

## **Badger Village Album: Clip index**

[Transcriptions abridged]

October, 2010

1. ***Hove\_Biebel\_background\_housing\_crisis.mp3***  
*Length: 01:21*

Hove: The biggest concern of the University following WWII was to find the means to accommodate all the veterans who were returning to the campus and who were having access to the University through the GI Bill. So the enrollment...was suddenly exploding...There were two concerns then: where were we going to find the instructional space for these people, and most of them being older, many of them were married students so we had to find housing for them. This included almost every available space we could think of in the community. We went so far as to go North to Baraboo...and created a little community of our own called Badger Village.

2. ***Zillman\_background\_BV\_in-depth.mp3***  
*Length: 02:10*

Badger Village was the housing complex put together during WWII to take care of the munitions workers who were then employed across the road in the Badger Ordnance Works...When the war was suddenly at an end, the need for powder was reduced drastically, and so Uncle Sam found itself with these Badger Village lean-tos...it was not the best of housing as you can imagine. But these were suddenly now vacant, and the University... got together with the federal people and the people in charge of that operation up there...and so the University then...got ahold of those apartments, and most of it was trailer type housing, and rented it out from Olin Mathewson and the federal govt. and in turn rented it out to the students who had children, because that was our crying need to take care of the more than two sized family among our student population. And so I think at high tide there must have been 700 to 800 student families living up there.

3. ***Halle\_how\_he\_became\_manager.mp3***  
*Length: 02:36*

I came back at the end of March of 1946 and my wife had remained in Madison during WWII living with three other nurses and she was working at University Hospitals. And when I came back, we didn't have any housing. And she found us a room on Gorham St. where we had to share the bath with 5 other students. And it was not very convenient. However we were glad to be together. I stopped in shortly after I arrived to visit Don Halverson...and Lee Burns...having worked for them in 1942...They welcomed me and said, we'd like to have you go to work right now as the manager of Badger Village. And I said, well I'm really intending to return to graduate school...They said, well we'll throw in a 2-bedroom house in addition to the salary...So we decided that she would go back to school...and we'd take the job at Badger and I would work and then when she graduated,

she'd go back to work and I'd go to graduate school. However it didn't work out that way. At the end of that year, I liked what I was doing and she was pregnant. So we decided we'd stay for a while, and I stayed there until we moved to Madison in late 1951.

**4. *BV\_Young\_impressions.mp3***

*Length: 01:28*

BT: When you arrived, describe...Badger Village, your first view of it.

PY: Well, you have to remember that we came from the country in Maine. So it seemed like quite a village to me. I think I would describe it as a strange domesticated army base...and then as you get closer, and as you get inside, they all seemed like a house of cards. A very fragile kind of impermanent feeling about these little quarters that we were in. It was roomy enough, but very fragile...I did not feel isolated...not at all. In fact I felt almost too surrounded. It was very crowded feeling to me and very busy. Mostly women. In the daytime, the men all climbed into the old rickety buses and off they went. But we were comfortably housed and very good from that point of view.

**5. *Halle\_two\_types\_of\_housing.mp3***

*Length: 01:40*

LH: We had two types of housing at Badger. One was in the row houses, which had drywall partitions and there wasn't any air space between them. And in one case, where two families lived side by side and their dining room tables were against the common wall, one man asked his wife to pass the ketchup and the family next door passed the ketchup.

BT: ...What was the second type of housing?

LH: Well there were barracks in so-called North Badger...Those barracks had been designed for single people...We were able to get the barracks also and we converted those to two-room apartments for families without children or with one child under two...because we had community bathrooms in there...We had a total of 700 apartments, and the population would run around 2,700 including children.

**6. *Mohr\_overall\_impressions\_of\_BV.mp3***

*Length: 03:09*

MM: You were living with another family and you didn't like it so much, so you looked to move out to Badger Village. When you did move, what were your first impressions?

DM: Well we were just happy to be by ourselves. And it was very rudimentary, it was just two rooms, in like a converted barracks, it had been a barracks for people who worked in the Badger Ordnance Plant. Anyway we thought it was going to be fun. They did a nice job on converting those, they were two rooms. One room was part kitchen, part dining room, and part living room. Everything was new, like they had a new hide-a-bed...not a refrigerator, it was an ice box...And then there was a bedroom, and they provided bunk beds and wardrobes. But we brought our own double bed...And then the bathroom facilities were down the hall. And the ladies had their bathrooms and showers and the men had theirs...And then there was also a laundry room, and I thought that was

pretty great because we had all brand new washing machines...they were washing machines with wringers. And no dryers, of course. In nice weather we could hang our clothes outside, and in bad weather they had a separate room where you could hang your laundry inside.

JM: Everybody was in the same boat.

DM: Yeah, that's I think what made it enjoyable. Nobody had any money...there was a general store right on the grounds...And then in the summer they provided grounds and land for us to have a garden.

JM: And they plowed it for us...It was about 40 feet by 6 feet.

DM: So we thought it was pretty much fun. I don't know if I'd want to do it again, but at the time we thought it was not too bad.

**7. *Lampman\_depressing\_place.mp3***

*Length: 01:17*

JL: Anyway, we lived out there at Badger Village. Now that was rough living. Kids these days that live there at Eagle Heights don't know what it's about [laughs]. I mean, we had a coal stove for instance in the middle of our living room, and my first son burnt his arm just learning to walk out there. And the guys had to take a bus in every day, 30 miles.

AB: So life in Badger Village sounds as though it might have been a little depressing?

JL: It was depressing and it was rough and we had no money. Well I shouldn't say that, because he still had Navy money...It was such a grim little place, and we didn't attempt to do a lot of fixing up. I was terribly busy with being pregnant with the second and having a boy a year old. We had two just 13 months apart. So I was too busy to think about anything else.

**8. *BV\_Johnson\_laundry\_and\_cooking.mp3***

*Length: 01:54*

The laundry was a daily problem. In those days there were no paper diapers. We all used cloth diapers and they had to be washed every day, winter and summer. And in the wintertime, I would put on my gloves and go out to the outside line and start hanging up the diapers, which would freeze in the basket before I could start hanging them out...When I finished that...I would peel them off the line at night...take them back into the apartment and string them up inside...But there were always diapers either inside or outside, every day of my life. I thought it was kind of like playing house; it didn't bother me a lot.

Another source of entertainment, or ingenuity was required, was cooking because there was one transformer in Badger that was always defective...At night when we were supposed to have a meal, the only thing to be done was to open a can of Franco-American spaghetti or baked beans...put it on the coal stove in a pot...and then we would light some candles and...we'd sit and have a candlelight meal, so to speak.

**9. *Korach\_managing\_Truax\_buses.mp3***

*Length: 01:37*

...of my years at the University in which part of the time was spent in managing the Truax bus system, which was a 20-bus system that ran between the Truax housing project and the university campus. It was designed to serve single veterans...There was also a Badger Village bus system which was run by another fellow named Bruce Soley. We had trouble getting enough buses. We had only two city-type buses built by Ford...and the rest was a collection of dilapidated school buses and ex-army buses that we were lucky to keep going. I remember one particular bus bouncing along down East Washington Ave. one night bounced right off of its chassis...However, we were pretty resourceful. Even though the bus looked like it fell apart, we had it back together and running again. The Badger Buses were all school buses...and Bruce had his troubles because his were probably even older than mine. But they were maintained at the same place as mine were so...he and I usually had a meeting once every couple of days to see if we could help each other out in running these transit systems.

**10. *BV\_Lemberger\_bus\_and\_class\_schedule.mp3***

*Length: 01:35*

One of the things that we attempted to do living at Badger was gear our class schedule to coincide with the bus schedule...you would try to avoid having a 7:45 class and a long break and a late afternoon class, or if you could get your laboratories in the morning rather than have them run until 4:20 in the afternoon. The trick was to do everything you could to get the assignment committees to give you the sections you were looking for. I was in the School of Pharmacy...you just caught a 4:30 bus if your lab ran until 4:20. The buses used to pick up at the Union, and then they picked up at University Avenue where the railroad tracks cross Univ. Ave near the Biochemistry building...I virtually always caught it at the Biochemistry building...

**11. *Anderson\_cold\_bus\_hitchhiking.mp3***

*Length: 00:40*

One evening we were coming back from the University and the bus was 14 below zero, and the bus stopped in Middleton and refused to run. So then we all got out and hitchhiked back up to Baraboo. And I thought some more about how nice it would be to be back in Washington. I hadn't had that hard a time even in the Army.

**12. *BV\_Johnson\_buses.mp3***

*Length: 01:06*

Very often, when my son was older, we would sit on the bed looking out at the frozen street waiting for the trickle of men to come up from the bus in the evening. They generally left in the dark and they got home in the dark...My husband says that he liked to go to the bus a little bit early, there were always many buses. There was no problem of getting seating, but the location of your seat was of great importance, because if you didn't sit in the front, you couldn't read. The back of the buses bounced so badly that all

you could do was talk. He says that in the winter what they talked about all the time was whether or not they'd get up and down Springfield Hill...people who go between Madison and Baraboo are familiar with this rather ominous bit of highway for a bus.

**13. *BV\_Johnson\_winters\_and\_summers.mp3***  
*Length: 01:03*

We had one severe winter in 47 and 48. There was a big storm in early December...and never really melted until March or April. So always the walking was treacherous...the driving was very bad, and the walking was almost impossible...The village itself in that year was an ice, place of torture, I guess. In the same measure that the winters were cold, the summers were very hot because there was no circulation of air...We had to have a fan blowing directly on us all the time for any air at all.

**14. *BV\_Lemberger\_studying.mp3***  
*Length: 01:11*

As I recall, we studied in our own apartments at the kitchen table. Again though, these were largely veterans in a married population, very serious about their education. So there wasn't a lot of hijinks going on in the hallways in the evening, at least not until 10 o'clock or so...people didn't play their radios too loud...Probably the bigger deterrent to studying was that fact that the bus ride kind of wore you down. You get home after that bus ride and unwind a bit and be kind of tired. I think your fatigue was more of a handicap to studying than the atmosphere in the building.

**15. *BV\_Lemberger\_meeting\_E.B\_Fred.mp3***  
*Length: 00:38*

The one experience that my wife and I had with noted people, people we should have recognized: there was one day this elderly gentleman came through our building asking a lot of questions about how things were at Badger Village, what life was like, how things were going, and seemed to be a very accommodating, very friendly person. And after he left, we looked at each other and said, "Who was that guy?" Turned out it was E.B. Fred, the President of the University at the time. We should have recognized him but most of us didn't. He just came unannounced, just a fine gentleman.

**16. *BV\_Baime\_diversity.mp3***  
*Length: 01:14*

I guess Badger Village was just a U-turn in my life. I was born and raised in Minneapolis, city and apartment-dwelling, but a lot of diversity. But let me tell you, when I got to Badger Village, I had a whole new meaning of that word. The impact of the people who wouldn't normally have gone to university at all...that diversity was absolutely fantastic. It just was an impact of honesty, tension. We shared only that we were women, most of us had children, and most of us were poor. And it was cold, and our houses were identical until we got in them. In the evenings, a favorite sport was walking up and down and

peeking in peoples' windows to see what they had done. And they had been all the way from being painted pitch black with red dramatic things, to little cutesy-folksy, so it was really fun, even the diversity of the way they designed those little apartments.

**17. *Mohr\_movies\_company\_Christmas.mp3***  
*Length: 01:21*

DM: Well, they showed movies there at Badger Village. I think we did that. We really did not get involved too much socially. Like I think they had dances there; we didn't do that. But we did have company...My cousin and her boyfriend came and visited us...When our first child was born, my mother came and stayed because they had a guest room there in the barracks...and then Grandpa's mother came and stayed for a few days after the baby was born...That year we did not come home for Christmas, we had our Christmas there, because the birth of the baby was pretty imminent...That's about as much as I remember. Do you remember any more?

JM: Did we have a Christmas tree?

DM: I don't remember that... probably not.

**18. *BV\_Johnson\_WHA\_radio\_classes.mp3***  
*Length: 00:35*

I remember listening to whatever classes were offered with enormous interest, on WHA. Because we needed more intellectual stimulation, women did, in those circumstances. Although we subscribed to a lot of magazines, I didn't have a lot of time to read unless the baby was sleeping. But I could listen to the radio while I was doing my household tasks, so it was a very important element every day to me.

**19. *BV\_Young\_children\_and\_school.mp3***  
*Length: 00:55*

When we got to Badger Village, we had one that was in first grade; she was a 6-year old. And we had a little boy who was 8 months old...I think a baby one year old will accept life as he finds it. And the little girl had one of the best teachers I think that any of my children have ever had. Her name was Esther Bubbly...The schools again were rather temporary looking, but they had a very light, airy, lively feeling. And it was a pleasant place for children.

**20. *BV\_Schereck\_anecdote\_communal\_spirit.mp3***  
*Length: 01:44*

You make good friends, you all band together in a time of need. I had a set of ratchet wrenches that I loaned all over the place...One time, I entered a contest; it was a Crusade for Freedom propaganda contest...I came up with some pretty good suggestions, and I won one of the three national prizes, which meant a trip to New York. By and large, I had nothing but school clothing, and I didn't have a good suit. I didn't have clothes I'd be proud to wear going to New York theater. Word got around, though. One of the fellows

who had a nice brand new pair of shoes my size let me have them. Another fellow let me have a suit. Another fellow let me have a topcoat. So when I went to New York, I looked the part of a winner, and had great fun.

**21. *BV\_Baime\_Swan\_Lake\_men.mp3***  
*Length: 00:59*

So we had a wonderful variety show, and I was a dancer and studied ballet all my life, so I gave exercise classes out there. One of the things we decided to do was Swan Lake with all men. So all the men showed up expecting to really lampoon and jiggle around. And I said, "It's much funnier if you are serious." So suddenly they began to really train like ballet people...I gave them the real Swan Lake. My husband was the male dancer, and one of the smaller men was the queen...and we tied a rope on him so that when my husband would lift him up, the rope carried him way off stage...It just was a fantastic version of Swan Lake with these men and their tutus. So that variety show was fun, and there were lots of humorous skits and things.

**22. *BV\_Lemberger\_sports\_Thanksgiving.mp3***  
*Length: 01:20*

Among the things that we did do for recreation that should probably be mentioned is that we did have a lot of athletic events. We had softball leagues in the spring and summertime, we had basketball leagues in the wintertime, we played a lot of touch football out there. In fact, one of the things that we did in Building 3 at Thanksgiving time, we would get together and the 12 units on the north end, the 12 guys would play the 12 guys from the units on the south end of the building in what we called the Toilet Bowl game...We would do that in the morning, and this may sound chauvinistic, but...the women would get together and cook turkeys and make a huge Thanksgiving dinner. They would do that cooperatively while the guys were off playing some football, and then we would have like 2 o'clock in the afternoon...we would have a building Thanksgiving dinner, and it was a great way to spend a holiday. That's among the fond memories of the time, too.

**23. *Halle\_end\_of\_BV\_1951.mp3***  
*Length: 02:37*

The university intended, when they opened Badger, that it would remain open perhaps 3 or 4 years until the peak of enrollment had passed and the building in Madison caught up. However, building in Madison didn't catch up that fast and the enrollment didn't slow down that quickly. Furthermore, living at Badger was very inexpensive. Many of the veterans paid only \$18 a month rent, and the maximum was about \$26.50. And you couldn't touch that in Madison. And while admittedly there were some hardships in living there, once you got used to it, it was pretty reasonable. And as the social activities and recreational activities increased, it became a reasonably attractive place to live...And students decided, we don't want to move until we finish our academic work. And of course the manager of the bus operation started in as a freshman and finished with a law

degree and a bachelor's in economics. And he lived the entire time there...Students were still living there in 1951 when the Korean War required that the Ordnance Plant be opened to produce powder. At that point the federal government decided that they wanted to take back the housing. So we had to terminate our lease in 1951, with the agreement that students could remain who were there until they moved out or finished their careers, whichever happened last.

**24. *Mohr\_reflections.mp3***

*Length: 00:57*

DM: I don't know if I'd want to do it over again now, but it certainly was a very positive experience...I liked all the people there. I felt we were pretty lucky actually, considering the times...The rent was certainly great; it was probably about \$23 a month...It was a good experience. I just kind of feel sorry for young people today that don't have to go through an experience like that. I know most young people today want to have their house all paid for, or at least have a house, have a car, and everything that goes with it. We didn't have any of those things and still we were very happy, and it was great.

**25. Conclusion / Cast of characters**