

**THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ORAL HISTORY
PRESENTATION PROGRAM**

OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE

AN INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA LYON AND ELLISON TAYLOR

FOR THE

**OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY
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STOW: Today, we're going to be talking with Bobby Lyon. Bobby's husband Richard "Stoke" Lyon joined the Manhattan Project in 1942 and came to Oak Ridge in '45. She didn't join the Laboratory until after their two sons were grown up. Bobby will be joined later in the interview by Ellison Taylor, and they'll talk a little bit about some of the political interactions that evolved after the war. Bobby, you hale from Michigan, I understand. How on earth did you end up in "Dog Patch," Tennessee?

LYON: Well, I went to the University of Chicago...

STOW: Yes.

LYON: And met my husband there. He was, at that time, a graduate student and a candidate for a Ph.D. in chemistry.

STOW: All right.

LYON: But, after we got married, he decided that he didn't want to be a chemist. He wanted to be an engineer. Engineering was not taught at the University of Chicago, so we moved to Ann Arbor, because it was fairly close to my hometown. And, in 1941 when Pearl Harbor happened and we were at war, he expected he would be drafted, but he was not. So, he looked around for a job that he could do that would contribute to the war effort. His father, who lived in Chicago, was a friend of Arthur Holly Compton.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: And, Compton said to Stoke's father, "Is your son technical?" And, Stoke's father said, "Yes." So, he said, "Well, tell him to go to Eckard Hall at the University of Chicago, up to the second floor, and see if he's interested in the work that's going on there." Well, I was left in Albion, Michigan, waiting for him, and he went on into Chicago and went down to the university. Well first, before he could go to the second floor, he had to sign the Espionage Act, and that was a little off putting.

LYON: And then he climbed up to the second floor, and there he met Eugene Wigner, who interviewed him for this job.

STOW: I'll be darned.

LYON: And by then, he had some idea of what was going on -- well, I guess he had a full idea. When he came back to Albion, where I was waiting for his decision, he had stars in his eyes. He said, "This is a whole new science. You have no idea what this is going to do." Well, he understood completely what the implications were for this.

STOW: And, he was right too, wasn't he?

LYON: Yes.

STOW: All right

LYON: Yes. He was right on ... practically every turn. And, he had decided to go there. He started off at \$206 a month, which was the lowest salary offered by any of the war industries. And, I joined him later. And, we were at Chicago until '45. In January of '45, we came to Oak Ridge.

STOW: Did you know at that point that the war was almost over?

LYON: I knew nothing.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: And, the women that I talked to knew nothing. It was such a tightly held secret that nothing was known in the city of Oak Ridge...among the people there ... what was going on.

STOW: What was your impression when you came to Oak Ridge in January of '45?

LYON: Well, I felt that I was coming to a very primitive place. I thought the only way I can come to terms with this is to consider it a sort of "resort." The houses all seemed temporary...

STOW: Yes

LYON: And, there were no gutters. The streets were just deep ditches along the sides of the road and a lot of washed-out ravines. I came with a two-year-old, and I had a second child in May after I got here. Shortly after I had the second child, my two-year-old got stuck in the mud at the bottom of the ravine, which had been formed by what we learned to call a "flash flood." And, later on, he got caught in the tube that went under the road.

STOW: Just a typical two-year-old, right?

LYON: Yes, right. He was exploratory. And, getting down into that ravine was very hard for me. I was still a little bit wobbly from childbirth, and I got down to the bottom. And I had to dig my hands down into the mud to get his feet out -- they were up [to] the ankle. And, we did sacrifice a shoe.

STOW: A small sacrifice in the long run.

LYON: Yes, but he was about to die -- I thought if he had panicked and put his hands down. He'd probably have just sunk down into the mud.

STOW: Oh my God.

LYON: Anyway, that was the kind of life we had. We were in a state of famine. We had no way of getting meat or any of the things that we had to spend our red stamps on — we had red stamps and green

stamps -- nothing was available. I finally sat down and made a list of everything that we could buy and started out with canned turnip greens, and ...

STOW: Was that the best thing you could think of?

LYON: Yes. We could occasionally get salad dressing, but we couldn't get anything that contained fat. There were times when there was not one ounce of fat in my house. And fat hunger, I learned, is very compelling.

STOW: Yes

LYON: Anyway, Stoke's father again came to our rescue -- he was also a friend of Oscar Meyer. And, Oscar Meyer sent us a care package once a month. We got wieners, liverwurst, and a little boneless ham.

STOW: Well, that made you pretty popular, didn't it.

LYON: Oh, I never shared that.

LYON: We kept it until it was moldy and ate it, but it saw us through. And, I sent him all of my red stamps, which kept it legal. And, that was pretty much the way we lived. We were really scraping bottom at the end of every month. But, Stoke was very happy. He went to work in a bus that stopped out in front of our house. Later on, the bus stopped up at the school, which was about a block away. And later on, it stopped down in Townsite, which is now Jackson Square.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: And so, it became apparent that we were going to need a car. We had sold Stoke's Chevrolet before we came down. And so, we did get a secondhand car, and that pretty much liberated us. I forgot to say that I didn't know I was not supposed to have a baby without a car or without a telephone. We had no phone. However, out in front of the house was a power pole that had a red box on it that said "Emergency." So, I decided that's the way we would have the baby.

LYON: We would call "Emergency." However, what I didn't take into account was the neighborhood. Everybody who was a neighbor was a friend.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: It was an enormous revelation to me, coming from Chicago, that we'd be surrounded by friends.

STOW: Sure.

LYON: And the man next door very kindly drove me to the hospital when the time came.

STOW: Were you in a cemesto house at the time?

LYON: We were in a C house.

STOW: Well, that was pretty good then, wasn't it?

LYON: Yes, it was. Stoke had a pretty responsible position, and we were right next door to ... well, it was called Knob Hill.

STOW: Yes

LYON: We were next door to the Whitakers and the Monsanto people and ... It was a good neighborhood.

STOW: Well now, you refer to your husband, Stoke. Where did he work? Was he over at Clinton ...

LYON: He was Dick -- his name was Richard.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: I called him Stoke. He worked with Miles Leverett.

STOW: Did he work with Leverett over here doing reactor-type work?

LYON: Yes. He was in the Reactor Division.

STOW: When did you first come over to the Laboratory and begin working?

LYON: Not until 1966.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: My kids were grown.

STOW: So, you were a housewife in Oak Ridge for that period of what, twenty years, or so then?

LYON: I was. I was a housewife, but I was also a political activist. I was on the board of every organization there was in town.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: I did everything I could to get out of the house.

STOW: Well, we'll come back to some of that in a few minutes. Let's go back to August of 1945. You'd been here for about seven or eight months at that point, and suddenly, a bomb was dropped on Japan. What were your impressions at that time?

LYON: By that time, we had a phone. And I called Stoke at work. And he said, "Have you seen the paper or have you heard the radio?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "What did they say?" I said, "They said that Hiroshima was vaporized." And, he laughed and I cried.

STOW: Is that the first time you knew that he was involved with bomb work?

LYON: Yes.

STOW: My goodness.

LYON: I had no idea.

STOW: Yes

LYON: And, it was a shock to everybody in the town, of course.

STOW: Oh, it had to be.

LYON: Yes.

STOW: After you finished crying, did you celebrate in any way?

LYON: Yes, of course. The Japanese capitulation was a reason for celebrating, and it was apparent that VE Day [Victory in Europe Day] was right around the corner. So, there was a measure of relief that the war was over, and that we weren't going to have all these deprivations...

STOW: Yes

LYONS: ... and that the town would move forward. But, we were kind of appalled at what we had been part of.

STOW: Do you still feel appalled here decades later?

LYONS: That's a two-edged sword, Steve.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: There's a way to destroy the world, and there are a lot of benefits. The medical benefits [of nuclear materials], I think, are outstanding.

STOW: Sure.

LYON: And, I'm very proud and pleased that we've gone forward with those. And, I think everybody is.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: And, there's great hope that if we can just keep the other in abeyance, that it will be a blessing for the world.

STOW: Well, of course, there was a lot of discord about the future direction of atomic energy. Should it be controlled by the military or by civilians?

LYON: Senator Brien McMahon proposed a bill that was passed as the McMahon Act. Before that it was proposed that the new science be put into the hands of the military. The military aspect of it was the part that most of us didn't really want to see pursued.

ELLISON TAYLOR: (interjects) The May-Johnson bill called for military control. The McMahon Act was passed instead. [It is officially called the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 and it brings the development of atomic energy under civilian control.]

LYON: Thank you. We need you.

STOW: Ellison, I'm going to jump to 1966 and talk with Bobby about the *ORNL Review* and all that sort of stuff. And then, I'll talk with both of you about the Federation of Atomic Scientists, and where all of that went. Okay?

LYON: Okay.

STOW: Is that all right?

TAYLOR: Sure.

STOW: Because, otherwise, we're going to switch a couple of times.

TAYLOR: Oh, I'm enjoying this.

STOW: So, we'll come back to this, but I think it was the May-Johnson Bill that advocated military control...

TAYLOR: That was the first bill presented, and then McMahon....

STOW: McMahon was for civilian control.

TAYLOR: ... the one for the AEA ... civilian control.

LYON: Oh, thank you.

STOW: Let's jump to 1966. That's when you came here to work at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

LYON: Yes. I had been doing some Laboratory work for some seminars on introducing the political world to the new science.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: They had been run by a man over at the Oak Ridge Associated Universities named Gregorieff. He had asked me to take notes on what the speakers said and write summaries of their talks. And apparently, my work there resulted in the Lab's calling me to come out and work in the public relations office.

STOW: Who called you? Do you recall?

LYON: Yes, Cohen.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: What was his name?

TAYLOR: Who?

LYON: Cowan.

TAYLOR: Oh, Wally Koehler.

LYON: Cowan -- public relations. The one who got the liquor.

TAYLOR: Cowan in public relations?

STOW: Well, Ellison was off doing chemistry and stuff at the time.

MCLAUGHLIN: Was it Harvey Cobert?

LYON: No, no. It was before him. He died ... the one...

TAYLOR: Jim Barker?

LYON: No, it was before him. Who was head of publications?

TAYLOR: Oh, oh. Okay.

LYON: It wasn't Cowan.

TAYLOR: No. No, not at all.

STOW: Well, it's not that critical.

LYON: Anyway, he called me.

STOW: Yes

LYON: And, I think he called me at Alvin Weinberg's instigation.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: And, I think Alvin had him call me at his wife's instigation. She was my best friend in town.

STOW: Getting to the head of power there, aren't we?

LYON: Right -- and she was a woman to be reckoned with. She was an extraordinary woman. And, I was, of course, in seventh heaven. This was what I'd rather do than anything in the world. Every time I drove out to the Lab -- I had a convertible at the time -- and I would shout to the skies, "This is where the action is!"

STOW: What did they ask you to do when they called you in '66?

LYON: They had no idea what to ask me to do. I had to invent my job. But, I did do some stories for the in-house news.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: And, I did a couple of news releases, based on Kurt Kraus and Josh Johnson's use of reverse osmosis to desalt water.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: And, I had been at the Lab for about a year, when Alvin decided he wanted a magazine.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: My boss, David Sandberg had come down from editing the *Nuclear News* in Chicago, or wherever it was. And so, he was given the magazine and he was too busy with the office that he held, so he turned the magazine over to me.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: And, it was a perfect job for me -- perfect because I'm a grammarian and I'm a speller, and I'm a very good editor. And, I was in love with the Laboratory. And, what I did was walk around and go into different laboratories and ask the men there what they were doing. And, they were more than happy to tell me. And, in that way, I got stories for the magazine.

STOW: You say, you asked the men there? Were there no women?

LYON: There were no women. No, it was a man's place.

STOW: Well, I know it was dominantly a man's place.

LYON: It was all men. And, that didn't bother me a bit. They were all friends of mine -- people I had known.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: Somebody said, "How do you feel about working out here?" And I said, "Well, these are all the people I only see at Christmas, so it feels like Christmas every day." I really loved the job, and I wasn't very good at it, and I wasn't really very technical. I was not afraid of technical terms, because Stoke was very good about explaining things to me. And, I could learn, and I learned a lot. And, of course, that added to the interest of the job.

STOW: What you were beginning to work on there emerged finally as the *ORNL Review*. Is that right?

LYON: It started out as the *ORNL Review*.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: And, it was a small magazine. It bore no relationship to what we have now, which is world-class.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: I saw it as a house organ. Alvin saw it as a showcase for the scientists and also a method of communication across the branches. We had twelve research divisions.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: And, many of them could use the services of others but didn't know what they were doing. Alvin saw the *Review* as a way of letting the biologists know what the engineers were doing, and letting the instrumentation and controls people know what the reactor people were doing, so they could use [each other's findings and technologies].

STOW: Was it successful in that sense?

LYON: Yes. There was a lot of cross action.

STOW: And, did you get comments back from the scientists about the content of the *Review*?

LYON: Well, of course, they liked me, and they were very complimentary.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: I don't know whether it was good or not. When we got into President Jimmy Carter's zero-base budgeting, it was always at the very bottom.

STOW: Oh, well, but you got it started, primarily, at the insistence of Alvin Weinberg, and...

LYON: He pretty much kept his distance. He assigned an associate director to be my consulting editor. And, all of the contents of the magazine went through his office before we went to press. At one point, it was suggested we have a committee of editors – an editorial board -- and I knew that that was just no way to get a magazine off the press, because...

STOW: Not by committee.

LYON: Not by committee, no. I notice that Carolyn Krause has a committee now, but she seems to be able to handle it.

STOW: Well, however she does it, she does a good job now.

LYON: Yes. She does a beautiful job.

STOW: She does a fine job -- absolutely.

LYON: I hired her.

STOW: Did you ... you did?

LYON: Yes.

STOW: What was it that attracted you to hire Carolyn as opposed to anyone else?

LYON: Oh, Carolyn had been doing science stories in *The Oak Ridger* for four years.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: And, her husband, I knew him -- he was at the Lab.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: He was in the Chemistry Division. And, I knew Carolyn. I knew that she wanted to work at the Lab, and as soon as the budget permitted it, then I called her up and she came out.

STOW: Did you have any idea at the time that you started the *ORNL Review* that it would persist as a viable document for thirty-six years now?

LYON: No.

STOW: No? Didn't think that far in advance?

LYON: No. I saw it as a house organ . . .

STOW: Yes

LYON: ...and it won a lot of prizes in that category. Carolyn's work goes around the world.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: And is aimed at a much more sophisticated scientific community than mine. I had a lot of human interest stuff. I was aiming the *Review* to the three groups at the Lab -- the blue-collar workers, the secretaries, and the scientific and technical staff. And so, I had something for everybody.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: And, my philosophy was that I should put something on the cover that would make somebody pick the magazine up.

STOW: Sure.

LYON: And, I should have something on the first page that would make them turn the page. And, I wanted the pages being turned. And so, I put a lot of things in. Uppuluri . . .

STOW: Ram...

LYON: Ram Uppuluri was a mathematician, and I asked him to put in math puzzles. I had a wonderful artist assigned to me down in the graphic art department. Bill...

MCLAUGHLIN: (interjects) Clark.

LYON: Bill Clark. Thank you. And, he and I worked very well together.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: Bill Clark. And, I had features like book reviews. Then I had a friend who was an old gossip and he wrote up anecdotes about the old days. His name was Herb Pomerance.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: And, there were features like that. I even made puzzles for it. I made an acrostic puzzle. And, I finally got Hume Craft, who was a local man who made puzzles for the Sunday edition of *The New York Times*, to make some puzzles for me.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: All these people are gone.

STOW: You put together the *25th Anniversary* volume of the *ORNL Review*.

LYON: Yes. Carolyn and I wrote it together, but we also got anecdotes from the older people.

STOW: It's beautifully done.

LYON: Thank you. Thank you. We felt good about it.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: And it was the Bicentennial issue -- so instead of red, white, and blue, we had pink, white, and purple.

STOW: Why pink, white, and purple?

LYON: Because it wasn't red, white, and blue

STOW: Well, that's true, wasn't it?

LYON: Oh, I want to tell you what Ellison said. Somebody ... see, what this is...

STOW: Do you remember what page Ellison's on?

LYON: ... is a reference of the front and back covers. These are the current pictures, or the badge pictures -- the pages where the badge pictures are. These are high-contrast badge pictures.

STOW: Oh!

LYON: And ... one of Ellison's colleagues came in and said, "I don't understand this. What does this mean?" Ellison said, "If you can't figure this out, you don't belong in the Chemistry Division." Do you remember?

TAYLOR: Yes.

STOW: Well, these are rare as hen's teeth right now and make excellent reading. So, thank you very much.

LYON: They're rare?

STOW: Oh, yes.

LYON: Well, they must have destroyed a lot. We had a whole room full of them.

STOW: Well, you can't get one today.

LYON: We knew there would be a demand eventually for that.

STOW: You can't get one today. So, you came here in '66, picked up and developed the *ORNL Review*.

LYON: Yes

STOW: You must have interacted, obviously, with a lot of people here.

LYON: Everybody. I was like a spider in the center of a web. If anything was going on, the web would shake, and I'd race out to see what was going on.

STOW: Do you have any special recollections of people you interacted with?

LYON: Well, yes. There was a time when I did some work. I described ,... molecular ... What was it Sheldon was doing?

TAYLOR: Oh, molecular beams.

LYON: Molecular beams.

STOW: Molecular beam work – yes.

LYON: I had a story on molecular beams, and Billy Appleton came over from Solid State ...

TAYLOR: Go ahead...

LYON: He came to me and said, "Where do you get the idea that that's their work? That's my work." Every once in a while, someone would walk into my office in a rage. I would not let them go until they were supporters.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: And, I got a story out of Billy Appleton.

STOW: This is Bill Appleton who eventually became associate laboratory director for the physical sciences?

LYON: His birth name is Billy.

STOW: Billy -- okay -- didn't know that.

LYON: Yes, and he and I became great friends.

STOW: Anybody else you think back on whom you became great friends with?

LYON: I don't remember their names. There was one man who went to the University of Chicago and was a very angry man. And, we learned that he was writing pulp stories for a pulp magazine...

STOW: Yes.

LYON: So, we got him to come in and bring some of his stories. And, he became a friend of ours.

STOW: All right.

LYON: Another guy came in and said, "Where do you get off doing this... ?" or something. And, I said, "There is no intent in this office to do harm or speak disparagingly of any scientist in this Laboratory. We are in total support." And, he looked, and I had a mobile hanging over me that I'd gotten at the King Tut exhibit in Washington. And, he said, "Well, anybody who has that mobile is probably okay."

STOW: And, the logic behind that -- did you ever figure that out?

LYON: No. That was when we were put in the men's room off the Central Research Library. We were moved all over the place.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: And, I was viewed by the Carbide public relations man -- Harvey Cobert -- as a loose cannon.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: I made him very nervous, because my philosophy was total disclosure, and his philosophy was information control. And so, he had to keep an eagle eye on me, and more and more, he disapproved of me, and got me moved. He fired my boss, and then moved me from the second floor front to ... What was the corridor that you were on?

TAYLOR: F.

LYON: F corridor. Then he moved me into a room that had, at one time, been the men's room. It reminded me of that Dorothy Parker thing, you know?

STOW: Kind of put you down, didn't it.

LYON: Yes. And, then he moved me closer to the door. And finally, I just moved out.

STOW: Well, did Carbide exercise a lot of control over the Laboratory at that point?

LYON: Yes.

STOW: Very different from what we saw in later years.

LYON: Oh, yes. They changed the designation of the supervisors from administrators to managers. And, they had them go to school to learn how to manage innovation.

STOW: So, what year did you finally retire from the Laboratory then, Bobby?

LYON: '82.

STOW: '82, so...

LYON: I was offered a package for early retirement, actually, in '83. I would be sixty-five.

STOW: Yes

LYON: So, I got a very generous package because my supervisor, at that time...

STOW: It'll come to you later -- don't worry about that.

LYON: Anyway, he was on a quota -- they were downsizing.

STOW: All right. Yes. So, over those years, from '66 to '82, while you were here at the Lab, is there any particular individual who influenced you more than anybody else -- who really impacted your career?

LYON: Well, of course, Alvin.

STOW: Well, tell me a little bit about your interactions with Alvin Weinberg.

LYON: Alvin and Herman Postma were my allies. I think Cobert wanted me fired, and they stood by me valiantly, and I've always been grateful to them for that. I had a lot of respect for Alvin's attitude toward the scientific community of the Laboratory.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: His annual State of the Laboratory talks were all encomiums on the work that was being done, on the people involved. I respected that, and the staff respected that. It was, I thought, very inspirational.

STOW: Well, he's got to be one of the more highly, if not the most highly respected, individual who graced the doors here.

LYON: This is what I like about Bill Madia [ORNL director starting in April 2000]. Madia does that now, too.

STOW: He's very highly regarded. He's a good man.

LYON: It was a dash of cold water when Postma came along, because he was a disciplinarian, and he spoke sternly.

STOW: But, he supported you very...

LYON: But, he supported me.

STOW: Yes, very much so. When you look back over your years at the Laboratory, I would suspect that starting the *ORNL Review* and seeing it grow and persist for many years must be a real proud accomplishment of yours.

LYON: Well, it was, because, I was raised in a publishing family. My father owned the newspaper in our town.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: His brother was a newspaper man. His father was a newspaper man. And, my sister was an editor in New York. We're all tied up with reading and writing in our family, and this was an opportunity for me to exploit that. I came to it with a measure of ability...

STOW: All right.

LYON: And, it was very gratifying to me to have a magazine ...

STOW: Yes.

LYON: ... all mine.

STOW: If you could go back and redo things now -- go back to the mid-1960s -- what would you do differently now, than what you did at the time?

LYON: Nothing.

STOW: Nothing? Good.

LYON: Oh, I'm not bright enough to think of any other way to do it.

STOW: Well, I don't know that it's a question of brightness or not -- whatever you did was right.

LYON: I look back on [my time at the Lab] as the happiest years of my life.

STOW: Good.

LYON: And, I just don't regret anything.

STOW: Let's go back earlier now. After you came here in 1945 and then into the late '40s, 1950s, and early '60s, you were very much involved with community affairs, were you not?

LYON: Well, I have to tell you, that right after the bomb was dropped, the town was visited by Norman Cousins, the editor of the *Saturday Review*.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: He gave a talk, which we all attended, saying that the dropping of the atomic bomb changed the whole world politics situation and that if we didn't form a world federation of countries, we would find ourselves in an arms race that would result in the end of the world civilization as we know it. And, we believed him. So, we had a bunch of different pockets of world government advocates. We had Women for World Government.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: We had Teachers for World Government. We had an organization called Students for World Government. The whole town was galvanized into this fear of what would happen, if we didn't have a world government.

STOW: And, did you become an active participant?

LYON: Oh, yes.

STOW: What was your role at that time? What did you do?

LYON: I gave talks. I did a lot of mailing of written pieces. We went to meetings.

STOW: With regard to the scientists and engineers out here at the Laboratory, and, of course, this was still Clinton Laboratories at the time, there was a group of scientists and engineers that began to speak up loudly, was there not?

LYON: Yes, yes. And, here's where Ellison comes in.

STOW: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about what went on after the war, as it became evident that atomic energy was going to be a thing of the future and that there was tremendous political influence associated with atomic energy. I know that there were moves afoot to determine whether the future of atomic energy was going to be controlled by the military or by the civilian side. Bobby and Ellison, explain what went on during those years. And Ellison, I know you were active out here in the Laboratory in voicing opinions, tell us a little bit about what your role was at that point, Ellison.

TAYLOR: Okay. I came to the Laboratory in October of 1945. I came from Columbia University.

STOW: Yes.

TAYLOR: And, security, in a sense, was much tighter there, in that we didn't know anything about the preparations for an atomic bomb. The people who were at Chicago and the ones who came down here were much closer to the real action. We knew what we were working on there, and the general details, but we didn't have any idea of the timing. So, it was a great surprise, naturally to us, even more probably than it was here, because we had no idea, at least at my level, that the thing was going to come to fruition quite so soon. But, after I got down here, I learned all about this pretty quickly, and obviously, people were interested in the problem of where this was going to go.

STOW: Yes.

TAYLOR: And very soon, we got into an -- almost full-time, when you weren't at work occupation -- discussing how we were going to avoid what we saw as a problem of the Army continuing to operate all

the nuclear energy operations in the country. So, I couldn't tell you the exact start of the situation, but we soon began having meetings and coalesced into something that eventually was called the Association of Oak Ridge Engineers and Scientists. I think it started primarily at the Laboratory, but it was expanded to bring in people from K-25, which largely accounted for the fact that we added the engineers to it. Although there were engineers at the Laboratory, the bulk of the people that were active in this, I think, probably, were the scientists and the engineers.

STOW: Yes.

TAYLOR: Engineers were more used to waiting for what the company was going to do.

STOW: How soon after the war did this initiative get started?

TAYLOR: I can't quite place that. The first few months I was here, say, until the end of '45, I was mostly occupied with starting what I was supposed to do scientifically and learning about the town and how to live in it and so on. But, I think, already, probably in the middle of the winter, this was in pretty full swing.

STOW: All right

TAYLOR: By the spring of '46, it was already well organized, and the association was doing things locally -- sending letters, telephoning congressmen, and sending out groups of people to describe what we thought the situation and the solution was to any place we could get to listen. I, for example, went with a number of other people to Virginia, sometime in the spring of '46. We went around to a group of colleges that had been brought into this and lectured to each of them and discussed with people our belief that some sort of civilian [entity should control the development of atomic energy].

STOW: Yes.

LYON: So, you get the idea.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: If you were spreading the word in the spring of '46, and you came in the fall of '45, there's an idea of how quickly that happened.

STOW: Moved pretty quickly.

TAYLOR: Yes.

STOW: What was your role, Bobby? You were a wife of an employee out here and...

LYON: Yes, yes!

STOW: ... and an activist of sorts, but what was your role?

LYON: Well, I kind of deplored the polarity that it threw the Lab or the town into. I had friends on both sides. And, it was like the days of Roosevelt's New Deal -- if you're not with me, you're against me...

STOW: Yes.

LYON: ... And, I don't want to have anything to do with you. I lived next door to some Army people, and they were kind of querulous about this. They said, "What have you got against the Army?" And, I particularly did not want to join that polarity, and I think Stoke didn't either, but we were in favor of civilian control.

STOW: What sort of role did you take, though? Were you outspoken about this publicly?

LYON: No, no. I retreated from that argument.

STOW: I see. When did you and Ellison first meet each other? Do you recall?

LYON: Yes, it was through Ray Stoughton. Jen Stoughton was one of my early good friends, and I think we used to play bridge together.

TAYLOR: Three spades...

LYON: We played a game called submarine, after the bridge game was over, in which -- this was the four of us -- Ruth and Ellison and Stoke and me -- at a given signal, everybody gets off the chair and under the bridge table, and the first person who sits on the chair opposite wins.

TAYLOR: More athletic in those days ...

STOW: I'll bet you had a lot of fun playing that game, didn't you?

LYON: We were good friends. We had a lot of fun.

STOW: Let's come back to the ... uprising, if you will. Where did you go with this, Ellison, in the year 1946?

TAYLOR: You mean, where geographically?

STOW: No, I mean, where politically?

TAYLOR: Well, I wasn't one of the more active people. I participated in the AORES Association ...

STOW: Yes.

TAYLOR: Association of Oak Ridge Engineers and Scientists. I think maybe I was on the steering committee, or whatever it was called for a while, because I can remember going to meetings at which we had discussions as to what techniques to use, what we should do, and so on. And, while all this was going on, trying to get our point across, the McMahon bill had been introduced as a competitor of the May-Johnson bill. We were also troubled with other things that stemmed from security. The first really exciting thing that happened in this regard was that we came to work one morning, and found that one of the chemists had been "snatched" from his house, so to speak -- while he was still asleep -- and taken into custody by the U.S. Army Security, or FBI. I'm not sure which now...

STOW: My goodness.

TAYLOR: ... And, hauled off for questioning -- for reasons that we didn't know at the time.

LYON: Beginning of the Cold War.

STOW: Well, it was, wasn't it.

TAYLOR: Yes.

STOW: Do you remember who that was?

TAYLOR: Allen Gueron.

STOW: Not a name familiar to me.

TAYLOR: He had a bachelor's degree at the time. He worked in Kurt Kraus's group, and he went back to graduate school after this all settled down and became a professor at Yale, I believe. And, I believe he became a member of the National Academy of Sciences, so he had a distinguished career -- after this exciting start to it.

STOW: Very much so.

TAYLOR: But, this upset almost everybody in the Laboratory immediately -- that people were being treated in this way without letting us know what was going on. So, we protested loudly to authorities in ... Oh, wait a minute. I think I've got the timing wrong. This was after the AEC had come in.

STOW: Okay.

TAYLOR: So, scratch the date on that. This was a later problem then ... our excitement over whether we should have civilian or military control. Do you want to go into this a little bit or...?

STOW: Let's talk a little bit about what the Laboratory scientists did in 1946 to try to influence the direction that the AEC was moving.

TAYLOR: Oh, well. This was before the AEC. We're still with the Army.

STOW: I understand. We're in '46.

TAYLOR: Lots of people did telephoning to congressmen and senators, and representatives. As I told you, we set up lecture tours to states that would set things up for a visit and wrote letters to the editor and things like that. And, in the end, we won, which -- thinking back now -- is kind of surprising. It's the last time I ever had any remote influence on the Congress of the United States.

STOW: Influence, yes. Was there pretty widespread celebration or joy?

TAYLOR: I suppose there was some sort of celebration. But after that, that organization went on to more general interest in science and politics.

STOW: Well, yes. That evolved into the American Nuclear Society, didn't it?

TAYLOR: No, no.

STOW: No?

TAYLOR: No, that was purely technical.

STOW: All right.

TAYLOR: This blended into the Federation ... started out as ... the national thing was the Federation of Atomic Scientists.

STOW: Yes.

TAYLOR: And, I'm not quite sure whether that changed its name, or whether there already was a Federation of Atomic ... of American Scientists.

LYON: Yes there was. There were FAMS and FATS, I remember.

TAYLOR: Okay, that I...

LYON: We used to talk about the FAMS and the FATS.

STOW: Explain what the FAMS and the FATS are.

LYON: The Federation of American Scientists and the Federation of Atomic Scientists. And, there was interplay between them.

STOW: Yes. And, were those fairly active organizations here at Oak Ridge?

LYON: I don't know.

TAYLOR: Well, local people, I think mostly, were interested in our own local association.

STOW: Okay.

TAYLOR: Although, some of them went off to other places and carried on with the Federation of Atomic Scientists and Federation of American Scientists.

STOW: Let me turn to Bobby here for a moment and find out a little bit more about what you've done in the way of community affairs. Here in 1946 and then '47, you were watching what was going on with regard to the...

LYON: Well, I was active in the Women for World Government.

STOW: Okay, tell us a little bit about that.

LYON: I was going to meetings for that. I remember coming home from a meeting one time -- my parents were visiting me -- and my ten-month-old boy had gotten up and walked across the room, and I missed it. I remember that part. That was in March of '46.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: So, I was working then on the World Government thing. I thought that it was very important. As it turned out, it wasn't just as horrendous as Norman Cousins predicted, but we did get into a big arms race.

STOW: But your entire community life was marked by community outreach and involvement, right?

LYON: Yes, and trying to get food in the house. And, trying to meet a budget.

STOW: Well, you and everybody else, I guess, at that point.

LYON: Yes, really, because when rationing stopped, we were afraid of inflation, and many of us thought that rationing should be extended beyond the end of the war, if only to save the resources, because we thought the resources would be sky high in price. But, everything sort of evened out.

STOW: It did. It did. Now, one of the things we're trying to capture here, as we talk to ORNL retirees, is not only what you've done while at the Laboratory -- and we've covered that, I think -- but also what your community hat may have been. Can you briefly tell us a little bit about some of the community activities that you participated in, in the late '40s through the '50s, and so on?

LYON: We had a number of government sponsored cultural activities in Oak Ridge. We had Waldo Cohn's Symphony Orchestra, which turned into the Oak Ridge Civic Music Association.

TAYLOR: ORCMA.

LYON: ORCMA. And, we had the playhouse, which turned into the Oak Ridge Playhouse. I don't remember what it was first called. It eventually moved into the Jackson Square movie house, where it is now.

STOW: Yes.

LYON: I was on the board when that happened. I was on the board of ORCMA, assigning seats to people for the chamber concerts. I learned to sit on the left side of the auditorium so I can see the pianist's hands.

STOW: You couldn't turn the piano around?

LYON: And, what else was I into? I think it was sometime after that that the Recording for the Blind started. And, that was after the war was over, and some of the soldiers who had come back had been adventitiously blinded in the war...

STOW: Yes

LYON: ...and had a GI bill. And, this came to the attention of the alumna of Bryn Mawr College. A friend of mine, Tony Pleasanton, was home at a reunion and learned about this and thought perhaps Oak Ridge could offer scientific textbooks to read into a recorder for the blind. She started the Recording for the Blind unit in Oak Ridge, which was one of seven in the country. It was dedicated, initially, to technical books. And, I was on the board of that. Finally, I was the brailist for them. I taught myself Braille, and I "brailled" the labels for the disks, because they were records at that time. And, I also read a little bit for them.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: And eventually, I sold enough lemonade on the streets of the Downtown Shopping Center to afford to buy a Braille writer. So, then I turned that over to Charmian Cohn, and she became the brailist.

STOW: My goodness.

LYON: Meanwhile, I taught Braille to a bunch of Girl Scouts, and they would come every week and we'd punch out Braille slates.

STOW: And, all the time you were raising two sons and trying to meet a budget.

LYON: Well, they were pretty much raising themselves at that point. They were both in school.

STOW: But, the point you've made splendidly is that people who work at the Lab -- and I realize you didn't come out here to work until several years afterwards -- have made significant contributions to the Oak Ridge community over the years.

LYON: Oh yes. Oh, yes. We were all activists. You were too, weren't you?

TAYLOR: Yes.

LYON: We were both in the Playhouse. We were both considerably notable actors.

STOW: What role did you play, Ellison, that you recall?

LYON: Judge?

TAYLOR: I was judge in two or three plays. For some reason, I gave an impression of piety at the least opportunity. And, it turned out that the rector of St. Stephens Episcopal Church happened to wear the same size clothes I did, so I could be fitted out, pretty economically, to serve as a minister.

STOW: That made you qualified.

TAYLOR: Yes.

STOW: And, what roles did you play, Bobby?

LYON: *Hotel Paradiso*. Tell him about that.

TAYLOR: Oh, *Hotel Paradiso* -- a French farce, which had been translated into English and which almost everybody didn't think was much of a play.

STOW: Yes.

TAYLOR: ... in fact, at the intermission, who's the biology man?

STOW: Not Hollaender?

TAYLOR: Yes, Hollaender. Alex Hollaender and his wife walked out at the intermission.

LYON: Oh, they were very critical of the Playhouse.

TAYLOR: Yes. But the Playhouse was the most fun thing in that sort of community.

LYON: It was. It was. And it was a way to get away from the house in the evening. If you had a sitter, it was just wonderful.

STOW: Bobby, do you recall a role that you played that you particularly liked?

LYON: Oh, my favorite role was Eleanor of Aquitaine. I was in the *Lion in Winter*.

STOW: Okay.

LYON: And, Paul Ebert directed that beautifully. He turned it into ... well, it says on the front of the play script, "a comedy." And, he made it a comedy. It was just wonderful!

STOW: How long did it play?

LYON: Oh, it was the standard period. It was two weekends.

STOW: Okay. Well, we are down to about one minute left. So, thank you all for coming out today.

-----**END OF INTERVIEW**-----