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The Princeton Mathematics Community in the 1930s
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ALFRED LEON and ELSE FOSTER,
DERRICK and EMMA LEHMER, and FRANCES MORREY
(with ALBERT TUCKER)

This is an interview of Alfred Leon and Else Foster, Derrick and Emma Lehmer, and Frances Morrey (wife of Charles B. Morrey, Jr.) on 18 May 1984 in Berkeley, California. The interviewers are Albert Tucker and William Aspray.

Aspray: We thought we would start today's session by asking the Fosters some questions, since they were chronologically first of this group to be at Princeton. Professor [Alonzo] Church mentioned yesterday your work under him, but we noticed in the records that you were credited with having taken your dissertation under [Oswald] Veblen. Can you explain that to us?

Alfred Foster: Yes, that was an ambiguous thing. Veblen adopted me—that is probably the right word. Of course, I officially was working with Church, but Veblen was more insistent on guiding me through than Church was. In fact, I had to rewrite my dissertation to Veblen's pleasure about three times because he found that I was too wordy in some spots. But it was a question of adoption. I don't know why, but he took a fancy to me, I guess, and just adopted me. I had sort of a dual relationship with him as far as my dissertation went. I officially worked under Church, but as I said, Veblen had his finger in the thing.

Tucker: That is what I assumed from what I knew about it, and I must say that it was a sort of general principle at the time that the senior people took the credit.

Aspray: And probably rightly so in terms of placing people.

Tucker: Oh yes, it was not a selfish credit that they took. It was the way the system worked at that time.

Alfred Foster: I should add that I was not unique. Veblen guided lots of others, as you know.

Tucker: There is a very fine history of the American Mathematical Society. It's the semi-centennial history written by Archibald in 1938. In that there are biographies of all the presidents of the A.M.S. up to that point with very complete bibliographies, and there is also a list of the Ph.D.s supervised. You are listed as a Ph.D. of Veblen's.

Alfred Foster: Yes. I knew Veblen not only then, but later on we happened to be at Goettingen at the same time, so we renewed our association.

Tucker: Can you tell me how you came to come to Princeton?

Alfred Foster: That was pretty easy. My undergraduate work was done at Cal Tech. E.T. Bell recommended me to Princeton and recommended that I get a scholarship of some kind at Princeton. It was largely through his influence that I came to Princeton. Of course I wanted to go, but I needed a recommendation from someone, and Bell was the guy to do it.

Aspray: Did you have an interest in foundations before you came to Princeton?

Alfred Foster: No, as a matter of fact. My interest was dual: mathematical physics and pure algebra. I branched out into foundations when I was in Princeton.

Aspray: So Bell's encouragement to go to Princeton was probably on the basis of [Howard P.] Robertson and [J.H.M.] Wedderburn being there.

Alfred Foster: Robertson, yes. Robertson and I knew each other very well at Cal Tech. Wedderburn, no.

Tucker: Yes, Bell was principally an algebraist.

Alfred Foster: Yes. Also a mystery-story writer.

Tucker: Oh, yes, as John Tain.

Aspray: So how did you get interested in logic? After all, it was sort of off in the far corners of mathematics.

Alfred Foster: Well, it was by a roundabout way. As I said, I was more strongly interested in algebra, but at that time group theory was perhaps a household word, and I saw an opportunity to introduce some group theory into mathematical logic. It was this that really got me started with it.

Aspray: Had you taken a course in logic with Veblen or with Church at this time?

Alfred Foster: No formal course, no. I had just read Church's study.

Aspray: One of the questions that came up in some earlier interviews that we did, was about Emmy Noether. Was that in a later period?

Tucker: That was a later period that she was at Princeton.

Aspray: You did know her and Goedel?

Tucker: That would be just about the end of the time that she was at Princeton.

Alfred Foster: Yes, just about the end.

Aspray: Before we talk about personalities for a while, may I ask: With the problems of the Depression at the time, did you have it hard after getting done?

Alfred Foster: Boy, did I. Do you know anybody that didn't? Yes, it was by no means easy. That is putting it mildly.

Aspray: Would you mind elaborating a little about that?

Alfred Foster: Well, you see, at Princeton at that time, Joel Hildebrandt was scouting for the department here at Berkeley, which was not very strong in the beginning years. Hildebrandt went scouting all over the country. When he was at Princeton he interviewed me along with some others. I had also an attachment which worked both ways with [Luther P.] Eisenhart. Eisenhart gave me a strong recommendation to Hildebrandt, and sometime later I got an offer from Berkeley. Hildebrandt was really the string that was most influential at that time.

Aspray: Did logic play a role either in your favor or disfavor in finding employment?

Alfred Foster: No, it didn't. In fact, Eisenhart recommended me to Hildebrandt, not on the basis of logic so much, but on my general interest. He claimed, I think somewhat untruthfully, that I was interested in a broad range of things. I was, but not that broad.

Aspray: My question may suggest that I have a negative attitude towards logic. I don't. In fact, I was trained in logic by Steve Kleene. I would just like you to know that. I was told earlier this morning that the Graduate School at Princeton did not look favorably on being married at the time one was a graduate student. Were you married at the time you were there?

Alfred Foster: After I had my degree.

Aspray: It was only after you had your degree?

Alfred Foster: Yes, I knew this bias. Maybe that alone would not have stopped me, but there were financial reasons too.

Aspray: Does anyone else want to comment on that issue?

Tucker: What was the date of your degree?

Alfred Foster: My degree is dated '31, you know. But we were married in '30, and that was after I completed my degree. I guess there was some reason for not formally granting the degree until '31.

Frances Morrey: My husband graduated from Harvard about '29, maybe. Too bad he can't tell you exactly, and I should know. In those years after his graduation from Harvard he was a National Research Fellow and spent, I think, a year at Princeton.

Tucker: '31-'32.

Frances Morrey: '31-'32, and then he went to Chicago for the summer, and then he was at Rice. Hildebrandt had gone to Rice and talked to Professor Evans, and so it was through Professor Evans, I am sure, that my husband came there in '33. So he was at Princeton as a post-doc. Then, of course, we went back on two occasions later.

Tucker: When were you married, Frances?

Frances Morrey: We were married in '37.

Aspray: So you did not have to face the mess of the graduate school.

Frances Morrey: No.

Aspray: While we are on the question of the Depression and employment, I was wondering if the Lehmers would like to comment on mathematical employment in the '30s.

Derrick Lehmer: I suppose so. Princeton was sort of a, I guess you would say, haven for many unemployed people. We felt that there was a considerable difference in the economic status of the people at Princeton. There were people who were living on \$1,000 a year and people who were living on no dollars a year, and then there were affluent people living on \$20,000-\$25,000 a year. We were all sort of thrown together, but we certainly observed the distinctions pretty much.

Aspray: Was there anyone in particular in the Princeton community who was responsible for making Princeton a haven?

Derrick Lehmer: Well, I don't know. It may have been Veblen.

Tucker: Veblen was certainly there, but of course he always had the quiet support of Eisenhart. Eisenhart was the stabilizing influence, but it was Veblen who was the leader.

Alfred Foster: Veblen had such a strong personality, but he kept it in check pretty well. He could get mad as the devil if he allowed himself. I can remember one fight he got into with Alexander, and it was a mathematical fight. In fact, it was kind of funny because it was a fight which took place during my final examination.

Tucker: Well, that is a great technique, to get the examiners fighting.

Alfred Foster: No, I had nothing to do with it. I was being questioned on the subject of complex variables. Veblen was asking innocent questions, but the two of them just got into a perfectly awful scrap.

Tucker: Something that very few people know is that Alexander's Ph.D. was done with [T.H.] Gronwall in complex analysis.

Aspray: I did not know that either.

Tucker: Most people think he did his thesis with Veblen because he was working with him. The story I heard is that at that time Veblen was not sure about analysis situs. He thought it might just be a passing fad, so he thought it would be a good idea if Alexander did his thesis in something that was clearly a reputable part of mathematics.

Emma Lehmer: I wish we had kept the letter from Veblen that said he would offer us just \$1,000 a year, but if we had a private means it would be very nice if we could come. We did not have private means, but we were very glad to come.

Tucker: Frances, you mentioned the National Research Fellowship. Can you remember what that paid at the time?

Frances Morrey: I don't think I ever heard what that payment was, but I know that when Chuck came here in 1933 the University had just cut the pay, so he lived on \$1,930 a year.

Tucker: Well, the following year I was a National Research Council Fellow and I got \$1,800, so I think that is the figure.

Alfred Foster: My N.S.F. also paid \$2,400 plus (my) travel expenses to and from Germany. A noble stipend at that time.

Aspray: I would like to ask any of you, since we mentioned Veblen, if you have stories or comments that you would like to make about Veblen. He seems like such a focus of attention.

Else Foster: One day when we were living in Berkeley, I saw both Mr. and Mrs. Veblen walking towards our house and was so surprised. They had not announced that they were coming. I liked both very much, and I ran towards them and said, "Well, don't you have a car?" They said, "Yes, we have a car, but we did not want to use it because it is too hard for the car; we left it down on Euclid."

Emma Lehmer: Well, Professor Veblen came to visit us the first day we moved into the Institute. We had a baby less than a year old. We had just come in, Dick had gone out to do some errands, and here I was with all our stuff just piled up in the middle of the place. I don't know how Veblen found out our address, but he wanted to be sure that we would be at the Institute for the opening luncheon the next day. That was a little overwhelming.

Tucker: You were there, of course, the first year the Institute was in operation. The official date now for the founding of the Institute is 1930, but that was apparently when they got some sort of a charter. It was the fall of '33 that things got started. Do you have recollections of when Einstein first came?

Derrick Lehmer: I think he was there when we arrived. He must have arrived in the summer of '33.

Tucker: Well, I don't remember exactly when it was he arrived, but the town was just full of reporters and photographers. He was brought by car to Fine Hall and was taken in the back door. The photographers were all waiting out in front of Fine Hall. Veblen had promised the press that after a suitable time Professor Einstein would give a press conference. This was to be in that large lecture room in the center of Fine Hall. So people were brought into that room and were all in there. But Einstein left; he did not want to hold a press conference; Veblen had promised this without getting Einstein's agreement. The result was that Veblen was in danger of being lynched. The press thought that he had played a deliberate trick on them.

Aspray: The story you tell about Veblen coming to see you the first day you were in town seems quite characteristic of Veblen in some way. He really seemed to promote a good social atmosphere for visitors and graduate students and others. Do any of you want to comment on that?

Derrick Lehmer: In general, that is very true, and some of it must also have been due to Mrs. Veblen; she did a lot of sort of visiting around and keeping everybody feeling a little better. We got from her the reassurance that although the country was in trouble, there was no problem in Princeton; nobody ever heard of a depression in Princeton. This was very gratifying sometimes, when she would take an interest in what we were struggling with.

Emma Lehmer: It was a curious mixture of informalities on one hand and very strict form on the other. The dinner at the Veblen's was something else again. The women retired with the men remaining at the table, and all that sort of thing. All that protocol was observed, and yet they were also informal; as I said, they would drop in and be very helpful.

Else Foster: We were once invited for tea when we had a little child a year old. He was just crawling all over the house; she took quite some interest in him and was very nice.

Tucker: I remember, as a beginning grad student, I was told by people like Bill Flexner, a senior grad student, that the proper thing to do was, on the first opportunity on Sunday afternoon, to go to the Veblen's for tea and also to the Eisenhart's for tea. Of course there was the Dean's house on campus. But I suppose because I was not married, I was not accorded these dinner parties. I guess I was invited to the Lefschetz's for a dinner party earlier on.

Derrick Lehmer: I worked for Lefschetz as a sub-editor, you might say, on the *Annals*. He was very helpful to me. I made some pretty bad mistakes that he covered up for me pretty well.

Emma Lehmer: I did some translating for him for the *Annals*, I guess it was.

Tucker: Later on, when you were at Lehigh [University], you did some translating for the Princeton Mathematical Series.

Frances Morrey: You were speaking about formality and informality. As a new bride I came to Princeton in 1937 with my husband. I was astounded to find that the ladies would come calling in the afternoon, and you had to have, what was it, three cards. You had to have two for the ladies and one for the men or two for the men and one for the ladies. If you were invited to their house you had to present these cards, and when they came to your house—sometimes they were very careful to come when they knew you weren't at home—they left cards to show that they had come calling. We lived in such a small place; I think we rented it by mail through the Institute. This was when the Institute was still in Fine Hall. This place we rented was the second storey of an old house. The owners were living in the first floor and basement; we had three rooms on the second floor, and there was some other student who had the fourth room which contained entry to the attic. So it was quite some affair when we had bridge parties. You had to put people in first and then the bridge tables; the last person sat in the doorway.

Tucker: There was another group of people who did this socializing on a somewhat different plane: the Alexanders [Professor James W. Alexander and his wife] and the Robertsons [Professor Howard P. Robertson and his wife] went in for what you could almost describe as wild parties. Were you ever invited?

Frances Morrey: There was dancing down on Princeton Street after a party; people were doing the "Big Apple", I think the dance was called.

Alfred Foster: I can't remember that. I can remember this wild-party business because I happened to be involved in one. This was a drinking party. Robertson could hold quite a lot, but apparently he couldn't hold enough as he was down the street hiding behind a lamp post at one time.

Tucker: And of course this was during Prohibition. I used to hear Bohnenblust talking French to [Solomon] Lefschetz and German to [Hermann] Weyl. I remember listening to one conversation Bohnenblust and Lefschetz were having, and the only word that I understood in the conversation was bootlegger.

Alfred Foster: Bohnenblust and Stueckelberger were the two Swiss at the time. It was funny to hear them talk because Stueckelberger came from Basel, and the German in Basel is one of the slow drawn out Germans.

Tucker: Bohnenblust actually came originally from the French speaking part. He was educated at the E.T.H.

Alfred Foster: When the two of them got together they spoke German, but it was such a different brand of German.

Aspray: Concerning social activities in the department, I have heard many stories about afternoon tea and the importance it played. Even before Fine Hall I understood that tea went on. Is that correct?

Tucker: Veblen used to have tea in his office in Palmer. He made the tea using a bunsen burner.

Emma Lehmer: They used to talk about the 40 tea-drinking mathematicians and the 40 rotating cows as the attractions at Princeton when we were there.

Aspray: The 40 rotating cows?

Tucker: Walker Gordon Dairy.

Aspray: Oh, I was taken there when I was a child. I remember that very well. They had something called the Rotolacter. What importance did the teas play in your own mathematical development or in your contacts with people in the department?

Alfred Foster: I think they were quite effective. Everybody arranged his work so about 4:00 we would all gather there. A little committee would bring out the tea, and we would all stand around using hands and fingers to draw formulas. You tried to follow the complex matters this way. There wasn't any blackboard in the tea room, was there?

Tucker: No. The matter was discussed at various times, but it was decided that the thing to do was to put a blackboard in the hall just outside. It was not there early on. But there was a room, a small seminar room just across the hall, where people often went to use the blackboard.

Alfred Foster: I remember one day Mrs. Veblen came to tea. She sort of looked around and checked everything, and she came to the conclusion that something had to be done about the processing of the tea cups. They were just rinsed and used again, and so on; when the cups were washed the tea tasted of soap for quite a while.

Tucker: Well, the first year of Fine Hall, '31-'32, I had a Procter Fellowship. Right at the beginning of the year Veblen called me into his office and said, "Mr. Tucker, you're the chairman of the tea club." I wanted to know how I got elected chairman. He explained that this fellowship I had made me responsible. I was to get the help of the other people who had Princeton fellowships. National Research Council Fellows were exempt. [J.H.C.] Whitehead already had his doctorate, but he was staying on to work with Veblen. He lived at the Graduate College, and because he had a Princeton fellowship (from Cambridge), he had to be a member of the tea club. Someone by the name of Barnes, John Landes Barnes, who later went into the electrical engineering department at UCLA, was the secretary-treasurer of the tea club. We did everything, even arranging for the delivery of cookies in wholesale from National Biscuit Company. But very soon the volunteer operations of the tea club closed, because the very able janitor at Fine Hall, Mr. Hahr, complained that the dishwashing and such were not being properly done. He volunteered to stay two hours extra, for pay of course, to make the tea and serve it and do the cleaning up. He was extremely efficient. He would not have been a janitor had it not been for the depression. He had had quite a responsible job, I think with some department store in Philadelphia, but lost it and found the janitorial job.

Aspray: You mentioned Mrs. Veblen coming to tea. It wasn't common for spouses to come to tea, was it?

Alfred Foster: No, I think not. It was just an inspection tour, I guess.

Aspray: I wonder what the spouses heard about these teas?

Else Foster: They had tea so they would just show up at dinner time.

Aspray: I see. Somehow a high point of the day.

Frances Morrey: I suspect that it was a place where they could really chat with people. I mean otherwise I am sure that Chuck would have been in his hole doing his work. He probably enjoyed going in and talking to people at that point.

Emma Lehmer: It really is not different from the coffee hour we have now, except maybe it was a little more formal.

Alfred Foster: And a little more crowded, too.

Aspray: But it was somewhat unusual for those days.

Emma Lehmer: Yes, quite. What was most unusual was having tea rather than coffee.

Tucker: That, of course, was Veblen's doing. There was a verse composed to fit with the so-called Princeton faculty song, "Here's to Uncle Oswald V.,/ Lover of England and her tea./ He is that mathematician of note/ Who uses four buttons to fasten his coat."

Alfred Foster: That is right. He usually wore a yachting costume, a nice blue, brass-buttoned affair with grey trousers.

Emma Lehmer: Well, so did my husband. He was a barker at the World's Fair just before we got the call to go to Princeton. With the job came a beautiful yachting costume. It saved us a lot of worry.

Aspray: Professor Lehmer, can you tell me how you decided to come to the Institute? What was it that attracted you there?

Derrick Lehmer: Well, as Emma just said, I was in the employ of the Chicago World's Fair at that time. We were planning to close down the Fair and open it again in June of the next year. The Fair had one attraction for us—we got a salary working for it. So we were sort of in doubt as to what to do. A lot of our friends in Chicago were out of work and used to come and talk about the absence of openings in institutions of higher learning. One day I got this letter from Veblen. It was just about when we were going to close down the Fair and thus be out of work. There was not a question if I should accept or not; we just packed up and left.

Tucker: How did he come to write to you?

Derrick Lehmer: I don't know. I got a sort of a letdown. I went to see [Abraham] Flexner first I guess. He told me about Bamberger Company and so on, and then he told me, "I guess the reason you are here is your uncle." I had about six uncles, but one was a professor at Columbia, a very famous economist known to Flexner. So who knows what happened there. It may have been my uncle, I don't know.

Emma Lehmer: Surely not. I don't think so.

Derrick Lehmer: My uncle was surprised when I told him. But it took a lot of my self-confidence away to hear this.

Tucker: With whom had you done your Ph.D.?

Derrick Lehmer: I worked with people at Brown mostly, [Jakob] Tamarkin and [Albert] Bennett. That was three years previously. I had already had two years of National Research Council support, and I spent one-half year at the Chicago World's Fair. Then this opportunity opened up.

Tucker: Who did you work with or talk to primarily when you were at Princeton?

Derrick Lehmer: It may have been [H.S.] Vandiver. He was a visitor at the time. He was from Texas.

Tucker: A number theorist.

Derrick Lehmer: Yes. I learned quite a bit from him and from finding my way around the then-recent subjects in topology by doing this

editing work with Lefschetz. I guess Veblen and maybe Weyl were the main sources of input. I was sufficiently young in those days to have a certain resistance to learning. You know, after you've learned it all you don't need to learn any more. So I am sure I did not take full advantage of the presence of John von Neumann, for instance.

Aspray: Who in the group was interested in number theory?

Derrick Lehmer: Not many, not many. Vandiver, of course. That's the reason I put his name down at the top. Number theory was not a principal subject in Princeton. I tried to explain its importance to Veblen, but he wasn't sympathetic either.

Aspray: I would have expected Weyl to be the one in the Princeton group who had an interest.

Derrick Lehmer: Yes.

Aspray: Did he have an interest in pure number theory?

Derrick Lehmer: Well, he wrote a famous article on exponential sums and their estimations. It is, you might say, tainted with number theory. I talked with him about that quite a bit.

Tucker: I think that Weyl is the nearest to a universal mathematician of anyone in this century.

Derrick Lehmer: He was very sympathetic, but in general I felt sort of an outsider.

Alfred Foster: Weyl was a very influential person in my life. I think now of an aspect of Weyl's lectures which you probably remember, too. He followed the European custom of wiping the blackboard with a sponge, and he would start writing on the wet blackboard. You could not see a darn thing for five minutes, and suddenly it would all pop out.

Aspray: That is typical.

Tucker: One of the great assets in the 30's was that the professors who were at the Institute had been so accustomed to lecturing that they just went on doing it. Now the professors at the Institute don't give lectures. They may give an occasional seminar. Now it is clear that they are Institute professors, whereas before you could not tell the professors who were at the Institute from the professors at the University.

Emma Lehmer: We hardly made the distinction.

Aspray: I had a question to ask you, Mrs. Lehmer. I understand that you have mathematical training. Did you sit in on the courses or lectures while you were at Princeton?

Emma Lehmer: I had a one-year-old girl. It was a rare occasion when I could get a babysitter and come to somebody's lecture. I did manage a few, but not very many that year. We had people come to the house, and we saw a lot of Vandiver. He did not have anybody else in number theory to talk to really. He was a constant visitor. I got quite a lot of inspiration and wrote a paper as a consequence of my talking to him. It was a grand year in spite of everything.

Tucker: And then you went to Lehigh University.

Emma Lehmer: Yes.

Aspray: Now you continued after that time to have connections with Princeton, a commuting connection I guess.

Derrick Lehmer: We would come down to the valley every month, I guess. There was the Princeton library, too. It was superior to what we had at Lehigh, of course.

Tucker: And could be used at any time.

Derrick Lehmer: Yes. It was wide open every day of the year.

Tucker: It is not that way anymore.

Derrick Lehmer: I can't remember the name of the female librarian who was there.

Tucker: Shields.

Derrick Lehmer: Shields, of course.

Tucker: Bunny Shields.

Derrick Lehmer: She was very impressed by the crowds that would come in. She was always talking about it. Very good librarian, though. I learned a few things from her, too.

Tucker: I found in the math department files, which are very fragmentary, a report that she drew up, shortly before she retired, of the history of the library. This was directed to Dean [Luther P.] Eisenhart. She had some recommendations for changes that she made in a very mild form. The math library at Princeton had been established back around the turn of the century, and it was called the Mathematics Seminary. I don't exactly understand the use of the word. There was a separate room for the math books in the old main-library, and then when Palmer Hall was built around 1905 the Physics Seminary and the Math Seminary were moved to Palmer. As you all remember, those two rooms, with book-filled shelves and a large table in the middle, were a place where mathematicians gathered. It is still the case that in the cataloguing of math books at Princeton the code is SM, which means Seminary of Mathematics.

Aspray: I was wondering, Mrs. Morrey, if you would tell us something about the occasion of you and your husband coming to Princeton.

Frances Morrey: He had been here at Berkeley since 1933. In 1937 he had a sabbatical and an invitation to go to the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. We were married that summer and had a big trip driving across to Princeton. We had rented this small apartment by mail and arrived there in beastly hot weather. Chuck proceeded to go off to math society meetings, I think it was at Penn State College [later Penn State University]. On our arrival in Princeton we received invitations to people's homes; Marston Morse's was one. Chuck used to come home for lunch; he would walk the few blocks from Fine Hall.

We did a good bit of travelling that year, because we would take vacations with relatives. We had relatives in New York, Florida, and various other places. I was from California so all of this was new, living in the East and driving in snow. Getting out of a sloping parking place when there was snow was hard. One time I remember at, I think, a grocery store somebody had to help me push the car to get that darn thing out in the middle of the street. This business of driving in bad weather like that was a brand new experience, but as far as mathematics, Chuck really never talked much about what he was doing.

He was a consistent worker. He usually worked at night as well as during the day, but we did have certain social engagements. We played bridge with different people. I think the Begles were there, but maybe that was the next time we were in Princeton, in '55. I know that Angus and Patsy Taylor were around; he was at the University and she was a friend from here. It was mostly a social life I lived.

Aspray: Do you remember who it was that invited your husband to come to the Institute?

Frances Morrey: I don't know, but I suspect Morse. Is that possible?

Tucker: Yes, but of course he could just have applied to go.

Tucker: He could have. But for people who were accepted several times, there was usually someone at the Institute especially interested in their work.

Frances Morrey: At the service in memory of my husband that we had the other day Hans Lewy said something about him solving one of the Hilbert problems. It could have been because of that that he was invited.

Aspray: Can you recall who he worked with most closely or talked with the most?

Frances Morrey: I think Marston Morse. He wrote some papers with him or talked in some of his seminars. I can't say offhand who else.

Tucker: I think that is right. Of course Chuck was in Princeton in '31-'32 and lived at the Graduate College and so...

Frances Morrey: He knew many of the people. Lefschetz, I think, entertained; also the Alexanders.

Tucker: They were the most socially minded of the group. The Veblens, too, but in a sort of normal but more flashy sense than the Alexanders.

Frances Morrey: I am sure we were together with the Veblens, too, but I don't remember exactly. I could not find any diaries at home that told of our having been to such and such a person's house. But I do remember the business of people calling in the afternoon. It was quite a shock. You had to have refreshments on hand, because there were certain days of the week when people were likely to show up.

Frances Morrey: And calling was utterly foreign to me. After all, I was born and brought up here in California, and I had been a graduate student here at Berkeley, which was where I met Chuck. This business of formality, I must have been warned enough to have some cards printed, but that was rather unusual, too.

Emma Lehmer: Do you have a list of people who were there the first year?

Frances Morrey: When did Tracy Thomas go to Southern California?

Tucker: '38.

Frances Morrey: Well, all right, '38, when we were there, he was going to UCLA. His wife had never been west of whatever. She was probably an East-Coast person, and she was scared to death to go by train or anything. She was afraid the Indians would catch her, and she was sure that the Golden Gate in San Francisco was some gate that was gold. We had to inform her that, no, this is not the case. Of course the bridge wasn't built at that point, but anyway, she was extremely scared of going by train across the country because the Indians might stop the train. At that point, they had some sort of maps. The Bostonian's point of view was that Boston was a large area, Cape Cod was extremely large, and the rest of the States were about one-half the size of that. She had never been west of the Appalachian Trail.

Emma Lehmer: Who is this?

Frances Morrey: Mrs. Tracy Thomas.

Tucker: I should think that Tracy would have disillusioned her a little bit. He himself came to Arkansas.

Frances Morrey: Well, maybe she didn't believe him.

Tucker: There were sort of two worlds there. But they mixed very well, that's the very interesting thing about it. They were miles apart, but...

Derrick Lehmer: We had to mix, because we were two groups in the same building, which was really crowded. You know I didn't have an office, I had to work in the library. That's the way I got to know Miss Shields. She helped me finding the obscure bibliographies and so on. We were fairly close.

Frances Morrey: You were spoiled after two years at Brown and Archibald's library.