind my manners (laughter).

ROSENWINKEL: Well, let's switch, then, and talk about World War II. And 1941, December 7, was Pearl Harbor. What impressions do you have of, say, 1941 to 1944, before you came to Portland?

BAPTIST: Well, as matter of fact, I was in Portland in that particular time, because I played field hockey in college, and I was on the team, and so we came to Portland to play hockey. I must have been a sophomore in college. We came out to play hockey, and the person who was our instructor at the time had come from Portland, and her family was in Salem. And we were here when they had Pearl Harbor, and she was really upset about it, and so we took an extra trip down to Salem to see the family, and then we went home. I can't remember anything about the hockey game we had.

ROSENWINKEL: So you did travel around, then, in college?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, let's talk about college for a minute, because we've got you to the end of high school, but we haven't got you to the university yet. And sometimes the Depression had a financial—families had financial problems, and often young women, especially, didn't go to college. So where did you go to college?

BAPTIST: I went to college at the College of Idaho, and it was at Caldwell, Idaho, and it was about nine miles, ten miles, maybe, from Nampa. And, at that time, it was Presbyterian. I lived in the dorm with a friend who I'd gone through grade school with and high school with. Her father

was one of the chief auctioneers at the sales yard, for one thing, and then he was a sheriff and numerous things.

We lived in the dorm, and it had a big dining room where the fellows from the boys dorm would come over and eat with us, and my roommate and I ate at what they called the cannibal table (laughter) because their manners were not very good, and they'd act up; and we seemed to get along with them pretty well.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, tell me a little bit about your college years and the kinds of classes you took, the people you met.

BAPTIST: Well, I started out in botany; I took that. It was good. And then most everything else had to do with zoology. Comparative anatomy; and then for that I had to find a cat to work on, toward the last; and so somehow or other my dad found some fellow who was able to get me a cat from some farm out in the community.

Oh, by the way, in my early days I did have a cat, and his name was Richard. He was a big, grey tiger cat. My dad had negotiated with some person he knew out in the country who had this cat. Well, when this man brought this cat in and he came into the house—poor old Richard was a half-grown cat, and he had never been in a house before, and he was just wild. He climbed the curtains and was on top. But he tamed down to be really a wonderful cat and lasted for about nine years, I think.

My roommate was married that year after. And, then, we had local sororities at the college, and so I belonged to one of those. And then they had a house, so then I moved into the house, which was another, different kind of experience.

ROSENWINKEL: You were off-campus then?

BAPTIST: Well, it was practically right on campus. The campus was here, and the house was kind of across the street from where the campus was.

ROSENWINKEL: So we're in about 1942, or '43 now?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: What was it like being a sorority sister, then?

BAPTIST: Oh, I don't know. It was just a place to live, and I got along with all these girls. We did have a house mother who did all the cooking. I think there were nine of us all together that lived there. Lots of people who lived close to the college went home at night and then came back.

ROSENWINKEL: So you spent three years, four years at the university?

BAPTIST: Three years, and then I transferred to the University of Montana in Missoula, partly because I'd taken all the courses that they offered that I wanted at the College of Idaho (laughing). The College of Idaho is now known as Albertson College of Idaho. It just changed a year or two ago. There was a young fellow who was from Caldwell who wrote an article for *The Oregonian*, and it said, Albertson College of Idaho by any other name is not the same. I talked to his mother when I happened to be over there, and she said he got a lot of flak over that article that he'd written.

That summer my…

ROSENWINKEL: Of 1943?

BAPTIST: Forty-three. My grandma took me to Alaska on a trip. She was a traveler, and she needed somebody to go with, so she took me up. And we had kind of a pioneer experience in that trip, because we rode the train and, as I remember, the bridges and the trestles were all being guarded at that particular time.

ROSENWINKEL: Because of the war?

BAPTIST: Yes.

And so, then, I was three years at the College, and then I transferred to Montana, and I was there for one year. I think, partly, because my folks had gone to the U of M, and my grandma was there and my aunt and uncle, so it was kind of like being home.

ROSENWINKEL: Were both your parents college graduates?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: That was extraordinary for that time, when you think about it, in the thirties. Or maybe it was the twenties.

BAPTIST: Well, it was the twenties.

ROSENWINKEL: So did you enjoy the University of Montana?

BAPTIST: Well, it was a poor time to go, really, to transfer. I would never recommend that anybody transfer their senior year. But, then, as I was told, the college wasn't so great, and they had recruits being marched around there, and there weren't very many people left there anyway, and the U of M was not the same.

ROSENWINKEL: So what degree did you obtain, then in 1944?

BAPTIST: Bachelor of Arts in zoology.

ROSENWINKEL: So what did that qualify you for at that time, as far as jobs are concerned?

BAPTIST: (laughing) Nothing. Then I came to Portland for my training in med tech, because that was what I was headed in.

[Tape stopped.]

ROSENWINKEL: During the war many of the men were gone, and that left younger people in the area. What exactly did you do during the summers during the war?

BAPTIST: Well, my very last—between my junior and senior year of college—they needed people in the fields. It being a farming area, they grew lots of dry onions and they grew lots of peas, and I started out being a pea picker. At that time they brought Jamaicans in to help, so we were picking peas with all sorts of people. And you got paid, I think it was fifteen or thirty-five cents a hamper. You could make three or four or five dollars, or maybe even more, during the day picking peas. You went along on your hands and knees, and there you picked—they went through several times. Now they just gather them up, I think, and thresh them some way. But then you picked the big, full pods.

Then, when the peas ran out, I was trying to figure out what I was going to do, and a friend's father had this packing house, fruit packing house, so I went down and I fancy-packed prunes. That was half-bushel baskets, and they'd fill the basket with prunes, and then we would work at this bench. They'd have a form, and you'd put a fancy cardboard, scalloped thing in the bottom, and then you'd turn all the prunes up and fit them in so that they were all bottom-end up so the stem ends didn't show; and then they'd somehow or other put another collar around that, and then they'd pull that off and put the bushel basket on the top, or half-bushel, and send it off. Then, when they ran out, then I was still looking for something to do. That was the year before.

Then, we grew a lot of seed corn. They had the bull row, and that was the pollen-type row, and then the other row you had to go and pull the tassels out so there wouldn't be any cross pollination; it was seed corn. So I negotiated to go out someplace and de-tassel corn; and when we got out there to this place, they had just irrigated—and we irrigated with roving water in those days, even the lawns in town—and it was the kind of corn that was six feet tall, and no way could we get to the top to de-tassel the corn. And I can't remember exactly whether we did anything or we just got back into town.

Then, they wanted people to go out in the beet fields, because we also grew sugar beets, and to hoe and block beets. So my dad and I both went out, but he went some other place and I went some other place; and I ended up on this ranch, and I was the only person in this whole field. And the farmer, the people that owned the field, had weeds that were probably two-and-a-half feet

tall growing there. And the farmers went fishing, and I was so irritated when I was out there working in their field and they weren't doing it themselves to help, and then when I got back, they wanted to pay me with a live chicken. And I knew if I went home with a live chicken my mother would not fully appreciate it. So finally they condescended to give me a dollar for my day of work. How I got in from the country I can't really remember now.

But then I did top onions out at Elmer Tieg's, and I rode my bicycle out nine miles to this field, and I was the only one there, except he had a Mexican family that worked for him all the time, and they were working in another field close by. That was pretty good.

ROSENWINKEL: What is "topping" onions, exactly?

BAPTIST: Well, they dig the dry onions, and they just lay them on top of the ground and then they dry, and then you have to take a pruner-type thing and cut the tops off, so that then they let them dry a little longer, and then they sack them up and send them off to market.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, let's go back. You graduated from the university in 1944, and then we have you in Portland again. Now, tell me how you got interested in medical technology.

BAPTIST: Well, I think it was probably because of Jean Steele. She was in college the year ahead of me, and she was already coming out. In the meantime, I had written to all the schools that I could find that weren't too far away to see where I wanted to go, and since she had come out here and she thought it was so good and enjoyed herself so much, and it wasn't so far from home, I came out.

And I was sent off on the train to Portland with only one suitcase, because my folks wouldn't bring me any more stuff (laughter). I've been collecting ever since.

I arrived in Portland, and Jean had lived in a boarding house, because it was during the war and there were just no places to live, really. You couldn't find anyplace. And so she got a job in Vancouver, so I moved into her space in the boarding house, and it was the best home away from home that ever could be. The food was outstanding. Mrs. Powell felt that everybody should have at least two vegetables…

[End of Tape 1, Side 1/Begin Side 2]

ROSENWINKEL: Betsy is talking about living in a boarding house in 1944 when she first came to Portland, and it's now the fall of 1944.

So would you continue telling me about the meals that your landlady provided for you?

BAPTIST: Oh, she was a wonderful cook. We had good nutrition.

When I first went in the boardinghouse, there were all girls; that was because all the fellows were gone (laughing). There weren't very many of them around. And I lived at the boarding house for thirteen years.

I came on a Friday, and my date for arrival at the lab was on the fifteenth of October, and that was a Saturday. And Mrs. Powell tried to tell me that the laboratory was not open on Saturday, but since my letter said to arrive at the lab on Saturday, I did. And, sure enough, there wasn't anybody around. But there was a lab boy who was a medical student, was the only one I saw. And so I went back.

And I had a roommate. My first roommate was from…

ROSENWINKEL: In the boardinghouse?

BAPTIST: In the boardinghouse—was from The Dalles, and her folks had a fruit ranch there, and she always went home on weekends. So while I was there all by myself, I got a bus pass. I was told about passes on the bus. So I just got on the bus—there were streetcars too.

ROSENWINKEL: You mean the local bus in Portland?

BAPTIST: Local bus, yeah. And there were streetcars then. There was a streetcar that ran up Twenty-third, up to Council Crest. There were two of them: one, Twenty-Third that went up

Twenty-third, and the other one went up to Council Crest. So I just got out and rode the streetcars that day.

And, then, that Monday I came to work and was greeted by Vida Fatland, who was the chief technologist at that time, and Florence Harlow, who was the secretary in the lab, who entered all of the specimens that came in. And I was put as a student in serology, because I had had some serology in college.

At that time we just had one big, long bench, and microbiology—they called it bacteriology in those days—was on one end, and serology was on the other end; and then we had an extra little room where we had glassware and a huge, great big old autoclave.

ROSENWINKEL: Where were you physically? Where was this lab, where was it located on campus?

BAPTIST: This was the second floor of the clinic building.

ROSENWINKEL: Now, this is the clinical sciences building or is this the outpatient clinic building?

BAPTIST: Outpatient clinic building. And as I remember, radiology was just above us at that time.

ROSENWINKEL: Now, you were enrolled for a one-year course?

BAPTIST: Twelve months, twelve calendar months.

ROSENWINKEL: And what would you obtain at the end of the twelve months? Would you get a certificate or a degree?

BAPTIST: We didn't have degrees at that time, and you could enter with three years of college…

ROSENWINKEL: And you had the four.

BAPTIST: …and I had four, so I did have my degree. But in those days they didn't offer degrees, so if you went three years, then that was it.

ROSENWINKEL: So you had your four years, plus you got your certificate at the end of twelve months?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: So let's go back a little bit to the lab now. So, you were telling me you were in this lab in the outpatient clinic building. Give me a little bit of the atmosphere of what the lab was like, the atmosphere or the physical layout of the lab.

BAPTIST: Well, we had refrigerators that were in the wall, built into the building, and practically everything that needed to be refrigerated was kept in those refrigerators. We didn't have any standing refrigerators like we do now.

I started out in serology, and serology shared the space with bacteriology. We rotated. I can't remember exactly how long we spent in each rotation, and I can't remember where I went after serology, but we had urinalysis, and we took—I think we had forty-eight urine specimens in a run. And everything, of course, was done by hand, in pipettes, and no safety bulbs, whatever those things are that they use nowadays so you don't accidentally get anything in your mouth. Fortunately, I never did, but there were some people who did.

And so I started—then I went to urinalysis, and hematology was just back-to-back along this one side of the room, which was more like a hallway.

ROSENWINKEL: So this is one large room with everybody doing their thing, or whatever they had to do?

BAPTIST: Well, it was not a large room. It was probably, oh, maybe ten feet, and then it kind of veered off to the left and made another little room that was probably eight or nine by, probably, six or seven, and that turned into chemistry.

ROSENWINKEL: So you're on your rotations now.

BAPTIST: Yes, rotations. So I started out, and I can't remember where I went, but we had a designated time in each area.

ROSENWINKEL: You mean like a couple of months?

BAPTIST: No, it was more like so many weeks, because all of this had to be done in twelve calendar months.

And we were supposed to have had lectures, but I can only remember having one lecture, and it was given by Dr. Ray Grondahl, who was at that time a resident, I think, in pathology. Then, when he finished his residency, then he became the director of the clinical laboratory. In those days anatomical pathology was where they did all the tissue work and posts and things like that.

ROSENWINKEL: Postmortem work, you mean?

BAPTIST: Yes. While I was a student, he condescended to take me, and another person who wanted to, to a postmortem that he was doing. That was the first and only one I went to, but I was glad for the experience.

Then he became the director of the laboratory, and at that time, then, it was separated. There was anatomical pathology from Dr. Hunter…

ROSENWINKEL: This is Dr. Warren Hunter?

BAPTIST: Yes. Then, there was clinical pathology, and they were separate entities.

ROSENWINKEL: In the outpatient clinic, we're talking about?

BAPTIST: No, the anatomical path was done up in Mackenzie Hall someplace; and, then, they also had a laboratory in Multnomah.

ROSENWINKEL: Multnomah Hospital, the old Multnomah Hospital?

BAPTIST: Yes. And they did their frozen sections and things that they did over there. And we spent I think a week with whoever was the person working in that area, during the training.

ROSENWINKEL: As part of your rotation, right?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: So we have you doing various rotations over the twelve months?

BAPTIST: That's right.

ROSENWINKEL: Do you remember any of those rotations you particularly liked and really thought, "I'm really at home here"?

BAPTIST: As I remember, everything seemed about equal. I knew more about bacteriology and serology, because I'd had some of that in college, and that's, of course, where I started my rotation, so I felt more comfortable there, but the other things were relatively new.

ROSENWINKEL: So who were your instructors at this time?

BAPTIST: The technologists who were working in the laboratory. They were supposed to teach us what we needed to know and how to do it. As I said, there was only one lecture that I can remember having. We were supposed to have had more. But we did have a special rotation program that we would follow.

ROSENWINKEL: It sounds almost like an apprenticeship program where you worked on the bench beside a medical technologist, or whoever had the expertise you needed, is that correct?

BAPTIST: That's right, that's the way it was.

ROSENWINKEL: So we have you doing twelve months, and you graduated with the certificate in medical technology.

BAPTIST: No certificates in those days.

ROSENWINKEL: Oh, it wasn't certificated?

BAPTIST: Oh, no. No, we just completed the training, and then we got a job and started working. It wasn't until, oh, way late in the sixties, I think, when we started, maybe, having a certificate on completion of training.

ROSENWINKEL: Who else was training with you? I don't mean the instructors. Were there other students in this program?

BAPTIST: Yeah. One student a month—one person would come in, and one student would be finishing on that month, so that's why I came in October; that was when Jean finished, and I kind of walked into her spot when she got her job over in Vancouver.

ROSENWINKEL: I see. So let's talk about your first job. Where did you end up as a fledged medical technologist after you completed this training?

BAPTIST: Well, there were jobs. They really needed people, because the war was on; and anybody who showed their face in the door, you'd hire them, that thought they could do lab work. And new people who were hired at our place were kind of, well, questionable, but at least we had somebody.

But when I finished my training, Vida says, "Well, there's jobs here and there and some place." And she says, "Now, I want you to go out, and I want you to interview and go out and see all these places, but we'd like to have you stay here, if you'd like to stay." So that's what I did. I went all over town, and I was really impressed with a diabetic specialist—and the pay was

unusually good. But Vida sort of said, "Well, that's all well and good, but." So the more I thought about it, and I'm not a great one for change. I thought, well, I like it here, and I like the people, and why not stay? So I stayed on.

And then the certifying examination was given—I think it was given twice a year. And usually, what they had in those days was a written exam, and then they had a practical exam. Well, because of the war and everything, we only had a written exam.

ROSENWINKEL: So you were lucky.

BAPTIST: Well, I guess so. It would have been sort of interesting to see how they handled the other part of it. But ours was given over at St. Vincent's Hospital. Agnes Marie Lyman was the chief technologist over there, and that was my first time over at St. Vincent Hospital. We took the exam—and Miss Lyman, she was tall and thin, and in those days we all wore uniforms, white uniforms, and the men wore white jackets; but not now, where everybody can wear a jacket. We all wore white uniforms. And in those days, before nylon, everything was cotton, and ironed and starched, or starched and ironed.

Then, some period later we got a notice from the registry saying that we had passed, and if we didn't, then I guess we just took it again. There was a fee for taking it, and I guess most of them at that time were given at St. Vincent's. Then, in later years, we started having the certifying exam here on the Hill, and finding a place; and more people taking it.

ROSENWINKEL: So let's say nationwide in 1944, how many technicians would there be in the country, do you think? Hundreds? So you'd get to know each other, I suppose, through meetings and other things?

BAPTIST: Yes, but I don't have any idea how many there were, because I can't remember what year my first convention. There was one here in Portland, and they had one in Seattle a bit before that, and I think maybe that was my first one that I'd gone to.

ROSENWINKEL: So we're talking about the American Society of Medical Technologists, right?

BAPTIST: That's right.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, let's get you back to your first job. Now, how much were you paid a month or per year on your first job?

BAPTIST: You know, I can't remember.

ROSENWINKEL: Would it be two or three thousand dollars, maybe, a year, or something like that, or less than that?

BAPTIST: Well, $165 a month, I think, but I can't just remember.

And then I charted. In those days we didn't have computers, so that all of the lab reports were written out on a little slip of paper; and there was a different color for each division of the laboratory, like urinalysis was blue and microbiology was yellow and serology was green, and so on. And so during my training I charted, and that meant that you sorted slips for the floors, and then you'd go out on the floors, and you'd chart all of the results or reports, write them on these chart sheets in the charts.

ROSENWINKEL: On the charts of the patients, you mean?

BAPTIST: Of the patients, yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Now, let me see if I understand this. You have Multnomah County Hospital, and you have patients both paying and non-paying in Multnomah County Hospital, is that correct?

BAPTIST: Yes, I think so.

ROSENWINKEL: Okay. So, then, they would need lab tests done, and the spin, or whatever it was, blood, was transported from the hospital to your lab, right?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: And then you worked on the lab results. Okay. And, then, this is where this charting comes in. The chart was sent along with the…

BAPTIST: No, no. You had this little slip, order slip, that tells what tests were to be done on the urine specimen or blood specimen or whatever. Then, the tests were done in the laboratory. And, first, it was checked in in the lab office, and the name of the patient was recorded in this big ledger—it was probably about two and a half feet long and probably about a foot high and probably about two and a half, three inches thick.

And so when a specimen would come to the laboratory, the slip was taken off, and the name of the patient was written in this book, and then the tests which were requested were checked off in the ledger, and then it was wrapped up again and then sent off to whatever section it was supposed to go to.

Then, when it got to the section, then the tube was labeled and the slip was put here and the test was done, and, then, when you got the two together again, you wrote the results on the slip. The slip went back to the office, and, then, that evening all of those slips were sorted according to floors in the hospital and patients. And, then, there were charters, who were students in the laboratory, who took these out on the floors, and then for each patient took the chart and then recorded the results on the chart and then signed it and then took all the slips back, where they were filed in these big file drawers.

ROSENWINKEL: That was the basic process?

BAPTIST: Yeah. And, let's see, now what?

[Tape stopped.]

ROSENWINKEL: We have you now graduated from the medical technology program, having spent twelve months here and having had some work experience at OHSU. Then you became an instructor. And would you tell me how it happened that you became an instructor?

BAPTIST: Well, actually, I didn't want to ever teach. That's why I decided I'd be a medical technologist. My mother kind of guided me in that direction anyway.

So I came to Portland and finished my training and started working in microbiology, part of the laboratory, serology and microbiology, and Dr. Grondahl called me in and asked me if I'd like to teach, and I said, "No, I don't want to teach. I never wanted to teach. That's why I chose medical technology." He said, "Well, why don't you try doing a lecture in urinalysis for the students and see how it goes?"

So I went home and worked up some notes that I thought the students ought to know about, and I went back and said, "Well, how is this going to be?" And he says, "Well, if that's what you're going to do, you're going to be done in one lecture. Now," he says, "go back and break this down and make a whole lecture on one separate little part." So that's what I did, and then I started lecturing in urinalysis.

And, then, I was interested in parasites—that's what I really liked—and so I started lecturing. So then I lectured in urinalysis and parasitology for several years, and I don't remember how long. And then finally someone else took over urinalysis and I continued hanging on to parasitology.

Well, when I was made an instructor then I did lots of just—not lab work, just paper-shuffling type work and schedules and things like that. So I hung on to parasitology for dear life. Then when finally they decided that the medical technology program needed more space because we were having more students, they moved us over to Gaines Hall; and that was in the sixties.

ROSENWINKEL: Was this in the early sixties, somewhere around '61, '62?

BAPTIST: Yes, it was, because I happened to take a trip to Mexico with the College of Idaho that year, and Marjorie Maxwell had to move my office for me, which was kind of a chore because I'm a collector and a saver and a whatever.

But we had some lab space, then, made at Gaines Hall, and I had an office and a little cubicle across the hall—when Gaines Hall was a hospital, it was their refrigerated or cooling room, because it was cement on all sides and just a little place, and they built benches around.

So I had my parasitology still, and…

ROSENWINKEL: So you were teaching and doing the parasitology as well?

BAPTIST: Yes, the lab teaching and lecturing in parasitology.

ROSENWINKEL: Tell me a little bit about the lab teaching. How did you do that?

BAPTIST: Usually I had four students, I think, max, maybe five at a time, and each one had their own microscope, which were Spencer scopes, and they were surplus, Navy surplus.

ROSENWINKEL: This is in the fifties, now?

BAPTIST: Yes. And they were not fancy ones like they have nowadays that do everything for you.

ROSENWINKEL: These were very basic, then?

BAPTIST: Oh, they sure were, but they were good, good optics in those little scopes.

And I collected positive specimens and preserved them in formalin, all that I could get my hands on. As a matter of fact, I had contacts out in all the other labs in town that if they had any good specimens that came in they'd call me and I'd run down. This was a means of building up a collection of parasites, so that I very rarely had to order anything from a biological supply house—I did once, and I was so disappointed, because you got such a little smidgen, and it was so expensive. And in those days, and still, the laboratory is on a rather tight budget. But in those days—I don't know where the money was. We never saw any (laughter).

ROSENWINKEL: So here we have you giving lectures—now, I'm talking about the fifties. You're giving lectures, you have, shall we call them, apprentice medical technology students in the lab, they're watching you do analyses in the lab, is that correct?

BAPTIST: No, they did their own.

ROSENWINKEL: They did their own, and you supervised them.

BAPTIST: You demonstrated how it was to be done and then turned them loose on specimens and were present so that—this was in my particular area.

ROSENWINKEL: You mean parasitology?

BAPTIST: Yes. And if they had a problem or they couldn't find something—and I had preserved [noens], and they spent, I think it was, two weeks in parasitology, and then at the end they were given a written exam, at the end of the two-week period rotation.

ROSENWINKEL: And then they rotated to other medical lab people, or instructors in the lab?

BAPTIST: In areas in the lab. In the beginning they were in the service lab, and they worked with the technologist who was turning out the work, and then when they were proficient enough, according to the person who was doing the instructing, then they would do the work under the supervision of this person, so they had hands-on experience.

ROSENWINKEL: So it was a very practical approach to this.

BAPTIST: Yes, it was.

ROSENWINKEL: So you got some lectures and you got a lot of what you call bench work, right?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: The hands-on, performing the test and looking at the specimen.

BAPTIST: Yes. And this was in every laboratory division. It was my job to make out a rotation schedule, and we started having more and more students until we had fifty students all at one time.

ROSENWINKEL: When was this, approximately? The seventies?

BAPTIST: Well, yeah, it could be. I can look it up and find out exactly. But we did have a couple or three classes that had fifty students, or someplace between. And we had student laboratories where they would learn the fundamentals of performing the various tests that were done in the service laboratory. And then they were rotated so many weeks in the student lab, and then so many weeks in the service lab so that they got the instruction and the hands-on preliminaries. Then they were in the service lab turning out work under the supervision of the technologist in that particular area, and then they'd rotate around until they'd finished their twelve-month period.

ROSENWINKEL: I see. So over time the program kept getting bigger.

BAPTIST: Number of students, yes.

ROSENWINKEL: The number of students. And you had to change the ways their instruction was given?

BAPTIST: Not really. We had fifty students, and we were still making the schedules, which was really quite a problem, but each laboratory rotation, then, had to accommodate more students at one time.

ROSENWINKEL: Now, you also had the position of chief technician, too, is that correct?

BAPTIST: Oh, that was long before. Marjorie Maxwell was the one who took the chief technologist position then, and I mostly worked with the students then; and she handled the schedules for the service lab and kept track of purchasing and all of those things.

ROSENWINKEL: We talked a little bit about the curriculum, but let's get back to your particular situation. You said that you did a lecture on urinalysis for Dr. Grondahl, and then you said you were going to try teaching. I assume after a while you got pretty good at teaching and enjoyed it and kept on it, is that correct?

BAPTIST: Well, I'm not sure, but I kept on. And I was really never sure how well I did. But the combination of maybe what I was able to give them and what they then learned at the bench, they became proficient.

ROSENWINKEL: How many tests would they have to know, say in the fifties or sixties?

BAPTIST: Almost as many as there are now.

ROSENWINKEL: So several hundred tests, is what we're talking about?

BAPTIST: I don't know where there were quite that many, but…

ROSENWINKEL: But a lot.

BAPTIST: But a lot, yeah. Of course, we had procedure books with the directions written out.

ROSENWINKEL: Like a recipe, step one, step two, step three?

BAPTIST: Yes, so that if you did it often enough, you could do it without referring, but you could use these procedure books.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2/Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

ROSENWINKEL: This is Heather Rosenwinkel, conversing with Betsy Baptist, and this is Tape 2, Side 1.

We were talking about Betsy's writing up of lab procedures, and Betsy will continue talking about that.

BAPTIST: Everybody wrote up procedures for the laboratory, but it was the general policy that a procedure should be written in such a manner that a person could walk in off the street, never have seen a laboratory before, and could follow the procedure and get a valid result in the end. No guessing, trying to decide what was to be done next, or that. It was all right there, step-by-step and complete.

ROSENWINKEL: So in addition to doing the teaching and the actual lab work, you were writing manuals as well.

BAPTIST: Well, only…

ROSENWINKEL: Or a group of you were, maybe.

BAPTIST: Each supervisor for the area was pretty much responsible for the workbooks or procedures in their department or area.

ROSENWINKEL: Who was the overall head of the labs in the fifties?

BAPTIST: Marjorie Maxwell and Jack Koontz. Now, Marjorie was in charge of everything, and then they kind of divided it; and Marjorie was then in charge of purchasing and equipment and supplies, which was becoming a monumental production line, and, then, Jack Koontz was the chief technologist in charge of keeping track of the laboratory procedures and the work that was being done. Marge was also sort of in charge of personnel, in a way.

ROSENWINKEL: You mean selecting students, or selecting other people?

BAPTIST: Employees.

And then Jack—what did Jack do finally? I don't know, I can't remember exactly. But then there was Ardath Durbin, who finished her training and then became the chief technologist, and Jack was kind of the pathologist's right-hand person, for keeping track of what I don't know. And so Ardath Durbin, then, was the chief technologist in charge of the laboratory, and hiring and keeping the laboratory running.

ROSENWINKEL: Was there a physician who was over all of this, like Dr. Grondahl?

BAPTIST: Dr. Grondahl, and, then, Dr. Grondahl left in 1962 to go to Butte, Montana, to join John Newman, who had been a resident of ours and was in practice in Butte as a pathologist, and he went up to Butte to work with Newman, and he's still there. I hear from him at Christmas.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, who took over, then, doing what Dr. Grondahl did?

BAPTIST: Then Dr. Tyra Hutchens. He was a resident, and he was particularly interested in nuclear medicine, and nuclear medicine was just kind of coming to the fore.

ROSENWINKEL: And this is in the sixties now, the early sixties?

BAPTIST: Yes. So Dr. Grondahl left and Dr. Hutchens took over, and we went on from there.

ROSENWINKEL: Okay. So in the sixties you're still doing your teaching and you're doing your lab work; and are you still doing parasitology in the sixties?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Were there any changes in the sixties in the curriculum or anything you recall that was significant in that decade?

BAPTIST: It was pretty much the same as curriculum. One thing we did while I was still over on campus was we'd have rounds for the residents, and I kind of enjoyed it, because I would put out specimens for them, and then they would have to see if they could identify whatever it was.

ROSENWINKEL: Now, what kind of residents are we talking about here? From where?

BAPTIST: Clinical pathology residents, our clinical pathology residents. Some of them had had their anatomical path and then some of them, I think—I don't know for sure—took clinical pathology. But I think they kind of took anatomical pathology and clinical pathology, because lots of them wanted the laboratory and know what's going on there, but, in addition, they liked the tissue work, too.

ROSENWINKEL: And those were fun for both yourself and the residents? Or interesting, at least. Maybe fun is not the right word.

BAPTIST: My little area in parasitology. But they'd make rounds in the lab, and then they'd talk about special things that were going on in the laboratory, and so my thing was to set up four or five microscopes for them to identify whatever happened to be there. I think it was good for them. We used to get specimens sent in from all over.

ROSENWINKEL: From the state of Oregon, you mean?

BAPTIST: Yeah. Finally, it got to the place where some people kind of knew that I was interested and that I was interested in other than just the intestinal parasites that most everyone else knew about, so I'd get specimens from all over.

I tried to have a sample specimen of everything. Loxosceles reclusa was the fiddleback spider, and it was being written up in several of the journals, because if it would bite a person, if they—and they're "reclusa" because it liked to set up housekeeping in clothing that hadn't been worn for a while, on the back porch, or in shoes that hadn't been worn or something. And, of course, if a person encountered that, the spider would bite, and it would make a very hard, difficult-to-heal lesion, and it would get bigger and bigger.

Somebody said we had them here. To the best of my knowledge, I've never found one here. So I wrote to a man in the Midwest who'd written something in a journal about these, and asked them, if they had any specimens, if they could send one. Well, I just ran across it the other day, because I'm going through some files for Marian Ewell, who's now the instructor and in charge of the teaching area. I wrote to this man, and he wrote me back and said that he was very sorry, but the person who had written the article had since died, but he would send me specimens. So he sent me, preserved in alcohol, a male and a female of this fiddleback spider, which I hope is still around someplace.

ROSENWINKEL: So you're still supplying the lab a little bit with some things.

BAPTIST: Well, not so much. They do everything differently now so that I don't—if I find something special, I'm apt to take it some—but I do have a big file that I'm having to sort out so that they can get rid of some of the papers, (laughing) and I'm kind of having a good time looking over some things …

ROSENWINKEL: It sounds like fun.

BAPTIST: And goodness knows I save everything.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, you told me—just to get back to the fifties again one more time, one last time—that you were located in the outpatient clinic. I have a date here, 1956, where the Medical School Hospital was finished, University Hospital South. Did your lab or did your facilities ever move over there at all?

BAPTIST: No.

ROSENWINKEL: Or did you go to Gaines Hall in the sixties and that was the only move you made during that time period?

BAPTIST: That's the only move that the teaching portion did. I can't remember. It seems to me that they did some kind of lab work over there, but whether we had anything to do with it or not, I don't honestly remember.

ROSENWINKEL: And, then, in the early sixties you became the technologist of the year, which was quite an honor, for your professional association. What did you do that you were nominated for this honor?

BAPTIST: I don't have the foggiest notion. I don't really know. But I followed some really good people, so hopefully that had something to do with it. I don't know.

ROSENWINKEL: And, then, Dr. Hutchens became the chair of the clinical pathology department in '62, and we've talked about that a little bit; but around the late sixties, about '69—when I was doing a little bit of research for this interview, I found that the radiologic technology program from PCC became affiliated with OHSU. What I'm wondering is, if during the sixties, especially, and maybe also into the seventies, that many other technology programs became associated with the Hill or were started on the Hill. Do you recall any of these other programs that had an effect on your teaching or on the med tech program?

BAPTIST: When Dr. Grondahl was still there, they had a program at Adventist and at Emanuel.

ROSENWINKEL: Med tech programs, right?

BAPTIST: Med tech programs.

ROSENWINKEL: So this was competition, really, to OHSU.

BAPTIST: Well, yes, in a way, but—we'll keep those two separate. They also had a school at St. Vincent and at Good Samaritan—I'm trying to think if they had one at Emanuel—yes, I think they did. The students from Portland Adventist and from Emanuel came up here for lectures.

ROSENWINKEL: For your lectures and the lectures of other physicians and other med techs?

BAPTIST: Well, in the specified classes that we had. We had chemistry and parasitology and hematology, I think. And for some of them, residents taught the classes. But those students from those two came up and joined our students in the lectures.

ROSENWINKEL: So you had sort of a joint program, almost, or joint arrangements, kind of?

BAPTIST: Sort of joint arrangement, in a way. Then, I can't remember when they quit, but it was, I think, after Dr. Hutchens came that Portland Adventist and Emanuel discontinued their schools.

ROSENWINKEL: Why was that?

BAPTIST: I don't know. Maybe financially they decided it wasn't—and so then there was just St. Vincent's and Good Sam and us.

ROSENWINKEL: So that just makes three programs in a city of a million people, or so.

BAPTIST: And then St. Vincent's gave theirs up and Emanuel—or did I say that? Anyway, then it was just Good Sam; and then everybody gave it up and we were the only one. But the community college had started…

ROSENWINKEL: Portland Community College?

BAPTIST: Portland Community College had started a laboratory program, sort of a laboratory one.

ROSENWINKEL: Would this be like a technician program as opposed to a technology program?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: And what would be the difference between a technician program versus what we had here at OHSU?

BAPTIST: Well, our program, we had degrees.

ROSENWINKEL: Oh, at this point, in the seventies, you're now giving certification or a degree of some kind?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Would this be a certificate at this point?

BAPTIST: We had certificates. I can't remember—we had certificates from the very beginning. As a matter of fact, I never got a certificate when I finished my training, and I complained very bitterly to, I think, Mary Ann, but I never got it.

ROSENWINKEL: Mary Ann who?

BAPTIST: Lockwood.

But I never got a certificate. So, then, one time they had a certificate made for me especially (laughter).

ROSENWINKEL: That was effective, at least.

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: So we're back in the seventies with the PCC program starting. You were talking about the difference between a technician and the med tech program up at OHSU.

BAPTIST: You know, I've been away from it so long, I don't know whether I can even remember. I know we had degrees. Our students then all finished with a degree.

ROSENWINKEL: With, like, a bachelor's degree?

BAPTIST: Yeah. Either they had a bachelor's degree in medical technology, or we didn't give it, but credits were transferred back to their university or college or whatever, and then they got a degree in whatever they were supposed to have there.

ROSENWINKEL: So they would write the boards, and then they would be—I don't know whether the word is accredited—credentialed, I guess—a form of credentialing procedure.

BAPTIST: They could get a degree, and still they'd have to take the board exam, too.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, in the seventies was there competition between the OHSU med tech program versus the PCC or any other "medical technician" program or lab program?

BAPTIST: Frankly, I don't honestly think that there was too much, really, because they were different. However, I, deep down, might have felt a little bit—kind of wringing my hands, wondering if we were going to be replaced or something.

ROSENWINKEL: But that didn't happen.

BAPTIST: But it didn't happen, no.

ROSENWINKEL: So what did happen?

BAPTIST: And they still have their program, I think, and we still have our program. And, supposedly, their program—the people who finish that would work under the supervision of a certified medical technologist. Now, I don't know whether that's still true and it works that way or not. And occasionally we would have a student who would have completed that program and then come to us to take the med tech program. And they also had a similar program down at OIT, down south.

ROSENWINKEL: That's the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls?

BAPTIST: Yeah.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, in the seventies there were two other things that happened at OHSU. One was the medical school at OHSU took over Multnomah Hospital, took over the administration of Multnomah Hospital, and renamed the two hospitals University Hospital North and University Hospital South. Did that have any effect on the medical tech program?

BAPTIST: I don't think so.

ROSENWINKEL: It was simply and administrative thing that happened, and you just continued to work. And you're still over in Gaines Hall, now, right?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Okay. And the second event was, in 1974 the schools of medicine, dentistry and nursing formed together to become the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center. And, again, that was an administrative change. Did that have any effect on med tech?

BAPTIST: Not that I—I don't think so.

ROSENWINKEL: So I get the impression you're chugging away doing your teaching and the other lab things that you do, and the medical tech program has more students in it now. Were there any changes in curriculum or methods of teaching during the seventies?

BAPTIST: No. We still had lectures, and we did have more instructors for the lab portions because the students were taught in what we referred to as student labs. Did we talk about that before?

ROSENWINKEL: A little bit. You mentioned it.

BAPTIST: Then they would go over to the main lab and work in a rotation system in the main lab. So they might be scheduled in chemistry for six weeks, say, so four of those weeks would be in the student lab learning the procedures, learning how to operate the equipment and

things, and then they'd go over in the service lab and supposedly, under the supervision of whoever was the technologist there, perform those tests and sort of get the swing in a real, true working situation.

ROSENWINKEL: Did the med tech program have relationships with the VA hospital, for example? Any kind of professional relationship?

BAPTIST: Not then, really.

ROSENWINKEL: Later did you?

BAPTIST: Not while I was there.

ROSENWINKEL: What about other hospitals? What I'm trying to get at is, did the med tech program here have any outreach programs in the community? You've mentioned that there were other med tech schools where the students came up here to the campus, and I was wondering if over time, let's say sixties, seventies, until you retired, what role did the med tech program play in the greater professional community or the medical community?

[Tape stopped.]

BAPTIST: Where were we?

ROSENWINKEL: Now, where we are now is, we were talking about the role of the med tech program at OHSU and community activities, what people in the medical technology program did for outreach or the relationships they had in the community.

BAPTIST: For one thing, it was recruitment for us. I used to be invited to high schools to talk to classes, sort of as a recruitment for us and, then, also for information for the students, because medical technology was kind of something that nobody really ever thought about. And some of the instructors, teachers, were becoming more aware of that possibility for their students, and so I was invited to go out and talk to some of them. And, then, they would have community

testing for diabetes, and they would have medical technologists come out from the community to draw specimens for those programs.

I went down to colleges and universities all over to talk to students in science classes about medical technology, and one time I went with a group from up here. Dr. Trainer was there, and we went down to some college, and the whole group gave sort of a survey of what the medical school could offer.

And that's about all I can think of that we did, off-hand.

ROSENWINKEL: So these were very good recruitment techniques.

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: I assume that some students, as a result of these talks you gave, or others gave, did enroll in the OHSU program.

BAPTIST: Yes. I had a great big tapeworm, and Dr. Veazie, who was in microbiology…

ROSENWINKEL: This is Dr. Lyle Veazie?

BAPTIST: Yes. She had one that someone had strung around a piece of x-ray film and then preserved it in this jar. So this tapeworm came, and it was so exciting because it was the only one I'd ever seen alive. An ordinary, great big *Taenia*. So I was going to wind it around—I bummed some suture material to tie the x-ray film so it would fit into this big jar, quart jar, and then we had this tapeworm stretched out on a tray, and everybody came to see it.

Then I decided, well, it was about time to go home, and maybe I should start stringing him up on this, so I made some holes in this cylinder of film—and it was clear, transparent—and since it was still alive, I'd get it stretched out and tied in one spot, and then next time I looked, here it was sagging, and that would never do. So then I decided, well, the only thing I could do was just—I thought maybe overnight in the refrigerator it would relax and die. Well, it didn't. So finally I just

resolved it in pouring formalin over it and putting it out of its misery and then binding it up on this piece of film.

I can remember that occasionally some high school student would come in, because sometimes I'd talk about Herman, this tapeworm—we named it Herman—or the students would come to the lab and we'd show them around, and I'd make a big thing about Herman. We had a couple of students who came to us, we recruited, so to speak, and they remembered Herman from those high school days (laughter).

Let's see. I got tangled up in a story and I can't remember where I'm supposed to be going.

ROSENWINKEL: You were talking about Herman, and we were still talking about community outreach and the fact that some of the students that heard you did enroll in the OHSU program, and that it was fairly effective, going and doing these little talks to a variety of students.

BAPTIST: Yes. It was rather interesting. When I went to a high school and there would be a whole day set aside for recruitment, and they had all these different areas that were available, I'd have, oh, maybe at the very most fifteen people who might be interested in laboratory work. But, airline stewardess: standing room only. And I always really thought, Gee. But I could understand. That was glamorous, you know.

ROSENWINKEL: Yes, that was very glamorous, where Herman maybe was interesting, but not glamorous, right?

BAPTIST: Well, I think most people thought, Ugh.

ROSENWINKEL: What happened during the eighties, just before you retired, in the field of medical tech?

[Tape stopped.]

ROSENWINKEL: It's my understanding, Betsy, that during the time Dr. Leonard Laster was the president of the university, that the med tech program was almost cut, cut off, kaput. Could you tell me some details about that and exactly what happened?

BAPTIST: I don't honestly know why—I think they were short of funds some way or other, and they were trying to decide how they could straighten things out, and they felt that maybe the medical technology program could be discontinued and that might solve some of the problems.

It was rather interesting. We had a few meetings about it, and—I don't know whether I should say this or not. At a staff meeting we were instructed that this was apt to happen and that we were not to protest in any way, that we were not to say anything about it one way or another. And I think I said, "Well, what if we do?" And I was informed, "Well, the military has a nice little term for that. Insubordination." And I thought, Oh, my. I'm planning on retiring soon, and I really, honestly don't want to lose my job. So I kind of pulled in my horns a little bit. I wasn't particularly happy about the prospects, but what would be would be.

Then, Maggie Diulio was on staff, and she had been about two years and was the laboratory instructor for hematology, and she had been a student of ours and had worked in the lab and then came back as an instructor, and she said, "You know," she says, "I can't stand to see this program just discarded like that." And she says, "I have a friend in the Oregon legislature." And she says, "I've been talking with him." And she said, "It's been suggested that we might go down and lobby the legislature." So I said, "Well, okay, what do we do?"

So I can't remember exactly how come, but she found out when they were going to bring this up. And we got together, and I recruited Jean Steele, who I'd gone to school with and had been in Portland just the year before I started my training, and she was down in Albany. So I called her—and her mother was very active in the Idaho legislature. So I called Jean and asked her if she would be interested in meeting us in Salem and sitting in on this thing. Oh, yeah, she would. So, lo and behold—I hadn't seen her for years, but she came up and joined us. And there were, I think, about four of us that were there, and we wore our white lab coats. In those days, then, we were wearing lab coats and graduated from uniforms, I guess. And here we were.

And they were having their hearing, and Dr. Laster was to be there. And I think when he came and he saw us, he was kind of taken aback, because he said he was not made privy of the fact that we were going to be there. Well, nobody knew we were going to be there because we just were there.

And so for some reason or other, anyway, we were able to avoid it some way. I don't remember exactly what all happened, but, anyway, the program lived.

[End of Tape 2, Side 1/Begin Side 2]

ROSENWINKEL: We are continuing the interview with Betsy Baptist.

During the seventies and eighties Dr. Margaret Berroth was involved to some extent with medical technology. Could you tell me what her position was during that time period?

BAPTIST: Well, let's see. Dr. Berroth was a resident in clinical pathology with our department, and then, when she finished her residency, she practiced in Hood River and The Dalles, that area down there. Then she was in charge of the education programs for our department, our laboratory, and she was actually our director for the medical technology program.

ROSENWINKEL: Did she have a particular philosophy about medical tech or particular things that she wanted the program to accomplish?

BAPTIST: No, I think we kept on doing whatever we were doing.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, in your estimation, what were her contributions to the med tech program?

BAPTIST: Well, let's see. She was pretty much in charge of directing the residents in clinical pathology in their year or two years that they spent with us, and also was pretty much the director of the school of medical technology.

ROSENWINKEL: Did she do recruitment as well as yourself?

BAPTIST: A little bit. Not much.

ROSENWINKEL: So the recruitment part of this for new students was pretty much yourself and other people?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, let's move into the eighties now. You said that you retired in '82, is that correct?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Tell me what medical tech was like just before you retired.

BAPTIST: Becoming mechanized.

ROSENWINKEL: Ah, that's what I would like to know about. Would you give me a little bit of detail about how it was becoming mechanized?

BAPTIST: All sorts of laboratory instruments that—frankly, I didn't work in that part, so I don't know a great deal about it, but it seemed as though you put the specimens in little, tiny containers and put them in a machine and turned the machine on, and it went around and did all of the—whatever the test was, and it came out as a printout on the end.

ROSENWINKEL: Are you talking about a centrifuge, for instance?

BAPTIST: No, I'm talking about, like, a chemical analyzer of some kind, and it would do several tests on one little smidgen of blood, and/or whatever, and the results were turned out. I'm sorry, I can't tell you anymore about it than that (laughing), because I never did one.

ROSENWINKEL: So you really didn't get involved in the computerization of the lab at all?

BAPTIST: Absolutely not. Actually, the computers came, and I left (laughter).

ROSENWINKEL: So what factors made you decide to retire?

BAPTIST: Well, it was time, and it just seemed as though I'd had enough.

ROSENWINKEL: So what was your retirement date exactly?

BAPTIST: December 1982, I think it was.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, you've certainly given me things to think about for med tech. I only have a few quick questions more, and then we're finished.

BAPTIST: Okay.

ROSENWINKEL: Did the program itself attract minorities, like men or people of any particular ethnic background, during the time you were at OHSU?

BAPTIST: In the very beginning there were very few men. Now, part of that might have been because when I first started the war was on. And then it continued mostly women, and then we had a man or two or three or four, and now it's getting to be almost half and half.

ROSENWINKEL: Speaking of ethnic backgrounds or other than Caucasian people, did you have any programs to recruit minorities?

BAPTIST: No programs as such, but we did have Asian and now they have East Indian and…

ROSENWINKEL: At OHSU you mean, or in the profession in general?

BAPTIST: No, in students now.

ROSENWINKEL: At OHSU now?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: But generally during the time you were at OHSU, there wasn't a drive, shall we say, to recruit people of different ethnic backgrounds?

BAPTIST: We didn't make a big effort to attract them in particular, but if they made an application, it didn't make any difference. And we did have several Asian students early on.

ROSENWINKEL: As early as the sixties, say?

BAPTIST: Oh, yes. And we did have—I was surprised, I'm trying to dispose of some of my files that are still there, and I ran across this list of handicapped students that we had had up until about 1960.

ROSENWINKEL: When you say handicapped, what do you mean?

BAPTIST: Well, hearing, speech…

ROSENWINKEL: And these people went through the med tech program?

BAPTIST: Oh, yes. And a fellow in a wheelchair who was on our staff after he finished. Well, the only thing that they couldn't be was blind. And we trained them, and even some of them stayed on and worked for us.

ROSENWINKEL: During your career at OHSU did you get involved with any professional activities with your professional association?

BAPTIST: Oh, my, yes.

ROSENWINKEL: What did you do?

BAPTIST: Well, I was president of the state once, I think, or whatever they call it now. And we were, and I think maybe we still are, a meeting point for people who are interested in medical technology to send out the information.

ROSENWINKEL: So you did some kind of informational mailings or something like that?

BAPTIST: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Did you get involved with writing at all, like writing journal articles?

BAPTIST: No.

ROSENWINKEL: What qualifications do you think a medical technologist should have? If you were looking at a possible student for medical tech, either now or during your career at OHSU, what would you look for?

BAPTIST: Well, someone who is interested in science, for one thing. You have to like that. And generally well-rounded.

ROSENWINKEL: In what way?

BAPTIST: In interests, activities, and to be a person who can work with people. There are technologists who don't want anything to do with people, but ideally, yes, they should be interested in people and be able to get along with nearly everyone.

ROSENWINKEL: We haven't mentioned very much about patient interaction, the medical technologist and patient interaction in all this discussion we've had. During your career did your students get involved with patients, live patients, or were they up there in the lab analyzing substances and doing lab tests?

BAPTIST: In the very beginning, we had the outpatient area, and I think they still do. I don't know how much interaction there is now. But we had a "spec room", we called it, a specimen collection area, and we used to have three or four benches out in front. And these patients would register down at the clinic office, and then they'd come up and sit there and wait for their name to be called and have their specimens collected, whatever was required for the tests. And we had children and adults, both, come.

I remember one incident in particular with a young fellow. He was probably about, oh, eight maybe, along in there, and he was to have his blood taken. He'd sit there, and they'd get his arm stretched out and the tourniquet on his arm, and just about the time they'd get ready to get the needle located, he'd draw away and fold it up. So finally, whoever was doing it, finally they came to get me. What I was supposed to do about it, I don't really know, but—so I thought, okay. So I talked to him a while, and then we sat down, and he stretched his arm out, and I got up, and the same thing happened to me. So I released the tourniquet.

So, finally I got out; and our specimen collection area was right in front—right in front of that were all these benches, and here were all these patients. Of course, this had been going on for three or four or five, ten minutes, maybe, looking to see what was going to happen. So he got up and walked out. And so we stood outside in the hall, and the bench of patients waiting were over where they were in plain view, and we were both leaning up on the wall, and I was trying to talk to him. And I looked over at all those people waiting, and they were kind of looking to see what was going to happen next, and I said, "Look at all those people over there. They're just waiting to see if you can come in and have this specimen collected. Come on." So we went in, tied him up, collected the specimen, and that's all there was to it (laughter). But there were a few things like that.

And we did basal metabolisms then, metabolic rates, and I had this patient. We had three rooms, and we'd let the patient rest for at least a half an hour in the dark, or with a little light on. And I happened to walk up the hall—and we did have big cockroaches then—and this big cockroach walked across the hall and under the door. And I thought, my goodness, what if that patient saw that cockroach. So I opened the door, and the patient was kind of wide-eyed, and I said, "Oh, did that bother you? Don't worry, it's all right." I closed the door and gave the patient a little longer to get collected (laughter).

ROSENWINKEL: Well, that's the first time I've heard of cockroaches at OHSU.

BAPTIST: When I first started as a student, down at the very end of the lab there were three drawers that were probably about eight inches square, eight inches, and probably a foot and a half long, that were in the counter, and I pulled them out—they weren't used for anything that I can remember—and in the bottom drawer here was all this paper all chewed up, and apparently a mouse had been living in there. So we put a trap in there and then forgot about it. Then, sometime later somebody investigated, and here was that little mouse that had been devoured by the cockroaches, and the most beautiful little skeleton you ever did see. And I thought about that often; I wish I had saved it.

ROSENWINKEL: I didn't know that cockroaches would eat an animal like that.

BAPTIST: Well, I think, if they're starving, they probably would eat anything, I don't know (laughter). But that's the only way I could account for that little skeleton—and we did have cockroaches then.

ROSENWINKEL: I hope we don't have them now.

[Tape stopped.]

We were talking about what you considered your proudest achievement or accomplishment in the time you were at OHSU.

BAPTIST: The association with the many students that had passed through in the time that I was there, and meeting them in later years, and some of them thanking me for the time that I'd spent in their time at the lab.

ROSENWINKEL: And what would your advice be to a young person today who's considering med tech?

BAPTIST: That's a rather difficult question, because I think it's still a good field, but not necessarily in the cities, because a large amount of the laboratory work which is being done in the cities where there are big hospitals is automated, and there is not as much really good hands-on. But in the smaller communities in the outlying towns in the state, or other areas, the medical technologist—say, like in Baker City, for instance, that community is far enough away from almost everybody that they need somebody there. They may have some equipment which will do tests, but they still have the feeling of hands-on, and association with their patients and being able to follow the patients.

ROSENWINKEL: And you get that, basically, in a smaller place?

BAPTIST: Yes, I'm sure.

ROSENWINKEL: And do you have anything else you'd like to add to this interview that we haven't covered?

BAPTIST: I think we've covered almost everything (laughing) from beginning to end.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, thank you very much for the two and a half hours we've spent taping this.

BAPTIST: Oh, you're welcome.

ROSENWINKEL: I think you've enlightened me, at least, and anyone else following me on the status of med tech from 1944 to 1982.

[End of interview]

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