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Interviews of the Margaret MacVicar Memorial AMITA Oral History Project

Emily Wick – Class of 1951

(interviewed by Dawn Herzbrun)

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MIT Oral History Project
Interview with Emily L. Wick by Dawn Herzbrun

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Herzbrun: The only thing that I know about your early life is that you were born in Youngstown, Ohio in 1921. Tell me about your family; your friends.

Wick: Well, we lived on what used to be an active farm but wasn't anymore, so we had a nice big barn, fields, and kind of country surroundings. We were still only about five miles from downtown,...I went to public school always and walked back and forth...

Herzbrun: How far was it to school?

Wick: Probably a mile and a half.

Herzbrun: People really did walk to school...

Wick: Sure!

Herzbrun: I always thought that my dad was just making those stories up.

Wick: Really, it was fun. You know, if the weather was awfully bad somebody would come get you. Everybody didn't have cars then. We had a car. Mother had a car and Dad had a car so there were two cars in the family, but we only got taken if there was a howling blizzard or...

Herzbrun: Or a flood.

Wick: ...or a downpour of rain or if we had to go somewhere right after and needed to be picked up.

Herzbrun: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Wick: I had a brother - he was the oldest, ten years older than I; and my sister, Mary - she is six years older than I; and then I had a younger sister, Harriet, who was about two years younger than I. They all went to school in Youngstown in public schools and, you know, we got a wonderful education.

Herzbrun: Did you?

Wick: So much better than what's in the public schools now. It's such a crime what has happened.

Herzbrun: With the budget cuts and what not?

Wick: Oh yes, it's terrible nowadays. It was wonderful then and everybody in town went. Well, let's see, I was about eight years old when the 1929 crash came in the stock market and when the banks were all closed. So I was young all throughout the Depression. Youngstown, Ohio at that time was a steel-making town. It was about the eighth greatest producer of steel in the world - the whole Youngstown-Pittsburgh area...they used to call it the "Ruhr of the United States," like the Ruhr Valley in Germany. So, steel business was the town - and because it had been that way for so many years, it had been a place where immigrants from Europe, first Italy and then Slavic countries, came for the job opportunities. So in our...all throughout school, you know, there was a tremendous mix of people from all around everywhere.

You know, my forebears, as it happened, had come to Youngstown back in the time when the town first got settled by people from Connecticut. Many of the kids in the class, their parents were still learning English because...

Herzbrun: ...they just got there.

Wick: ...they just got there. Or, they spoke broken English because they had not been here that long. So it was a wonderful experience of all kinds of different people. And during the Depression there were poor, poor, poor folks. One of my friends, her family lived in a kind of freight car, an abandoned freight car...

Herzbrun: I can't imagine that.

Wick: And there were places in industrial cities or in cities during the Depression called "Hoover City".

Herzbrun: Who was that?

Wick: Because Hoover, you know he was the president at the time of the Depression, just as the Depression came, before FDR. People were ... it's like now ... homeless. You know, you see people huddled up next to big cardboard cartons and things?

Herzbrun: Were these people that poor before or was it just because...

Wick: Well, there were no jobs. And unemployment was widespread. They were people who had just lost their jobs. And they were down like it is today, only people tend to avert their eyes and pretend the homeless aren't there. These were hard working folk who just had no other way to live. Sure we knew there were kids who didn't have homes. Of course, that was before welfare, too. So there was no...

Herzbrun: They had no money at all.

Wick: ...That's right. But, we had a wonderful time in school and wonderful teachers and we got a really good education. There are still a handful of us that were in the same class from about second grade through high school. When I

go home to Ohio at Christmas, why five or six of us get together. (Laughs) It is fun because we all sit around and say how lucky we were; remember the Math teacher and the Latin teacher and English teacher. And they really were wonderful, wonderful teachers and did so much. You look back and you find out that they did a lot for the way you looked at the world and the way you functioned later.

Herzbrun: Did you have any specific teachers that really...

Wick: Oh, yeah, the Latin teacher and the Math teacher and the English teacher were simply wonderful.

Herzbrun: Do you remember their names?

Wick: Sure, The Latin teacher; her name was Mrs. Rifenberick; and Miss Russell was the English teacher and Miss. Turner was the Math teacher. Then, I mean, I always knew ... I mean it was just assumed that all the kids in my family were going to go to college.

Herzbrun: Now, isn't that odd?

Wick: What?

Herzbrun: I mean, not everybody went to college back then.

Wick: No, not everybody did. But that was part of the wonderfulness of the public school system. And the kids who were interested in academic things...Well, everybody was encouraged to learn...

and anybody that was interested in going to college ...you were encouraged. There weren't any student loans or anything.

So, it was a very different process. I remember when during the Depression my older sister - she went off to college in 1933 which was still pretty much the depths of the Depression.

Herzbrun: Where'd she go?

Wick: She went to Mount Holyoke. My older brother went to Williams. And I remember the day that Dad called up from the office and told Mother that he'd worked it out. He was going to be able to borrow on his insurance and Mary could go off to Mount Holyoke, so... (Laughs)

Herzbrun: What did your Dad do?

Wick: He was a...Well, he had gone to MIT. He was the class of 1906. And he majored in mechanical engineering.

Herzbrun: Course 2

Wick: And he could not afford to pay his own way - a man at home in Youngstown paid his way for him. In fact, Dad had planned to go to West Point because that was one way you could get an education and not have any money.

Herzbrun: Get a great education.

Wick: That's right. So when he went home and got a job with Youngstown Sheet and Tube, which was one of the big companies then he went to work with a man who had a bronze and brass foundry. They made parts for the big steel mills. It was called the Falcon Bronze Company. He worked his way up and he ended up being the boss and the chairman of the board and everything. Then he retired. He was working at the Falcon Bronze all through our growing up years.

Herzbrun: Did the Depression affect his job at all?

Wick: Oh well, the whole valley....(Laughs) was in the pits. He had to borrow on his insurance. So you were lucky if you had insurance to borrow on. We never suffered during the Depression though. Well, Mom and Dad always did mind their nickels and dimes. I mean, they always were...

Herzbrun: Frugal?

Wick: Yeah.

Herzbrun: What did your Mom do?

Wick: She went to Smith for two years. She came from Indiana. She had come to Youngstown to go to high school because the high schools in Youngstown were known to be better than the high schools in Fort Wayne, Indiana. And she had an older sister who was married and lived in Youngstown, so she and Dad were in the same high school class.

Herzbrun: Oh, high school sweethearts.

Wick: (Laughs)

Herzbrun: Just like my parents.

Wick: So, well then, by 1939, and I went to college in 1939, I knew I wanted to come to New England. Well, because Dad had always loved New England. In '29 and '30 we had come down for a two weeks' vacation in this area on Cape Ann. In fact, Dad, in his freshman year at MIT (1902) had a cousin who lived in Magnolia - its just right next to Manchester, south of Gloucester - and she invited him out for the weekend. They had driven by horse and buggy up to Gloucester and around. He was just taken with the area and decided if he ever could, in the

far distant future, this was where he wanted to come for vacations. So many years later, there he is: he and Mom have four kids and we came down here for four weeks. Then it really got to the bad Depression and we were lucky if we went up to Lake Erie for vacation. Well, Mother had gone to Smith and they both loved New England. So it was a place we had always thought of and kind of wanted to come to college down here. My brother went to Williams College and Mary was at Mount Holyoke. And I looked all around....

Herzbrun: What were you looking for in a school? Did you know what you were interested in yet?

Wick: I just knew I wanted to go to college and get a good general education. I always had liked to build things and, you know, I was a tomboy. I used to have a chemistry set. You know, it was fun to mess around. I always did enjoy science in high school. But I enjoyed everything. It was all very interesting. At first I said, well, I don't want to go to Mount Holyoke - that's where Mary went. Then I looked around and I didn't want to go to Smith - it was too big. And I didn't want to go to Wellesley, because it was not out in the country enough - it was too, kind of, suburbanized.

And I didn't want to go to Bryn Mawr, because... Well, it was too suburbanized too. The area around Mount Holyoke is just beautiful. You're in the middle of the country with hills and lakes and it is kind of ideal rural New England.

Herzbrun: I have never been up there.

Wick: Oh, it's really nice. So I finally decided. Mary had been long gone for two years, so she was not hanging over me. So I went off there. I had considered Oberlin there in Ohio, and other co-ed places like Cornell and University of Chicago, but I did not want that kind of place.

Herzbrun: The University of Chicago is really big.

Wick: Well, yeah, but the undergraduate school wasn't. That would have been a big city and I did not want that.

Herzbrun: You wanted...

Wick: And since back then there was no question of having a choice of Williams or Swarthmore....

Herzbrun: Were they all men?

Wick: Sure. They did not become co-ed until the early '70's.

Herzbrun: No joke?

Wick: Absolutely.

Herzbrun: Were there any co-ed schools?

Wick: Well, Cornell, Oberlin, University of Chicago. The universities were co-ed.

Herzbrun: Did you want all female?

Wick: Never gave it a thought because that's what there was. I mean, if you wanted to go to New England into a liberal arts college there were the women's colleges. So, it was not a question. Yale went co-ed when I was working in the Dean's Office at MIT. I mean, it is recent. It was only twenty years ago, really.

Herzbrun: It seems ancient, because it was already in my lifetime.

Wick: Yeah, I know, but really in the time of the history of education it's not a long time ago. And those schools are still learning how to be co-ed. They really are. So, that wasn't even the issue. Also, Mount Holyoke interested me because they had a wonderful reputation for the sciences and really wonderful teachers. Well, they had very good teachers in all fields, but the scientists were particularly well known.

Herzbrun: So, you were already thinking, maybe...

Wick: I knew I liked science...

I wasn't ready to say that I was going to major in it. I did not know what I was going to major in. There were so many things that I had never tried out. So, I went and I took the general core and made sure I took courses...You know, I got math and physics and things in so that if I decided to major in chemistry I would have the basics. I did not decide on chemistry until junior year.

Herzbrun: Wow. Wow. How did that...How did that all of a sudden pop into your mind.?

Wick: It didn't all of a sudden. I was weighing possibilities. I had never had any opportunity to study astronomy and I wanted to try that out.

Herzbrun: What did you think of that?

Wick: Oh, it's interesting, but I did not want to do it. (Laughs)

Herzbrun: I took an astronomy class last term and that was plenty.

Wick: Yeah, right, it was interesting, but I did not want to do that. And I took languages and history and, well, you had to do your distribution requirements. And nobody ever complained about that. That made sure that you kind of spread yourself around and made sure you got insight into the various fields. Then I finally decided on Chemistry. I was drawn to the chemistry department because of the people there.

Herzbrun: Who was in there?

Wick: Well, a woman, Emma Carr, was the department chairman. She was a very distinguished chemist and was the first woman to receive the Garvan Medal from the American Chemical Society which had a special medal for outstanding women chemists. The faculty always did research and they had a Master's Program and students worked with them senior year. If you did honors work or whatever you would do a piece of the research that related to the professor's work. And it was a tradition that the professors would have research programs. So it was a good thing and it was a lot of fun. There would be department picnics; nice fun-type people.

Herzbrun: How many students were in that department? Do you remember?.

Wick: I don't know, but the whole college had, maybe, back then, 900 students in all four years.

Herzbrun: So it was small?

Wick: It was small. It's still small, though. There are 1900 now, in 1992. So it is about twice as large as back then in the early '40's.

Herzbrun: But it's still small.

Wick: But it's still small. It is about the size of Wellesley, in terms of the student body.

Herzbrun: What did you do for fun? I am curious what Mount Holyoke was like?

Wick: Back then, of course, nobody had cars. And during World War II even if you had a car you couldn't get gas because it was rationed. So you rode the bus into Holyoke and you went to the movies. Or, you went hiking or you took the train to New York.

Herzbrun: Oh yeah?

Wick: Sure. They had a really good train service then.

Herzbrun: Did you go with a bunch of girlfriends?

Wick: Sure. And we had a lot of fun. Some of the kids lived in New York. We used to go ...We did more of this, actually, when I was working for my Masters, because I stayed on and did that. But, you would ride the train down and get off at Grand Central and then we would get tickets to plays. I saw all those early musicals, and the really wonderful actors and things....

Herzbrun: Like what?

Wick: You know, John Gielgud in his early days when he...

Herzbrun: Wow, wow. He's famous.

Wick: Sure. And, well, I think it was probably when I was working on my Masters that we saw "South Pacific" and "Oklahoma"...

Herzbrun: The big ones.

Wick: You know, when they first came out. And we used to stay; I had a friend who lived in Brooklyn. We would get into town, probably around noonish. And then we would, I don't know, I forget where we would go, but we had a lot of fun. And then we would go and have dinner some place and go to the theater. Then we would ride the subway...

Herzbrun: That's always exciting.

Wick: Well, the subway was a very...I mean it was kind of like the train to Rockport. I mean, it wasn't a dangerous place to ride at all.

Herzbrun: Now, that's changed.

Wick: Sure. Nobody worried about us riding the subway around midnight. And we would get out to Brooklyn and her mother would always have a freshly made chocolate cake. We would sit around and drink milk and eat chocolate cake.
(Laughs)

Herzbrun: What was her name? What was your friend's name?

Wick: Ruth Love was her name. She lives out in Oregon now. We had fun, lots of fun. And then in...Of course, the war started. The U.S. didn't get into the war until '41, but the war started in 1939. The night before the day I went off to Mount Holyoke to college was when the Nazis went into Poland and Winston Churchill made a speech and declared war against the Germans. So, my whole experience, well up till '45 and '46, was World War II when I was...

Herzbrun: In college.

Wick: ...in college, yeah. And that made it very, very different from other times.

Herzbrun: How do you think it affected it?

Wick: Oh, tremendously, because everybody's brothers and friends were going off to war and getting killed. Everyday you read the paper and they were desperate times back then. It really looked like Hitler was going to win for awhile. I remember, it was junior year and the chemistry department always had quizzes on Mondays...

Herzbrun: Why?

Wick: Well, they just always did. Every week we had weekly quizzes. They kept you going. They really kept you on your toes. We were all just sitting down to study on Sunday afternoon when we heard about Pearl Harbor. Of course, that kind of...we didn't feel like studying much. We would say things like "Oh, they'll have the quiz. They won't have the quiz." And of course, what happened was they didn't have the quiz, but instead everybody gathered in the big lecture hall and we listened to President Roosevelt address Congress...You know, about "the day that will live in infamy" and all this...So we listened to his speech before Congress and didn't have a quiz.

Then in 1943 when I was going to graduate, I interviewed for jobs. Because our faculty were well known in the chemistry profession all around, the chemical companies would come around and interview like they do now. Not the same numbers, but they did.

Herzbrun: What companies did you interview with?

Wick: Oh, I can't remember.

Herzbrun: What were you going to be doing?

Wick: Well, it would be lab work. I don't remember if it was Monsanto. My impression is that it was some chemical company in St. Louis. And I did not want to go to St. Louis. And it didn't really seem as though there would be too much of a future there anyway. So when the faculty of the department asked if I would stay on and be a graduate assistant and work for a Master's, I was happy to do that. So I stayed on for two years and was an instructor on the faculty. So I came to MIT in the fall of 1946 as a grad student.

Herzbrun: Yeah, I have it that you were a chemistry instructor at Mount Holyoke. And then you got your Ph.D.?

Wick: Right, and I went to MIT because it was near Rockport. I knew MIT was an excellent place. I went because it was near Rockport. I figured if I was going to work like hell I might as well be near the place that I would rather be...where I could go sailing. Because, by that time we had...

Herzbrun: How did you know about it?

Wick: In 1937, we spent the summer in Rockport and then we got a sailboat and then my Dad built a house on the shore over there. So this was where I wanted to play. I probably would have gone to the University of Illinois if I hadn't really cared a lot about Rockport and sailing, because they had an excellent organic department. I didn't want to go out to Illinois, so I went to MIT.

Herzbrun: That's an interesting reason. "I went to MIT for sailing in Rockport." That's a good enough reason.

Wick: And the only reason I went on for a Ph.D. was, well, my brother and Dad, and by this time my brother was a philosophy professor, both said, "You ought to go as far as you can and make sure you're qualified. If they slam the door in your face it's because you're a jerk, not because you're not qualified; you don't have what they want, but it's not because you're not qualified. So, go on." And that made sense to me.

Herzbrun: What were your sisters doing at this point?

Wick: Well, let's see. My older sister, Mary, her husband got killed in the war and she thought she would like to go to medical school. She had gone back to school to get - she had majored in art history; she had to go back and take chemistry and stuff. My brother was establishing himself as a professor.

Herzbrun: And what about Ruth...was that her name?

Wick: No, Harriet, my younger sister. She went to Vassar. She did okay. She went home and, what was she working at? I don't know.

Herzbrun: What did she major in?

Wick: She majored in, oh...

Herzbrun: It's not that important.

Wick: I don't know. (Laughs) It wasn't science.

Herzbrun: It's not important. I'm not interviewing her anyway.

Wick: (Laughs)

Herzbrun: So, how come you didn't stay and teach at Mount Holyoke?

Wick: Well, I didn't want to because I wanted to...uh...

Herzbrun: "Go as far as you could go?"

Wick: Yeah, right. I mean, I wanted to be down in Rockport more. I loved it out there in the Connecticut Valley. But, if you're going to get a job, you want a job that's interesting and where there aren't artificial barriers for how far you can go.

Herzbrun: That's true. You can go as far as you want.

Wick: Sure, and that your abilities allow you to go. And again, the chemical industry did not much appeal. Back then, women did not really get an even break in industry. There was no affirmative action. There was no...

Herzbrun: Equal rights type thing?

Wick: Well, you know the reason the women's colleges got founded was that women who wanted to go into an academic career couldn't get appointed in the regular universities. The women's colleges really got strong because here were all these tremendously able academic women that ended up being the faculty. So they were very, very interesting and challenging environments. So I came to MIT...

Herzbrun: ...and got your Ph.D.

Wick: ...After the first term I was on probation because my cum was 3.45 and it was supposed to be 3.5.

Herzbrun: See nowadays, that's no big deal if someone has a 3.45. That's a C+...

Wick: Yeah, I know. But if you were in Graduate School you were supposed to get 3.5. I lived over at 120 Bay State Road which was the first women's dormitory.

Herzbrun: Now, I heard that you lived together with about fifteen women.

Wick: Yeah, there were about fifteen women, maybe eighteen total, and half were grad students and half were undergrad. That was a great place to live, really.

Herzbrun: Really, what was that like?

Wick: Well, it was one of those nice row houses along Bay State Road. It came into being, well, Mrs. McCormick...

Herzbrun: I live in McCormick Hall.

Wick: ...of McCormick Hall was instrumental; Mrs. Compton, Mrs. Karl Compton, who was the president's wife back then when I was in grad school - she was very active. Some of the faculty wives were looking out for woman students and doing the best they could and got this house for eighteen. I think we were about, I think, about sixty women students in all.

Herzbrun: Grad and undergrad?

Wick: Grad and undergrad. But the total student body...I don't know, the number's got to be checked, but it was more like 4,000 total.

So, the whole of MIT was much, much smaller than it is today. But still we were a very small minority amongst the total.

Herzbrun: What was it like going from Mount Holyoke which was all girls to MIT that was mostly guys?

Wick: It was more analogous to moving from a little itsy bitsy town to a big city. That's all. (Laughs) It wasn't so much the... Well, the biggest shock was the total professional atmosphere at MIT. It wasn't like a school, it was like a research institute.

Herzbrun: Really, how do you mean?

Wick: Well, every professor expected every student in the class to maybe want to grow up and be a professional in his field.

When you took math or physical chemistry it was as though you wanted to be a Ph.D. in p-chem. It wasn't knowledge for knowledge's sake in general. It's kind of the assumption, I want to grow up and be a professional in this particular field.

Herzbrun: It's definitely directed.

Wick: And that's the biggest difference. I think that's still the major difference - in atmosphere - between a place like MIT and a more general school though MIT is much more general and like the others now. And I think it's a great improvement there's a much broader curriculum than there used to be. I would never have gone to a place like MIT as an undergraduate because I was not that narrowly directed, and I wouldn't have lasted.

I mean, I would not have liked chemistry because I wasn't that interested in chemistry. Besides, I wanted to learn other things...

Herzbrun: Astronomy.

Wick: Music, art, history, literature; I mean, the riches of the world, you know. And there are lots of riches in the world. I still believe in liberal arts colleges. There's a whole range of knowledge and it seems like people ought to expose themselves to it. But, MIT is the perfect place for somebody who already knows what they want to do and it's along a quantitative bent - that's exceedingly important. If you don't have that approach MIT is a rather very bad place for you. You can be very, very bright, but if you're not...if you don't have that kind of approach to life, it's not going to be that much fun. So, by the time a person's in graduate school and you've made up your mind that that's the profession you want to go into then MIT's a great place.

Herzbrun: Then you'd better be directed.

Wick: Yeah, right, because you're ready to do that. But, I always have felt sorry for people, particularly back then, at MIT when there would be somebody that you really felt deep down would really rather be a poet or something. Yet, with all of the peer pressure, it is hard to change. "What do you mean you're wimping out on us?" And it's too bad. Well, there are pressures in liberal arts colleges, too: but there is freedom to move around...It's harder to really go some very different direction - at least it was back then - at MIT. Now, you've got a

School of Humanities that is really active and has considerable range. So, you're not a real weirdo if you decide to go in that direction, whereas back in the early 40's, if you didn't want to be a straight on engineer or scientist.

Herzbrun: Something was wrong.

Wick: You felt people question it.

Herzbrun: Did you feel any of that pressure? Where you starting to second guess yourself?

Wick: Oh, no. I knew I was happy with chemistry, but I sure pitied those undergraduates at MIT. (Laughs) Oh, gosh. I felt, oh, poor souls, what they've missed. But, I struggled along and I got my cum up to 3.5.

Herzbrun: Were you making some close friends?

Wick: Oh, sure. And living at the dorm was nice because you already had some friends there. We walked back and forth over the bridge. And then the Margaret Cheney Room which is still there - that was our haven. We would always eat lunch there. That's where the women students got to know each other.

Herzbrun: Was there a lot of socializing between males and females?

Wick: Oh, sure. Sure. Heck, all the guys in the lab, in your group, in your year, the classes you were in. Sure. But you needed a place to sort of, well...MIT was like a factory. (Laughs).

Herzbrun: What do you mean?

Wick: MIT is a much more human place now than what it used to be.

Herzbrun: Well, what was it like? That's really interesting.

Wick: Well, it's hard to describe. (Pause) Well...

Herzbrun: Was it like studies was all there was?

Wick: Yeah, and there was...It wasn't wrong, but the pressures were tremendous, that wasn't wrong either, but there was a lot of pressure. Everybody was in hurry to get done what they could get done. It was an interesting time to be in grad school because it was right after the war. The guys that were back...There was a much wider range of ages than now because most everybody had been in the service. They could hardly believe they were still alive. I mean, you know, they'd made it. They were alive and they could do what they wanted to do and, of course, the GI Bill was new and that made it possible... That was money that anybody who had been in the service knew they could have for education. And back then was when research grants first

began to be available. Professors had research grants and students could work for the professors and get paid.

Herzbrun: Is that what you did?

Wick: No, my dad paid my way.

Herzbrun: Yea for Dad.

Wick: Well, in the first year I had graduate courses and a couple at the senior year level, undergrad courses, but I never was aware of lots of teaching assistants or all that. Now, they may have been there but...certainly on a considerably smaller scale than now because the whole place was much smaller. And it was still kind of getting out from the war. I mean, MIT had certainly already been integral in...Well, the Radiation Lab, radar, and...it had been an integral part of our war effort. Everybody was proud of it - it had been a national resource. For a long time really up until the Vietnam War, that's when things went sour - when there was a war people didn't believe in. Whereas World War II - even if you were a pacifist, you knew that we had to fight, at least somebody had to fight. And if you were a pacifist you probably went off and worked for the Red Cross, did that sort of thing and didn't carry a gun. There was a unity, cohesiveness of purpose that was really a wonderful thing...

Herzbrun: Something you don't get nowadays.

Wick: No, that's what makes society all sort of at loose ends these days. Really, ever since Vietnam. Not that I am hoping for a world war or some evil force that needs to be overcome. I would not want to have that happen just to unite the country, but it was a kind of special time to be going to school because everything was kind of a new beginning. And there were many more opportunities for women as a result. During World War II when the guys had all gone, women began being able to move into jobs.

Herzbrun: Yeah, you had to fill in.

Wick: And that really was the beginning of a kind of modern progress, believe me. So, well, let's see...

Herzbrun: So you're back at MIT. And you just got your GPA up so you're not on probation anymore.

Wick: That's right, and I'm sliding along. I passed the qualifying exams. You had to take the qualifying exams in order to be allowed to really go on for a Ph.D.

Herzbrun: So when did you take the qualifiers, after your Masters or in the middle...?

Wick: Oh, I had my Masters already. Then there were the Ph.D. exams: there were the writtens and the orals.

Herzbrun: I've heard about those.

Wick: And I flunked them the first time and so had to do them again. And if you didn't pass them the second time, you know, you left with a Masters degree.

Herzbrun: So that's pressure taking them the second time.

Wick: But I finally made it. I finally made it and finished up in 1951. It took five years. Did I work every summer? I don't remember. It doesn't matter. And then in '51, Dr. Arthur Cope - he was the chairman of the chemistry department...I had done my research with him...asked me if I would stay on and help get a lot of research written up.

Herzbrun: On what? What was he researching?

Wick: He was in synthetic organic chemistry.

Herzbrun: Actually, I don't know what that means.

Wick: Well, organic synthesis - you know, how you make compounds of certain structures; they might be stereochemically important or what not. He was not particularly into trying to synthesize potentially biologically active compounds. But, that was back in the days when penicillin was first synthesized - Professor Sheehan was in on that. He was one of the new young faculty members the year I went to grad school.

You know, many of those things we take for granted nowadays, in terms of drugs and stuff...

Herzbrun: Tylenol?

Wick: No, but penicillin; antibiotics were just brand, brand, brand new. So, synthesis of things that might be useful was of great interest. But Dr. Cope had come to MIT from Columbia; during the war he had had a lot of students who had never had a chance to really write up all the research that had been done. He wanted to publish a bunch of things. The people who had done the research had gone on... (SIDE B)

So I would take the research notebooks that these guys had had plus any kinds of reports that they had written and the actual samples of things that they had made...(Laughs)

Herzbrun: In vials and things?

Wick: Yeah, sure...and pulled together what the significance of it was. It was very interesting. It was very good training - very good training. So I did that for...How long did I do that?

Herzbrun: I think about a year.

Wick: Do you have the years?

Herzbrun: A couple of years? '51 - '53.

Wick: Yeah, that's when I was a post-doc.

Herzbrun: So, then...?

Wick: Then...I was always looking for a job in the Boston area because I still wanted to keep Rockport my base.

Herzbrun: Sailing? Did you advantage of the MIT...did they have a sailing team?

Wick: Well, I did. Sure MIT did, but I did not do a lot of it there because I had a boat out here in Rockport and I did not want to use up my goof off time in town. But, when things got thick, I would walk down to the sailing pavilion and smell the fresh air. (Laughs)

Herzbrun: I guess the Charles River had fresh air back then?

Wick: Oh yes, and the small John Hancock building was the only tall building then. What building has the weather lights on it now?

Herzbrun: I think that's the Hancock building.

Wick: It's relatively...it's sort of shaped like this...and it's one of the shorter buildings now. It does not anywhere near compare to any of the present tall buildings.

Herzbrun: It's not the Hancock, maybe it's the Prudential. My it's the mini Prudential.

Wick: Well, anyway, it's now one of the shorter buildings. It's the taller of the shorter buildings. (Laughs) That was the tallest building then. The skyline was very, very different then. All those tall, square things were not there. So, I was looking for jobs.

Herzbrun: What did you want to do?

Wick: I wanted a chemistry job. Since I had been in synthetic organic, that was the kind of job I was looking for. I expect I saw a notice on the bulletin board about the job at Arthur D. Little.

Herzbrun: It's right up the street.

Wick: Yeah, it was the building right next to the Sloan School. I think MIT owns it now. Anyway, it was right there. So I interviewed and also the lab, the food lab, was over in Kendall Square. You know where you come out of the subway and there's a kind of a gray building, the Suffolk Building they called it...

The lab that I ended up working in was in the Suffolk Building. I went and interviewed. I remember coming back to the lab at MIT and telling my labmate, who was a Swiss post-doc about it. We were laughing over it. I said, "You know what they do? They smell things over there!" And really, it was fascinating. At ADL in the flavor lab, one of their big clients was...I can't remember if it was Maxwell House or Chase and Sanborn...it was General Foods, anyway. Coffee. People with educated noses really can give tremendous guidance to a company or a bunch of engineers who are developing a process: soft drinks, toothpaste, all manner of things. You have probably read about perfumers, people who concoct these wonderful perfumes. It's a truly very, very sophisticated, very expert kind of job. People get so that their noses really are the best guide. Well anyway, I went to work for ADL...

Herzbrun: Were you a sniffer?

Wick: No, I wasn't a sniffer. They hired me because I was a chemist. For instance, the first job I was on was for the Campbell Soup Company...

All their canned or most of their canned products - soup and stuff - all had beef extract in them. That was critical, I mean without beef extract that soup would not taste like anything. Beef extract is really the essence of bouillon; beef broth. But beef extract was expensive, it mostly all came from Australia.

And if they could understand what was in beef extract that gave it its, its...

Herzbrun: Beefiness.

Wick: Its beefiness. It would be a great thing to know. Well, that was a really fascinating project to be working on because beef extract - where they get it from is boiled meat. The fat gets skimmed off and you just sort of boil it away and boil it away and the beef extract is what's left.

You don't let it burn, but it's really the essence of the beef. Well, of course meat is protein - it's got everything in it. And then you cook it and all these chemical reactions are occurring. You know, it's biological material that's been cooked. Well, the possibilities, chemically, of what's in there are humongous. And then you needed people who were expert tasters and smellers to guide you...You know I could sit down as a chemist and I could figure out how you separate whatever that's left from protein and carbohydrate. You could work out some separation schemes, but how would you know which separate part was the place you needed to work on? Or did you need, if you divided into four parts, did you need A and B together to get the flavor quality?

Or did A just have it?

You know it boggled the mind. So you needed people, expert smellers and tasters, who were sophisticated at knowing how to test this. (Laughs) When you do this separation and you have this flask and there's a little smear of something brown in it, how do you test that? Well, it's ever so much more concentrated than it was in the original beef extract. So if you just tasted it itself, you would not necessarily know. So you needed that kind of expertise and it was fascinating the way they did it.

Herzbrun: You were doing that, right?

Wick: Well, it was the tasters and the smellers mostly that provided the guidance there. I was trying to figure out the chemistry and the separation part.

Herzbrun: Oh, you were figuring out A, B, C, and D.

Wick: Yeah, and I would join in on the tastings and the smellings to learn or try to learn. I would never have known how to approach it. You know...Beef broth feels more viscous in your mouth than just a glass of water.

But, if you measure the viscosity it's no more viscous than a glass of water.

Herzbrun: That's interesting.

Wick: It's the way it feels in your mouth. So, they knew this immediately. One of the key things is the mouth-feel aspect of beef extract and the other aspect of beef extract was the beef aroma.

Well we solved the mouth feel part of it, but the beef aroma part we never did. And I think now chemists are pretty good at it, but back then in the '50's...I mean analytical instrumentation was just beginning. All the war time advances in, what do you call it, pre-electronics I guess, were just beginning to be applied to analytical chemistry techniques. So gas chromatography was brand new and that was something that allowed you to separate something into...well, complex mixtures you could separate into many components. But it hadn't advanced enough back then. We knew we didn't have the answer and we figured it was because the compounds were so volatile. You know, they went puff up into the sky. (Laughs) Or they reacted with the oxygen in the air and changed.

Herzbrun: Oh, became something else?

Wick: Yeah, 'cause you know if you cook roast beef in the oven and you smell all that delicious aroma...and then you have cold roast beef, it's different. I mean, it's reminiscent of that original aroma, but that aroma...it's gone.

So, it was a very challenging kind of thing to work on - the volatile part, the (sniffs) smell part. Then there was the mouth-feel part. It turned out the mouth-feel part was caused by a bunch of nucleotides, you know, nucleic acid breakdown products. You know about the helical structure of nucleic acids.

...and how the four different - what do you call them- bases...each one of those is a nucleotide. Nonvolatile things like that are in all meat and by the time you cook something and get right down to what won't evaporate off, you're bound to find a lot of these. It turned out that that's really what was giving the...

Herzbrun: Mouth-feel...

Wick: ...the mouth-feel part. But the beef aroma part is still a challenge, though they understand it a lot better now because they have mass spectrometry, gas chromatography, and detectors are so much more sensitive. If you get a couple of milligrams of something, nowadays you can identify it, know the structure and everything. In fact, my whole Ph.D. thesis now would maybe be - I don't know - an afternoon's work. (Laughs)

Herzbrun: What was your thesis on?

Wick: Well, I was trying to synthesize a derivative of cyclooctatetraene, an eight-sided cyclic compound. The whole purpose behind it was to find out...Dr. Cope was interested in structures and the stability of eight carbon rings...
...and their configuration. It turned out, I got one step away from the compound, but then couldn't really repeat the synthesis reproducibly. I could do it once and get a little itty bit of it, but that compound really wasn't going to exist. (Laughs)
So then I had to stop that project...Oh yeah, that's why it took me, partly why it took me, five years because we stopped that. Then I changed and identified two or three compounds that had come about as side products in another synthesis that one of the other students had made. In his synthesis, I forget what major compound he was after, but he got that and then there were three or four other things that had been produced that they knew were pure compounds, but he did not have time to prove their structures.

So it ended up that my thesis really had to do with the identification of those structures. Nowadays each one of those might take you an afternoon cause you'd have it pure and you'd look at it through NMR and mass spec. There are instruments now that allow you to get at the structure that didn't exist then. So nowadays, chemists really have to be smart...you know, they have to be intellectually bright not just skilled people who can carry out techniques and study the details of something. So it's interesting. That was forty years ago and there's been a lot of progress. A lot of progress. So we were at ADL.

Herzbrun: Yeah, guess you worked there for four years?

Wick: Yeah. Another interesting project I worked on was...mayonnaise.

Herzbrun: Mayonnaise?

Wick: Oh, Miracle Whip, Miracle Whip! It turned out that there were batches of Miracle Whip that had a terrible taste and they couldn't figure out why and they needed somebody to look into it. So I learned all about mayonnaise and the

essential oils, the flavors, the pepper, and the things that go into it. They sent up samples of the ingredients and everything. And again, we had to depend on the noses, and...

Herzbrun: The sniffers!

Wick: ...the sniffers and the tasters to guide us...First you checked out the ingredients to see where maybe this, it was a kind of a wet, cardboardy taste, was.

Herzbrun: The bad batches?

Wick: The bad batches. And the sniffers and the tasters aimed us at the pepper oil, the essential oils. And that was fascinating. They sent us batches of the various pepper oils that they used to put the mayonnaise together. We studied that and it turned out that some of the pepper...There are two part of pepper: there's the essential oil in the pepper which you can distill off and then there's the compound that makes the red hot bite. (Laughs)

And the problem came in the essential oil. The pepper had been adulterated or maybe, I can't really remember if it was a bad batch...

Herzbrun: Of pepper?

Wick: Yeah, in other words they were able to go back to the source of the ingredients. It really was a neat project because those smellers and tasters, they're wonderful. I could distill the essential oil out of the pepper and they could tell you. And then the stuff I would isolate, oh yeah...The Miracle Whip people sent jars of mayonnaise, without any pepper that didn't have the essential oil. It was mayonnaise all except for that flavor so we could then put the isolates that we got...back into this bland mayonnaise...

Herzbrun: I was going to say that wouldn't taste like anything.

Wick: ...and we could reproduce it. And then we sent some of the isolate down to the company and they made some mayonnaise with it...

Herzbrun: Did it taste horrible?

Wick: ...and there it was. There it was - the bad tasting stuff. That was interesting. That was real interesting.

Herzbrun: That's really neat because those two products are still, you know, they're big names.

Wick: Yeah, right. It's kind of your household stuff. (Laughs)

Herzbrun: It's like Windex or something.

Wick: Sure,...so, I got an appreciation for how fascinating research could be...on a very kind of down to earth practical basis like food products that everybody eats everyday; or that the food industry is trying to put together and make good products for us. So that was interesting.

Herzbrun: So that was when you got interested in...

Wick: Well, that was how I got the food interest. I was just a chemist who happened to be working on food products. I was at ADL for four years and then...well...it looked like there weren't going to be that many more interesting projects and I thought I would arrange to move from the food lab of ADL to the analytical laboratory. One day the phone rings in the lab and it's Prof. Sam Goldblith at MIT who was in the Food Technology department. I had known him briefly...one of his grad students used to live at 120 Bay State Road. I knew Sam, some, but I didn't know him real well. He consulted for ADL, and he heard that I was going to move from the flavor lab to the analytical lab. (Laughs) He's a very blunt guy. He said, "This is Sam Goldblith. You have rocks in your head if you throw away your past four years of experience. Why don't you come down and talk to us?" (Laughs)

Herzbrun: That's blunt!

Wick: So I said, "Oh, sure Sam, I'd be glad to come down and talk to you." The other thing about ADL was...I mean, I was perfectly happy working there, but one of the drawbacks was that if you wanted to go to, say an American Chemical Society meeting, unless you were giving a paper - which you probably weren't because you were working on a project that really was, it was for a company it wasn't really for public knowledge - you couldn't go to a meeting unless you were giving a paper. And you couldn't go unless they paid for it, even if you wanted to pay your own way - that was just the policy. And that was a little constricting because it is fun to go to an ACS meeting and see all your old buddies and find out they're all the gang you knew at MIT - they were working all around, at Du Pont, you know lots of places in the chemistry world or in academia. Well anyway, I went down and had lunch with Sam Goldblith and Prof. Proctor who was head of the department. And at that time they didn't have...There wasn't a chemist in the department of Food Technology.

Herzbrun: That's Course 20?

Wick: 20. And it became Nutrition and Food Science and then it became Applied Biology and then it was wiped out a couple of years ago. But they said how about coming back to MIT and being a post-doc and Research Associate. There wasn't a chemist in the department and here we were on the verge of all these, you know, all kinds of instrumentation being developed that would really allow you to work on food related things.

So, I thought about that and then I went down and I talked to Dr. Cope who had been my boss in the Chem department to ask, "What do you think about that? Is that a good thing to do? I mean, had Food Technology got a future at MIT or am

I just moving to some place that would be a dead end?" He said, "Well, Emily, I'll call up the Dean and find out." (Laughs) Oh, it was wonderful. Now, the Dean's name? (Dean of Science, George Harrison) Oh, he was a wonderful guy. This would have been in '54. Anyway, Dr. Cope called him up and Cope came out and found me down in the labs. He said, "It's all right if you go to work there." (Laughs)

Herzbrun: That's because you had a guy on your side.

Wick: But that was wonderful and that was my experience, that's still my experience about MIT people - great integrity - which is my experience about Mount Holyoke people, too. Great integrity. They care about you as a person and a fellow worker and everybody does what they can to help a person understand their situation. So, I left ADL and came back to the Food Tech department. And that was interesting, there were a wonderful bunch of guys over there in Food Tech...It was made up of engineers really, and biologists, interested in applications and knowledge of food products or food ingredients. Before you eat it...(Laughs)...before it's made into a food product, while it's in a food product, and somebody eats it. You know it's the whole gamut. Applied Biology is really the name that's most appropriate to that department. As time went on as I worked there, and particularly after Dr. Scrimshaw came, it got even wider because he brought in medical doctors and nutritionists in a way that hadn't been there before.

So it was a fantastic group of people. Tremendously different in their professional fields.

Herzbrun: How big was it, how big was the department?

Wick: Oh, not very big. And during most of the time that I was there it was a graduate department, I mean there were just graduate students. Oh, a few undergrads, but that wasn't the focus.

Herzbrun: And you were the only chemist?

Wick: At first I was. How many faculty were there? At its largest, once the Clinical Research Center and all that got in, there were maybe twenty. Back in the early days, twelve to fifteen. And everybody different. Engineers do think differently from pure scientists. You know, you could observe people just approach projects in different ways.

Which made it a very interesting place to be, but it also meant it was a difficult group of people to get to meld together. And you know at MIT the pressure is always on faculty. You have got to get your research grants and you have to have good students and you have to succeed. So the pressure is all just to funnel you in your own way, under great pressure. The nature of food is such that there would be more than one faculty member that would collaborate, but it's a complicated mix of people. That was its fascination, but it also, I think in the end, was its downfall because it was hard to have a cohesive group of

people to care about the whole as much as they were pressured to care about the parts. I'm sorry that the department was disbanded because...it made an important contribution. Maybe it would have existed longer if it had been called the Center for Nutrition and Food Science, or Center for Applied Biology...

Herzbrun: It was all in the name. (Laughs)

Wick: Yeah, but it was a loose agglomeration of people who were very different and all very talented. So it was a great thing to have been in that department.

Herzbrun: What were some of the things you worked on?

Wick: Well, tomato - fresh tomato flavor and aroma, the chemistry of that; bananas - United Fruit Company, Campbell Soup Company, again. The NIH had a section back then that was interested in this sort of research. Also - fish protein concentrate which is very nutritious. It's just pure protein but it's very hard for it not to have a residual kind of smell, fishy leftover aroma. I was very fortunate...I had some very wonderful Japanese post-docs. This was not too long after the war. Prof. Goldblith - during World War II was a prisoner of war in the Philippines. He was one of those prisoners on that Bataan Death March, you know, where they were just marched around and most of them died.

Herzbrun: How old of a guy was he?

Wick: Well, he's alive. He retired not too long ago. He's about 72, 73 and still has an office at MIT. But here he had been a prisoner of the Japanese, but he got to know Japanese and he came back to MIT in the department and his first graduate student was Yaichi Ayukawa. In fact Yaichi Ayukawa died just before last Christmas. He turned out to be a very distinguished scientist. He was a member of the MIT Corporation for many years and was tremendously active in MIT-Japan relationships and also USA-Japan relationships and cooperation. A wonderful, wonderful guy. He was Sam's grad student and he was still around when I came and there were lots of Japanese connections. These post-docs - Japanese chemists who already were Ph.D.'s - wanted to spend some time at MIT. And I luckily, got some of them and what I needed desperately were good chemists to work on these projects because I needed chemists. I was about 35 about that time and at that time the rules about tenure were...There was an age by which if you hadn't gotten tenure you had to leave. Now was it 38 or 39? Anyway, I didn't have much time.

Herzbrun: So you had to get cracking.

Wick: Yeah. And you know, I didn't have time to grow my own chemists. I mean, I had some excellent grad students, but they weren't chemists. They were food science grad students. So I would never have succeeded if it hadn't been for these Japanese who had come over. Wonderful folks. They came one at a time, but they would stay at least a year and they kind of knew each other. They had all shared the same professor under whom they got their Ph.D. And they have been dear, dear friends to this day.

Herzbrun: You still keep in touch with them?

Wick: Yeah. In the spring of '89 I went over to Japan. They had been trying to get me to come for years and years, but I never had time until after I retired. And then there were some projects that I wanted to finish. I retired in '86 and it wasn't until '89 that I really got organized to go to Japan.

And oh, it was wonderful. You know they are now professors and deans of medical schools and everything. Really, it was wonderful because they are just the same. People are just the same...I mean their personalities (Laughs)...the talkative ones are still talking; the quiet ones are still quiet...(Laughs)

Herzbrun: The obnoxious ones are still obnoxious.

Wick: (Laughs) Yeah, right, but it was just wonderful. It really illustrated, again, to my mind one of the great attributes, good attributes of the academic profession. Because, over the years you get to know so many students who then graduate or become post-docs who then move on. And they move on all around the world. They're your friends forever, they send their students to you...It's a great big family kind of thing. You go off to a professional meeting to a chemical society in some foreign country or some city you've never been in and you register and within ten minutes you've bumped into somebody you know. They are a mutual friend of a mutual friend and you know, the work they do. It's a big friendly happy family all around the world. It's so rewarding really. They were marvelous to me. Lots of fun. (Laughs) I would never have succeeded at MIT without them and they figured, well gee, if it hadn't been for their years in the USA they would never have been able to go back home and succeed so well. So it's kind of a mutual benefit society and that's what happens at MIT and at other institutions. I mean other universities. It happens all the time, but to my mind it's so much more interesting than working in industry where you'd have to keep secrets from people.

Herzbrun: It's more cut-throat.

Wick: Yeah, you couldn't share all your knowledge. Whereas in the academic world you do and you learn from the other guy, too. And that's a big difference. Now of course lots of people are stimulated by industrial research so there are a lot of different ways to go.

So I got tenure.

Herzbrun: What year did you get tenure in?

Wick: I think it was '63...or '62.

Herzbrun: So you were an assistant professor by then?

Wick: Well, I got...that's right, I was a post-doc and then...

Herzbrun: Did you get paid as a post-doc?

Wick: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Herzbrun: Were you living close by MIT?

Wick: After I moved out of 120 Baystate Road, I lived on Marlborough Street...with another post-doc in chemistry, Marion Burg. Then soon after I finished up my Ph.D. I moved to Rockport. The family sold the house over on the other shore because dad decided he didn't want to retire here and live year around. But I knew I wanted to live here and so, well I knew a lot of people by that time, and I knew there were folks just down the street from here who rented apartments in their house.

And so I rented an apartment and I lived just down the street for twelve years. I heard about this house in 1963 and bought in 1963. So I commuted...

Herzbrun: Did you have a car or did you take the train?

Wick: When I worked at ADL in Kendall Square I took the train. We always had very good train service that was better than it is now.

Herzbrun: It's still pretty good now.

Wick: Yeah, but it took you an hour and ten or fifteen minutes. Back then the commuting times...With the express, you'd leave Rockport and you'd be in North Station in 59 minutes. (Laughs)

And then the lab at ADL moved out to Acorn Park which is on Route 2, kind of out by Alewife Brook Parkway. Then I had to drive. The traffic was nothing then.

Herzbrun: Really? I can't even imagine that.

Wick: Route 128 had just been opened up and it wasn't a tough deal. You could get there in an hour. When I worked in the Food Tech Department, I used to be able to leave here in my car at 8 o'clock and I would be at my desk at MIT by 9.

Herzbrun: What, did you fly?

Wick: No, no, you didn't have to. There wasn't traffic. It made all the difference in the world. And one of the reasons that helped convince me to move out to Mount Holyoke in 1973 to work was that it was getting to be just too much hassle commuting to MIT. I could see the day coming when I'd figure I would probably need to have a pad in town as well as a place out here just because of the traffic.

Herzbrun: Tenure. You just got tenure.

Wick: So I got tenure.

Herzbrun: Just in time.

Wick: Yeah. And I remember Sam Goldblith again...Oh, I know. The way I got appointed to the faculty was...let's go back a way...I was a post-doc. Then Prof. Proctor, who was chairman of the department, had a heart attack up in his office and died. Sam was made the acting chair of the department. Sam was chairman until Scrimshaw came, which was a couple of years later. And Sam got me appointed an assistant professor. Once I was on the faculty I had to put up or shut up. I was about 35 and I had this limited time to do what I could. I think,

there had never been a woman come up for tenure before. You know, Sam said, "I just don't know what's going to happen. I just don't know what's going to happen. They could turn you down because you're a woman, they could do anything." This was long before there was any kind of Affirmative Action. And besides, we just never thought of stuff like that. But it worked out. By that time Dr. Scrimshaw was the chairman and when he told me it had gone through, he said, "Everybody said you didn't have many publications, but then they said well, how could she because she was only appointed three or four years ago." So, I guess I made it because I had done about as well as you could do under the circumstances. So then, since I had tenure, and I knew I had a job at MIT, that was when I could buy a house and make some plans. I had some really great guys, as grad students. We had a wonderful time. But then, I had always been interested in the students. As I say, I had always pitied the undergraduate students which is kind of arrogant on my part, I guess. But I did. Once you got tenure, MIT sent around a notice to the faculty asking what committees might they be interested in serving on. You didn't need to return it if you didn't want to. I checked that I was interested in the Committee on Student Environment.

And that's how I met Kenneth Wadleigh who was the Dean of Students at that time. I got on this committee and began to hear about the life of undergraduates at MIT. I guess I was on that committee two or three years. And then I think at just about that time, the mid-60's or the early 60's, they knew that Mrs. McCormick was interested in or willing to give more money to build the second part of McCormick Hall - the part toward the grad house.

Herzbrun: When was the first part built?

Wick: Not too much earlier. I don't know exactly, but not too much earlier. Mrs. McCormick was a wonderful lady. Boy, MIT owes her a lot and the women students do, too. She graduated from MIT in 1902. Before that I think she went to finishing school. She did everything her parents wanted her to do as a lady-like young lady in Boston, blue blood type. Then she wanted to get a degree in biology and she did. Then she married one of the Cyrus McCormick's sons. He was the McCormick of the McCormick reaper: rich, rich, rich. And then her husband got ill, and was essentially ill until he died - I don't know how long. This meant that she was left with the management of the fortune - not the reaper

company - but she was a rich lady with lots of money and she did wonderful things with it. She helped support the research at the Worcester Foundation that ended up with the Pill. She was a friend of Margaret Sanger and worked for the vote for women. And you know, women got the vote about the year I was born. It's not that long ago. Just 70 years ago. My mother could not vote until she was 40 years old, 35 years old or something. That's very hard for me to understand, too. But...

Herzbrun: It's hard for me.

Wick: Women have come a long, long way. Mrs. McCormick also gave money to a program for women at the Stanford Medical School in California. She's done wonderful things with the money she had. And then, she gave lots of money to the Boston Symphony as well as to MIT in lots of ways, and then left the residue of her estate to MIT. She did not know me as an individual. We would see her: she would be over at the dorm or some place. She was this little lady in a black dress with a black hat on. And very opinionated...Mrs. Alvord...Well, she wasn't a house mother at 120 Baystate Road, but she was the grown-up who lived there...was a good, good friend to us all. She used to go to Friday afternoon symphony concerts with Mrs. McCormick. Whenever the dorm needed something, Mrs. A or Mrs. Compton would get some help from Mrs. McCormick.

(TAPE 2)

Mrs. McCormick took a great deal of interest in the design of the new dorm. And it turned out much more luxurious than it would have if she hadn't done that. I got in on some of the designing of the newer part. It wasn't that we wanted to make it a place that was uncomfortable at all, but more practical. And more appropriate, really, for use by young folks who use a place hard. (Laughs) But that's all right.

It's nice to have nice things around, but you don't make it quite as grand. Nobody was going to complain because, after all, here was this wonderful opportunity to get more living space for women students. MIT knew that if there was more space for women, more women would want to come. Because over the years...back in the early days, you had to be truly driven professionally to want to go to MIT because they didn't offer you a place to live. You just had to do it yourself. For a long time women didn't have living accommodations that were anywhere near what a young person would expect going to a college. So, we knew that there'd be many more women who could consider MIT as a place to go to school if it had a really decent living accommodations. This was before Affirmative Action; this was not a matter of getting more women because someone was telling you you should. We just knew there were going to be more women out there who wanted to come, but wouldn't unless there was a decent living place where they would get treated like they were "for real. So, when MIT knew that there were going to be more women - there had to be - that's when Kenneth Wadleigh came to me and said would I be a half-time Associate Dean in the Dean of Student's Office - because they knew there'd be

more women. But from the beginning, I was not to be "Dean of Women". I was an "Associate Dean of Student Affairs" who happened to be a woman. Cause we never ever said that the women had to just talk to me or that I just had to talk to women students. But it did seem to make sense that maybe there could be a woman in the Dean's office who could look at things in the Institute from a woman's point of view. For instance, some of the things we did. Dorothy Bowe was the secretary in the office and, really, she's marvelous. She was really the Dean. She was the best friend of all the students - and had just the right personality. One of the women students, I should remember her name but I can't call it up right now, was a marvelous tennis player and always had been. She was so much better than any of the other co-eds that happened to play tennis that it was not a challenge for her to play them. She wanted to be able to practice with the guys - with the tennis team. Well, it took quite a lot of talking about this. Why can't she practice with the guys? "Well, because she's not on the team."

Herzbrun: She's a girl.

Wick: Yeah, so there were a lot of things like that. Nobody was really trying to be mean to the women students, but they just weren't in the picture. People just weren't aware; they knew women were there, but nobody ever really in a practical way helped them get integrated into all the activities. And most of the projects were just that simple, just that simple. Like making sure that the girls could practice on this team or that team or get melded in and be part of the real part of all the activities at MIT. That's what we did. We also did a lot of advising of kids who wanted to go to med school and I got to know a lot of guys as well as women. It was just another part of the Dean of Students Office. Paul Gray was in the office half-time as the person who looked after the freshman class. That was fun. We had a wonderful time in that office. Ken Wadleigh is a great guy.

Herzbrun: What position was he in?

Wick: He was the Dean of Student Affairs.

Herzbrun: What I was curious about is that in your notes I noticed that there was a big dilemma that you were worried you'd have to give up your research and...

Wick: Oh yeah, to spend half time - I didn't mind giving it up so much but it was like having two full-time jobs. You had to keep getting money to pay your grad students, and research grants, and stuff. It really ate into the time.

Herzbrun: I bet it did.

Wick: But, as a result I really got interested in the administrative side of MIT. Then McCormick Hall got built and it became the late '60's and early '70's and all the upheaval about the divestment of the Instrumentation Lab rose. All the upheavals of the late '60's, early '70's. Vietnam. There were mob scenes, kind of, in the Building 7 lobby. That was a very, very hard time for everybody. The

protesters - it was just as hard on them in their own way as it was on the people who kept trying to keep some kind of stability. You know, it was really a hard, hard upheaval time. And I was in the Dean's Office then and had a chance - because there would be meetings and stuff, MIT wide meetings that I would get invited to - to begin to take an interest in educational, academic institutions as a whole and how they work. By that time since I'd been primarily responsible, looking out for the women students and the policies about them, I also got interested in or was thinking more about women's education as education. How did it differ? Should it differ from anybody's education? I never meant to ever leave MIT, but in 1973 when a friend of mine at Mount Holyoke called up and said, "I am on this search committee for a new Dean of Faculty and some of us wondered whether you'd put your name in as a candidate," I thought, "Well, I don't want to do that. I'm happy here. I don't want to do that." Then she said think about it.

Herzbrun: It couldn't hurt.

Wick: (Laughs) It's funny because I didn't really think about it for awhile. Then over the next couple of days I thought I'm really not interested in going out there to work but I am interested in how colleges and universities are organized and how you try to get them to succeed and make them thrive. By that time, I'd also had lots of contact with people at Wellesley in connection with the exchange. The student exchange started while I was in the Dean's office.

Herzbrun: Did that start because of you?

Wick: Not because of me. No. In fact, I was one of the skeptics. That was in Howard Johnson's administration. It was a good idea because it would bring more women on the campus but, on the other hand, the way the idea was launched made it seem as though the co-eds just weren't there. The co-eds' attitude, with which I sympathized tremendously, was, "Well, listen, we're already here at MIT. Get more of us, don't just import people from Wellesley." Nothing against Wellesley, but it was hard. Nobody meant any ill against the co-eds, it just was one of those thoughtless insensitivities to the way the MIT women students would feel about it. Though, basically it was a good idea.

Herzbrun: In the end, it was good.

Wick: Yes, but you have to sort of work it out in a way that everybody is happy about it and nobody feels threatened by it. Or patronized, you know. so I said to myself, "Well you know it would be fun to hear about how Mount Holyoke is organized and what sort of institution it is now." Oh, I'd been back for reunions and I had been on some alumnae committees, but I hadn't really been out to Mount Holyoke or paid any attention to anything in particular. So I called up my friend and I said, "If you guys want to waste your time by having me come out (laughs) and look at the place, I wouldn't mind coming out." They said that was good and I did go out. It was fascinating because I had no intention of ever leaving MIT, but it was fascinating. The president of Mount Holyoke then, David Truman, is a really fascinating guy. He had been at Columbia before that. I met

all kinds of groups of faculty across the board: in music and arts and humanities and science and economics and the whole range and I didn't think I would be their first choice at all. But it turned out I was. So, I had to decide. So, I went out and I talked again. The challenge and the fascination of the thing...And then the fact that commuting from Rockport was getting harder and harder and harder made me decide, well, I'll leave MIT and go out and be the chief academic officer out there. That's what I did in 1973. And I don't regret it, because it was a smaller place - a place where you could not escape from having an influence on the place for good or ill. And I was also, by that time, really interested in the women's education aspect. And if there ever was an opportunity, you know, if it really is special, why not go to a woman's college and work there?

Herzbrun: It makes sense to me.

Wick: Yeah. I really think we need to have women's colleges. I am not against co-ed places at all, but I think the choice needs to be there. And for some folks it makes all the difference in the world.

Herzbrun: Do you think there should be all male colleges?

Wick: Well, the guys don't seem to know the difference.

Herzbrun: They're clueless.

Wick: I think if this were an ideal world or if we were more civilized, or if society had progressed further along, there would be no use at all for women's colleges. But we're not there yet. I think women's colleges can provide a really good experience for folks. You can get your self confidence together. If you're not totally directed in a particular way when you go off to college, you can go to an excellent school - the education you get is as good as you get anywhere else - but you can experiment around in a variety of fields without pressure. There isn't any question of whether a woman can do the job or not. Whether it's the newspaper, building scenery in the theater, whatever, a woman does it. And nobody makes any big old fuss about it. There is never a question of, oh well, women don't usually do that...The faculty are about 50:50 men and women, so there are a lot of women in the professions. They're right there for people to talk to. MIT's done a lot...MIT is great at the way the numbers of women on faculty have increased and so has the number of women students. I think MIT's done a marvelous job. It's a great place, but it's not the only kind of place there is. There are a lot of different kinds of people in the world. I used to love to talk with the students at Mount Holyoke who had gone for a semester or year, say to Williams or Dartmouth or wherever. By the time they came back, were they ever wise in the ways of the world and of people: the way guys tend to react and the way girls tend to react to just ordinary circumstances, you know. They'd tell the funniest stories...There was this one girl who was a star at everything; she could do anything. Anything she was interested in she could do very, very well. She had gone up to Williams and she was interested in theater as a sideline so she wanted to get active. Well, they wouldn't let her work on

the scenery. The girls can't use the power tools. She said what do you mean girls can't use power tools?

Herzbrun: What year was this?

Wick: This was not too long ago, I mean, some time in the late '70's. It's different at MIT...MIT is a kind of rough and ready place where if you go in a lab you're expected to do whatever the guys do and there's a lot more things to build and wire and do that sort of stuff. You don't notice it so much at MIT as you would at another kind of school where the courses they take are not science. Maybe a person will have one science course or two whereas at MIT you're mostly doing something like science. There are still a lot of stereotypic expectations about what women do and what guys do, but it's getting better. Unless you have a lot of self-confidence already you can be dampened down if you're a girl in a co-ed situation. Nobody's trying to isolate the sexes or anything, that's not what women's colleges are about. It's the atmosphere in which you live. Most of the kids who go to a place like Mount Holyoke are looking for a good school, a liberal arts college, not too big. Maybe they like the location. It isn't so much the women versus co-ed question. It's not until they're there awhile, by junior or senior year, that they're aware of the difference and the pros and the cons. It's a very interesting thing. We need both co-ed and women's colleges. I'm hoping for the day, it won't be in my lifetime, it will be a few more generations before we can go all co-ed and not lose, I think. I don't know how you feel, but I feel we've backslid. Progress for women has backslid.

Herzbrun: You think?

Wick: Oh, yeah.

Herzbrun: You may be right. Luckily, I've always been in an environment like MIT...

Wick: Well, you're not going to suffer from it. No. And a lot of young women won't feel it because the environment they're in is supportive. They'll just go on and they won't be stopped. Maybe I'm just narrow minded, but I think a lot of women who go to big state universities are pressured to be pom pom girls or whatever. They don't get enough support to do other things. I don't mind a person being a pom pom girl as long as it doesn't become the be all and end all.

Herzbrun: It's like my dad always says, when I would always say I think it would be neat to be stewardess, he would say, "Don't be a stewardess - be the pilot."

Wick: Exactly.

Herzbrun: Don't be a nurse, be the doctor.

Wick: Be whatever you want to be. That's exactly what my brother was telling me: go get your Ph.D. don't stop now. Get yourself organized so you can have

a maximum of choices. I guess what I'm saying is that the place of women's colleges is to give that kind of support, to point out the tremendous options, all these people are doing all these things. Don't be persuaded that society dictates what the stereotype is. So, it's fascinating. It really is interesting.

Herzbrun: So you went back at Mount Holyoke.

Wick: Yeah, and that was very interesting.

Herzbrun: Were you also teaching at that point?

Wick: No, no. Because by that time, well, if I had taught at Mount Holyoke it would be introductory organic chemistry. I was out of date on organic chemistry by then. In the research at MIT, I was off in a kind of specialized area. I didn't even have the modern vocabulary. Things are called by different names. What I did was I watched over a lab one day a week and that way I got to know the kids in chemistry. I would go over and sit in the class and try to get updated on the vocabulary and what was going on. I would go to the chem department seminars when I could. If I had taught the students would not have gotten their money's worth. I didn't have time to really spend the time on chemistry to bone up on it; that wasn't my prime responsibility. I was more worrying about what did the English department need and what did the Classics department need and where are we going to find the faculty and where are we going to find the money to do this project and that project and all. It really was fascinating. There's nothing like colleges. The combination of the young folks, the students and the faculty members. It's really a fascinating thing to try to make it all work and stay strong.

Herzbrun: I guess you would be in charge if you were making sure all the departments have what they need.

Wick: Yeah, right. So, it is really a very interesting job. I kept in touch with people at MIT and still do. Mostly on Alumni/ae Association things now. then they asked me to be on the Chemistry Department Visiting Committee...

Herzbrun: MIT?

Wick: Yes, and that was very interesting. I was on the Biology Visiting Committee, too, for a while and the Dean of Student Affairs Office Visiting Committee for a while. That's fun. I was on the Corporation for a time.

Herzbrun: What does that mean?

Wick: The MIT Corporation is the Board of Governor's of MIT, the trustees of MIT. Yeah, that was very interesting. So...

Herzbrun: You got to keep in touch with the MIT folk.

Wick: Yeah.

Herzbrun: So you were Dean of Faculty for awhile.

Wick: Yeah, from '73 till '79 or something like that, or '80, almost '80. And then we got a new president in '79 and she asked me to become her special assistant for long range planning.

Herzbrun: What does that mean?

Wick: Well, when I was Dean, I just never had enough information. I didn't really know the history of what had been going on. Or planning for the future: what should we be worried about in terms of, oh it could be anything from the curriculum to student admissions, to the library, to space needs and all that. And that's what long range planning was. And that was interesting. A guy in the history department at Mount Holyoke became the Dean of Faculty after me. It's interesting that things that we planned for when I was long range planning are now coming to pass because we were really working towards a fund drive. Colleges are always raising money. Periodically you have to have humongous big capital fund drives. We knew that Mount Holyoke was going to need a humongous big one like all the schools have had. MIT has just finished one. Everybody's just finishing one. But, in order to set up for that you really need a lot of background information. You need to work with the departments to find out what their goals are for the next ten to fifteen years - how they see themselves fitting in with the world at large and all. So there was a lot of research to do and you really needed someone who kind of knew the departments and the background of the college to do this to bring it all together. So it was an interesting job. It put together the foundation for a capital fund drive and the renovation of buildings all around the campus. All that has just been finished. There has been a new addition on the library, half the buildings have been redone. The capital fund drive they just finished came in about fifteen million more than they had planned. So, it's been fun. I go back to visit and walk through the buildings. We thought, back in 1982, "Gee could we ever do this?"

Herzbrun: And there they are.

Wick: And there they are. It's done. It's very interesting. This kind of process goes on all the time, always, and always will. And it's fun to be part of it.

Herzbrun: Planning for the future? What else did you plan for?

Wick: Oh, well, I don't know. Some of the other things were to upgrade scientific equipment and to computerize the campus and make sure that in the dorms students can have their own computers. I was back at Mount Holyoke earlier this week wandering around the new addition to the library and an old building that's been renovated into the academic computer center. It's sort of like what happened at MIT when Project Athena got started.

Herzbrun: When was that?

Wick: I'm not sure how long ago, really, since I was working at Mount Holyoke. The same sorts of things have happened at MIT with new buildings and all but on a different scale, a scale analogous and appropriate to the nature of each institution. I read in the newspapers and the "Chronicle of Higher Education", a newspaper that comes out every two weeks, about higher education. I read and think I'm so glad that I don't have to solve these problems that they have to solve now.

Herzbrun: "Glad I got out when I did?"

Wick: Because it takes a lot of creativity. And what's been hard, hard on the colleges and universities, I mean, the birth rate dropped so. During the baby boom, institutions expanded but then suddenly the population dropped way off. And the nature of the population is changing so greatly. And the nature of the high school preparation has changed so much.

Herzbrun: That's true.

Wick: MIT is affected, though not as much as some other schools. MIT has always gotten really the cream. It's a very special population and a very able special population. But even they noticed that preparation was different and that they have to therefore teach things differently. Oh, boy, just the fact that young folks now don't read and write the way they used to. That meant, particularly if you're teaching literature or something like that...Well, it doesn't matter what course you teach...people have to communicate clearly.

Herzbrun: That's always a plus.

Wick: Yeah, right, or else they're never going to get anywhere. It's scary reading the papers about the proportion of folks who are really essentially illiterate.

Herzbrun: That's terrible.

Wick: And the deterioration of the public school system is terrible because that's where people can really fall behind. Every citizen ought to have the same chance of getting a fundamental, basic education. You shouldn't have to ante up extra money to go to a private school.

Herzbrun: Yeah, I went to a public school.

Wick: I wouldn't want to change that experience for anything. Where did you go to public school?

Herzbrun: Sharon, Massachusetts.

Wick: Oh, did you? I've got a niece and her family who live down in Canton.

Herzbrun: Oh, yeah. I was on the gymnastics team and they were our big rivals. Canton Bulldogs.

Wick: Yeah, there are still some good schools, but it's harder and harder for teachers. My niece and her husband are both high school teachers. Laura teaches chemistry at Wellesley High and Richard teaches science and chemistry at Weymouth High. Wellesley's a well off community. So Wellesley High is far better off than Weymouth, but, oh, what teacher's are asked to do nowadays with no support. Laura doesn't suffer for equipment and stuff, but sometimes the attitude about learning is not really prime. It's bad. Well so and so should get an A whether they did the work or not, whereas at Weymouth they are so poor, poor and the budgets have been cut way back and the state aid is not there. And the number of teachers in the school has been cut way down.

Herzbrun: It's really a shame because the kids are the ones who suffer.

Wick: They suffer, absolutely. And it doesn't matter how good a teacher is there's a certain limit to the number of kids you can have in a class and still do a job of teaching. It's sad. And it just kind of does the whole country in because if you have a bunch of people who never really get educated, they're not going to be able to get decent jobs.

Herzbrun: Exactly.

Wick: So, it's awful. There I was in grade school and high school during a depression that was far worse than what we have now, but I got a real good education.

Herzbrun: It doesn't make sense.

Wick: It means we're not really keeping our minds on the ball in this country.

Herzbrun: Maybe things will get straightened out.

Wick: Oh, I hope. The trouble is things usually have to get worse. If only the pendulum would stay somewhere in the middle instead of going way off here and then zoom way off there.

Herzbrun: Yeah, that's how it works though. There are always highs and lows.

Wick: Oh yeah, that's right. Unfortunately, that's human nature I guess. I think things will get better, but there are going to be whole bunch of young folks who get caught in the squeeze.

Herzbrun: How long were you at Mount Holyoke?

Wick: From '73 until '86.

Herzbrun: What made you decide...

Wick: And then I retired. I worked at Mount Holyoke just about as long as I worked at MIT.

Herzbrun: '86 was time to...

Wick: Well, I was 65 and I figured why not. I enjoyed working tremendously and I would not have wanted to have worked any less. But on the other hand, gee, it's great to have time to do all the things that you don't have time to do when you're working.

Herzbrun: What have you been doing? Sailing?

Wick: Oh, you can travel, you can read books. You know, books you don't have to read. And you can spend a long time reading the newspaper if you want to.

Herzbrun: You can sleep late.

Wick: You can go out and walk around the shore and see what kind of ducks are out there and bird watch and take hikes. You can do all kinds of things. And it's lots of fun.

Herzbrun: You can visit your family.

Wick: Sure it's great.

Herzbrun: Where are they all at now?

Wick: Well, a sister and cousins in Ohio and nieces and nephews in this part of the country, more or less. So, quite a number of them come in the summer around here.

Herzbrun: This would be great in the summer.

Wick: Let's see, I went to Japan that time. And I went to Kenya bird watching.

Herzbrun: Wow, just because...

Wick: Well, I went with a friend. And then on an Elderhostel program we went to Spain where the theme was Romanesque Art. In Spain in the Catalonia area, the part near Barcelona; it kind of backs up towards...France...There were a lot of old Romanesque buildings there. We stayed in a hotel in Barcelona. They took us by bus to many little towns. Some of them were up in the hills; some of them were down by the Mediterranean. It is fascinating, you know, to travel around and see places. Learn about history. And then we went to Costa Rica to watch birds and nature and stuff. And then this past winter we went to Egypt. We took a cruise on the Nile.

That was fascinating.

Herzbrun: I can imagine.

Wick: I expected it to be interesting but I was surprised how really, truly fascinating it was. It had a combination of geography where there would be these dry, dry, dry deserts and mountains and then, right near the river on either side, there are green, green, green palm trees and just lush greenness. And then this huge big river that really provides the lifeline for that country and then all these ancient temples and tombs reflected the civilization - a very sophisticated civilization back there 1500, 2000 years and more BC.

Those guys knew what they were doing way back then. We have electronics and stuff, but we're not any smarter. And I'm sure that's true if you go to China or India. There were a lot of very sophisticated civilizations way back.

Herzbrun: You've been all over.

Wick: Not all over. I want to go to Greece. I haven't been to Greece.

Herzbrun: Would you ever go to Australia.

Wick: Sometime yeah.

Herzbrun: It's a long trip.

Wick: It's a long, long way and I would like to get there, but it's not tops on my list.

Herzbrun: You could find out about beef.

Wick: Yeah. (Laughs) I could.

Herzbrun: Maybe they figured it out.

Wick: Well, I think they know. Protein hydrolysates. The food business does all right. I think they figured, I don't know what they figure, but...

Herzbrun: They figured something.

Did you, you never got married?

Wick: No.

Herzbrun: It didn't seem like you had time.

Wick: Oh, I never met anybody who really...

Herzbrun: Could keep up with you or something?

Wick: No, no, no...that was more interesting than what I was doing.

Herzbrun: That's a good attitude. So many people nowadays think you're not complete unless you have a significant other and I think that's bogus.

Wick: Oh, I think that's baloney. You know, I think it's fine if people get married. There are a lot of people who meet the right people and...

Herzbrun: Your parents.

Wick: Right. And they have wonderful lives, but that doesn't mean you have to do it that way. And certainly the last thing you want to do is look upon it as some sort of refuge; or you do it because society tells you you should. I think it's too hard to be married and be successful at it. It's a team and a partnership and not easy to bring off successfully. No, it's fun to be independent. And now I could never put up with another person as you'd have to.

Herzbrun: I hear you.

Wick: Nothing against it whatsoever. No, not just because it's a stereotype and socially expected.

Herzbrun: Yeah for you.

Wick: Well, I think a lot of people feel that way. Back when I was your age the pressure was tremendous to get married.

Herzbrun: I'm sure.

Wick: People in my class at Mount Holyoke...if they had jobs they've gotten them, a lot of them, since their kids got old enough. But they initially, getting out of school, expected to be married and raise a family and not work for a living. It's only really relatively the last, what, 20 years or so where women have gone into the work force for their own interest and wanting added income, too. And also there are opportunities.

Herzbrun: Finally.

Wick: Society has changed. But, oh, it used to drive me nuts when I'd go home at Christmas and the aunts would say, "Oh, Emily, you really should come home and get married."

Herzbrun: What did your parents say?

Wick: They said do what you want to do. They weren't putting pressure on. But society in general was taking the attitude that you're a woman who was not fulfilled if you weren't married.

Herzbrun: Does that mean a man is not fulfilled...

Wick: Oh, I know it doesn't make any sense and it never will. So what's the pressure now?

Herzbrun: It's not so bad, now. Sometimes my older relatives

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Herzbrun: It's not so bad anymore. People are getting married later and later and later.

Wick: That's right. That's right. And in many ways I think the conservative folks, it turns out in the long run, are people who have lived together for a while and then got married.

Herzbrun: That's true.

Wick: That really turns out to be, in a way, the sensible way to go. I never believed I ever would see the day when that would appear to be the case because not too many years ago that was a heinous crime.

Herzbrun: Yes, very bad.

Wick: But as I look around, that isn't too dumb a thing to do.

Herzbrun: For financial reasons if nothing else.

Wick: Yeah. The other thing. Another thing that has made a tremendous difference to women's lives is "the Pill". It has put some power in their hands that didn't used to exist.

Herzbrun: Unfortunately, now with AIDS and what not, it's not enough.

Wick: Yeah.

Herzbrun: They're coming out with a woman's condom thing.

Wick: Yes, I read that. But oh, it's so complicated.

Herzbrun: Yeah. My dad says he feels bad for kids my age.

Wick: Oh, I do, too. It's much harder for you guys. AIDS is kind of like a modern plague.

Herzbrun: It really is. It's a shame.

Wick: I suspect sometime that they'll understand more about it and one hopes gain some kind of control. Also, what it's telling people is that really it's more than just a religious belief that promiscuity is a bad thing. (Laughs)

Herzbrun: It's medical.

Wick: Yeah. The real reason is beyond what, maybe, your Sunday school or your parents or somebody said. It's practical.

Herzbrun: Yeah, it is.

Wick: It is interesting that it's come to that though it's the hard way to learn.

Herzbrun: Definitely.

The famous people are all in the news. I don't know if you follow it at all.

Wick: Yeah, it's so...

Herzbrun: Maybe they'll find a cure. That's what everybody says...

Wick: I keep hoping that for cancer, too...some day.

Herzbrun: They're getting closer.

Wick: They're getting closer and closer. My gosh, the things they now understand about disease and immunity and all that is truly wonderful.

Herzbrun: I think it's really neat that you've been able to see all the changes. Actually, throughout this interview, that you can remove yourself and look down on it.

Wick: That's part of the fun of getting older. I think that's always true. I think my mother and dad used to look at the world that way. My gosh, they were born in, what, 1883 and 1884, and you know...airplanes, electricity...all these things...didn't exist.

Herzbrun: That I take for granted.

Wick: ...that I take for granted, too. Yet, every generation comes along. The older you get the more you have a chance to kind of stop and think and look around and see how things seem to interrelate. You'll do that, too; you can't help it.

Herzbrun: It seems that I won't, but I'll take your word for it.