

Barbara Mettler, Tour Story, Boston, May 24-25, 1955

Tour Story Tape 1: Preparations at Rock Ridge

The tour was the fulfillment of a dream which I'd had for a long time. From the beginning of my work, I wanted to gather a group around me which could work consistently on principles of creative movement. As these principles developed in the laboratory of my studio, and as they began to awaken interest throughout the field of modern dance, it seemed logical that we should try to show these on a national basis. This meant touring. My idea of a tour was somewhat different from the usual theatrical ventures. We had always approached dance as primarily something to do and only secondarily something to see, so our tour would be a demonstration tour showing people a way of dancing which could be enjoyed by everyone. We planned to offer teaching workshops, as well as demonstration performances. In our performances we planned to offer audience participation like we had been doing for the past many years. We would be pioneers, going across the country, showing people a new way of dancing, something which was for everyone, breaking down distinctions between dancer and audience, between artist and layman.

The idea of the tour began to take firmer shape when I found that some of my most advanced students could make themselves available during the season 1953-1954. Cora Miller was anxious to make a change from her job as the head of the dance program at the University of Georgia. Bill Ward could interrupt his studies toward his master's degree for a year. Marsha Eastman, my assistant in the creative dance program at the YWCA would give up her job when I gave up mine. Will Carbo, who had left the field of industry to become a student of dance and design, was free to become a member of my group. And Heather Barnes' family was willing to let her take a year off between high school and college for the experience of the tour. Cora and Bill were in Athens, GA, where Bill was Cora's student at the university. Will and Marsha and Heather and I were in Boston, and that is where the tour plan ripened. We would be a dance group of six: four women and two men. We needed an extra member, someone to do secretarial work, take care of the business of the tour. Little did we know how much we would need someone. But it did seem advisable for us to take a non-dancer along. It was natural that we should select Evelyn Cunningham to fill this role. She had come from Baton Rouge, LA, to Boston to study with me, and she was earning her living by doing secretarial work. On a part-time basis, she was helping me with correspondence and business affairs of my work. Evelyn was thrilled about it, and that made us a party of seven.

What about transportation? Paul, the property manager of my New Hampshire studio, whose interest in our work was scarcely less than that of the dancers themselves, had always said that what we needed was a bus - a second hand bus that could carry us all wherever we wanted to go. The idea of a second hand bus never appealed to me much, and we investigated every other possibility. With Will's help, I studied the problems of trailers, station wagons, and a marvelous new vehicle on the market called a Safari, which seemed ideal except that it would cost \$6,000. When Paul said that there was a second hand bus for sale in Meredith for \$900, it seemed to be the answer. It had been a very good bus, carrying many people, much equipment, and traveling long distance. It was owned by Straig, who is the man of Meredith, being fire chief, taxi man, gas station, garage owner, telegraph operator, bus driver, and so many other things I won't remember long. We decided then to buy the bus and to remodel it according to our own specifications. So I

got together the \$900 and in no time found myself the owner of a somewhat decrepit but dignified General Motors bus.

This was in the summer of 1953. It had been decided that the group would assemble at my New Hampshire studio in July, and that we would work all summer preparing for the tour which would begin in the early fall. As soon as we got together we found out there was much to be done, and each one was assigned his tasks. To Paul and Will was assigned the job of transforming the bus into a mobile home for our professional family. Seats were torn out, plans were made for sleeping, eating, and storage quarters. In the back was to be a complete kitchen, with a gas stove, electrical refrigerator, and sink, supplied by a water storage tank. The big question was how can we separate the men's and the women's sleeping quarters? Various solutions were offered, but it was finally decided to build a compartment on the roof which could be opened up at night to shelter the two men while the women slept inside. Responsibility for the bus weighed heavily on the shoulders of both Paul and Will all summer. Because the bus had been his idea, and because he was the main builder involved in the remodeling, Paul felt that the responsibility for the safety of the group on our travel was largely his. But Will was the one who was going to have to drive us, and his concern for the safety of the outfit knew no bounds. Will was a highly trained machinist who was used to working with delicate precision instruments. The huge complexity of the bus was an entirely new responsibility for him, and he took it hard. He insists that the tour took ten years off his life. If so, it was because he was the driver of our bus.

We called the bus El Pachydermal, our idea of what "elephant" might be in Spanish. The reason for calling it an elephant was obvious. The Spanish flavor derived from Arizona, where our group had hoped to settle down together at the end of the tour. When I think of putting Will, with his delicate sculptor's hands and his sensitive nervous system, in charge of that bus, and the life and limbs of our group, it makes my blood run cold. He was the logical choice for driver because he was at home with machines and had driven many types of cars and boats, as well as flown an airplane. But the bus was something different. A great, big, heavy piece of machinery that sometimes seemed even too much for Paul to cope with. When it came time for Will to get his operator's license, he borrowed a truck. How he got the license I will never know. He said he got it from the goodness of the heart of the examiner.

El Pachydermal was indeed a unique vehicle in every way. Its appearance never failed to collect a crowd wherever it was. Once when it was left open and unattended in the town of Meredith for a few hours, a steady stream of curious people poured through it from one end to the other, speculating the uses to which it and everything in it would be put. The final design was a masterpiece of ingenuity and imagination. Modeled after some of the most modern trailers, every inch of space was put to good use. In the daytime, bunks were turned into seats, and tables, and working space. Even the driver's seat became a bunk at night, and shelves and closets and all the personal, professional equipment that we had to take along were provided in all corners of the bus. The men's penthouse on top was a compact looking thing when closed up for transportation, but at night it opened up into two big butterfly-like tents, which made the bus look as if it were about to fly away.

When it came to getting insurance for the bus, we created a minor revolution in the insurance business in Boston. It could not be classified; no one knew what to call it. At first, they planned to file it as a

commercial vehicle because they considered us a theatrical crew in a class with circus performers and other types of entertainers, which made us, as they said, a very poor moral risk, and the insurance was sky high. They told us that if people like us were in an accident that no one would ever stand up for them, people would always immediately leave the scene of the accident, and that it was practically impossible to defend such a troupe. Adding injury to insult, they told us that the insurance would be \$800 a year. That was such an impossible figure that I told them the bus would have to be scrapped, and the tour plans with it, if this was the only type of insurance they would give us. This caused them to go into the whole matter again, and after several visits to the local and Boston insurance agents to the studio and their inspections of the bus and their examination of all its occupants, especially me and the driver. When they saw that we really would not or could not pay the \$800 a year, they changed their minds and decided to classify it as a mobile home. All the way on our route, we met this difficulty of classifying the bus; entering a toll gate on turnpikes and bridges, officials would open their mouths and gape, saying, "What is it?" In trailer parks, we'd be awakened by the sound of children's voices, laughing and wondering and discussing our vehicle.

Before we actually took off on the tour, our number was reduced to five. The first casualty was our secretary, Evelyn, who decided rather late in the summer that she didn't want to continue in the direction of dance, but wanted to go into a serious study of theology. Although that lightened the load on the bus and made it easier for the designers to find places for sleeping quarters for the women inside the bus, it left us shorthanded in a very serious way. Having to do all the business and correspondence and desk work ourselves while on tour turned out to be an almost impossible task. But it was out of the question to fill Evelyn's place. At the last minute, we couldn't take a stranger into such an intimate situation as the tour was going to be. We made one attempt by contacting a former student and old friend of ours, Faith Metcalf, who was doing secretarial work at the United Nations. She was very fond of our group and really would have liked to come along, but economically and otherwise it turned out to be not very practical for her.

With Evelyn's decision to leave, we were reduced to six in number. Then, very late in the summer, I began to realize that Heather was too young for such an experience that the tour was going to be. As the time for our departure grew near, I began to see the difficulties that were going to come up professionally and personally, and I knew that it would be difficult even for those of us who were seasoned in work and life in general. I suddenly saw very clearly how difficult it would be for Heather and how difficult it would be for us if she were to go along. She was looking forward to it so much that it was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do to tell her that she really shouldn't come. But she's a very sensible girl and understood what I meant, and fortunately was able to get the scholarship which she needed to go to college even though it was very late in applying. She applied both to Vassar and to Bennington and received a scholarship from Bennington. As it turned out Heather was in college only half a year before she became engaged. At the end of her freshman year she was married.

When we assembled in July of 1953 to start making preparations for the tour, we had as yet not one single engagement. It had not been possible for me to do anything except send out a rather general preparatory announcement in the late spring. It was necessary to follow up this announcement with an intensive publicity campaign and to make haste in getting engagements so that we could chart our tour. Cora and Bill were put in charge of these tour

arrangements, and they worked day and night to complete them. It is no small job to set up a tour like that. First one sends out an announcement, waits for inquiries. Answers inquiries, gets definite offers. Then accepts offers in relation to a possible route, juggling people, stalling for time, and really practicing quite a sleight-of-hand. Cora and Bill studied maps, typed letters, stamped envelopes, and worked in every possible way against all odds with the result that by late October we had a loose tour route mapped out.

The economic basis of the tour was a very shaky one, but we were full of hope. We were offering to schools and colleges and community centers a choice of plan. They could either pay us a flat fee for a performance, or we would take our chances on gate receipts. But we would accept room and board for the entire group in return for teaching engagements. I guaranteed the group \$50 a month each in addition to paying expenses, so it was necessary that we cover all this somehow. When Evelyn left, it was decided that Phil would be our business manager, handling money, collecting income, and paying bills. He was most conscientious about this and did an excellent job. We used to tease him by calling him Money Bags, and once, when someone called him Sugar Daddy, we were surprised to find that he had no idea what this meant.

Marsha was a trained secretary, and we expected her to take over some of Evelyn's secretarial work after Evelyn left. As it turned out, Marsha was very busy because we also gave her the problem of cooking for the group and generally managing our household affairs. So Cora and Bill typed also. There was always a lot of typing to be done. So now our group had taken its final form. Five of us: three women and two men. The designers of the bus were greatly relieved, because as it turned out, three could sleep very nicely on the inside of the bus, whereas with more it might have been very difficult. The driver's seat opened up into Marsha's bunk at night. The seat opposite became Cora's, and mine was a kind of Pullman compartment in the middle of the bus which turned into our dining and working table during the day.

There were many preparations to be made entirely apart from the dance program. Marsha, who was our house mother, had to see that dishes were bought and cooking utensils, that curtains were made and sheets and bedding provided for. She was busy with her sewing machine night after night at the farm. Bill was in charge of packing, and for many weeks before we left he was making lists of things that had to be taken along and measuring space to see how everything could be packed in. We had, of course, to take with us personal clothing for all kinds of weather. We were going through Northern winter into the deep South and then coming back in the spring, we were going to be gone about six months. We had of course limited closet space so we had to plan very carefully. We had all our professional equipment to take along, our practice clothes, our performance costumes, our instruments, and other objects with which we worked. Fortunately, our costumes were not the kind of problem that they are for most performing groups; we performed always in a basic leotard. We had three different colors and a few changes, and the women sometimes wore skirts and the men sometimes slacks, but the costumes really didn't take up too much space as you might think they would.

We had two sets of instruments with us, those instruments with which we performed and those instruments which we intended to use when we were teaching groups. I think most of those instruments went into a hole in the floor which Bill and Will and Paul ingeniously figured out. We had to have cooking utensils and places for storage of food and places for laundry and linens and all those things. In addition to this there had to be tools for maintenance of the bus and for possible emergencies. The bus was going to be really loaded. And here's where the trouble began: Will, feeling himself

entirely responsible for the safety of the group, and knowing it was an old bus, wanted us to load it up just as lightly as possible, so that everything he saw going into the bus hurt him, caused him nervousness. There was many an argument as to why we couldn't leave out this or that, and sometimes one side won, sometimes the other; I tried to arbitrate. Of course we women wanted many things which men consider unnecessary, but Bill thought himself responsible to keep everybody happy and often took the women's side. Paul, justifiably proud of all the space he had provided for us in the bus, kept telling us that it could hold almost anything. This left poor Will alone in his efforts to keep the bus as light as possible, and at first even I didn't help him very much until I realized that he really thought it wasn't safe; he considered it a very old piece of equipment and he felt that every single pound added to some danger. He was much more worried about it than I realized.

Tour Story Tape 2: Preparations, continued.

We were a lively and colorful group, all dedicated individually and collectively to the study and research, teaching, and demonstration of the principles of creative movement which I have been working on for the past 20 years. Cora was a seasoned professional who had done pioneer work in various responsible teaching positions. She was a gay and sociable person with a wonderful sense of humor, which never allowed us to take ourselves too seriously. We called Marsha our Intellectual. She was a literary person who liked to write and hoped that she could somehow make use of her interest in creative writing in combination with her professional work in dance. Bill was primarily a musician, whose work in music had brought him into the field of dance. He could sing and play almost any instrument and added a strong creative element to our work in sound in relation to movement. To round out the music, Will was a designer, most of his creativeness being in his eyes and hands. Bill, too, was a creative hand worker, and so was Cora, and the two of them carried on continuous experimentations in the making of interesting new kinds of musical instruments.

So, just as our work, beginning with movement and dance, involved all the arts, so all the arts were represented in the very interests of our group. But we were not only artists. Most of our time during these days of preparation, as well as on tour, was occupied with duties which were only indirectly related to our real jobs in the field of dance. As well as being a dancer and writer, Marsha was an extremely domestic person. She seemed to have all the household skills at her fingertips, and to love them. So we made her house mother, and held her responsible for all the things which have to do with food, and clothing throughout the tour. She had her own portable electric sewing machine, and most of that summer she was busy making costumes and curtains for the bus, and sheet liners for our sleeping bags. Will was upholstering the seats in the bus, and becoming acquainted with the bus's mechanical operation. He had an instinctive and trained relationship to mechanical things, even though he'd never been confronted with anything quite as monstrous as our Pachyderm. Bill, in addition to being dancer, musician, and worker, and our business manager, was also our gardener, assistant to Paul. Bill came from the rainside in Oregon, and had a love and natural relationship to all growing things. He knew and loved plants and animals of all kinds and took to gardening like a duck to water. So it was his responsibility at that time to see that the garden grew, and that we were well fed with green things that grew in the season.

The difference in temperament between our two men is perhaps worth talking about. Bill was a country boy, through and through. Will was from the

city, Bill was from the far west, Will from the deep South. Bill was blond and round and hearty with a pink-and-white, Anglo-Saxon complexion. Will was a Cajun from the swamps of Louisiana. Dark skinned and aesthetic, part Spanish and part French, Will was a devout Catholic. Bill worshiped nature. It was inevitable that the two should clash, and they did. But personal misunderstandings were minimized in the pressure of preparation that summer.

Geographically, the origin of the members of our group covered a wide range. Bill from Oregon, Will from Louisiana, Marsha from Connecticut, Cora from West Virginia, and I from Illinois. We sometimes had fun laughing at each other's speech patterns. Bill always used the word "pack" when we were to say "carry." They accused me of regularly mispronouncing the words "schedule" and "wet." In age our party covered a wide range, too. Marsha was the youngest, being 23, with Bill just one year older. Will was 27, Cora 32, and I was 46. I have always found that groups containing different kinds of individuals always produced the most creative results. I've always found it monotonous in teaching groups where all the people were the same age or of the same background or had the same size and shape. I loved groups where people were all different in ages and temperament and background and color and size and shape. The difference in temperament and background were such as to make it a particularly lively and creative organism. We all shared boundless interests and belief in the work we were doing, so that the varieties of our temperaments directed all of our energies toward the same goal.

In preparing for our tour, so much time was taken up in making ready the framework that is to say the problems with the bus and transportation, and the business arrangements, that we really didn't have as much time on our dance work as we should have had. Our project was a big one. Our goal was to give our performances the form of improvisation throughout. In fifteen years with my group in Boston, I had come to discard composition entirely in favor of improvisation, which I came to believe was the most creative form of dance. In Boston, I worked for nearly 8 months with a group of five in group improvisation. Shortsightedly, I thought that by getting this tour group together, all of it getting ready for professional work, I thought that we would pick the work up just where we had left it. Of course this was not so. We had not worked together before, the five of us, and it was necessary really to begin at the beginning. It took us a long, long time to get to the point where we could improvise together as a group, and naturally while we were here we never did quite reach the point because we never had time to relax into the work like we should have. Nevertheless, we worked hard, day by day, and made headway. We wanted our program to show all faces of work, to show movement, movement and sound, movement and design. In all these areas, we wanted to show both individual and group improvisation. To be able to improvise a satisfying performance in front of an audience was much more dramatic than the mere execution of composed dances. Composition may require a high level of technique, but improvisation requires a certain creative maturity. So we worked to acquire the creative foundation, knowing that each performance would take us farther ahead in our abilities to improvise together. Our time was very short, and when it was finally time to go we all realized that we had not been able to achieve our goal.

Preparing a program of composition requires practice and practice of technique, and the minimal requirement of such a program is that the technical requirements be fulfilled. In preparation of a program of improvisation there is also practice and practice, but the practice of improvisation with technical preparation was a subordinate role. We had our hour and a half of technique daily, but that was preparatory of our real

work, which was hours and hours of improvising together, in twos and threes and fours and in our group of five. In a program of improvisation, the minimal requirement is that there is communication of a creative feeling, and so we worked to develop this feeling. Most of our work was at a huge barn studio at Rock Ridge Farm, which was the home of our work in Meredith, New Hampshire. Early mornings in New Hampshire, even in midsummer, are cool, and so we would often start our technical preparation out of doors. As the heat of the sun developed, as we needed a more concentrated atmosphere, we would move inside.

You cannot imagine how more satisfying this work in improvisation is than work in composition. In preparing for the usual type of dance performance, one is just preparing, and the work has only value as preparation. In preparing for program improvisation one is really dancing, not just preparing for something but actually doing it. There's no difference between preparation and the real thing, because each time one improvises one does the best one can. Each moment of dancing is really it. Of course, performances lose all that strained, technical effort; performances can be no more nerve wracking than the daily preparation in the studio, and more enjoyable. The freedom of our work has helped us to break down so many distinctions, among them preparation and performance. Each moment of preparation is a performance, and each performance is preparation. As a group becomes skilled in improvisation, the distinction between improvisation and composition breaks down because improvisational forms become so clear and the dancers become so aware of them that they have the same value as a planned composition and could almost be remembered as such. Skilled improvisation unites freedom and control in perfect unity. In the completely free flow of the creative idea, at the same time there is control necessary to direct that idea into immediately satisfying forms. This are why those experienced in this type of work can hardly go back to the other.

As our publicity began to go out, the press became interested in us, and we were fortunate enough to have had a very favorable mention of our work by John Martin in his Sunday column of the New York Times. This gave us a tremendous lift, and felt that all we were doing, the efforts we were making, were proud. The field of modern dance has always looked at me and my work as scamped, not accepting it because it was so unorthodox, but at the same time not wanting to admit any values which it might prove to have. John Martin's support was just what we needed to soften up the opposition in the orthodox dance world. The women's page editor for the Christian Science Monitor in Boston was fascinated with the idea of our bus life, and wanted to write a story around pictures that would be taken of dancers and their domestic duties in connection with the bus. I suppose she wanted something like Marsha in her leotard cooking something over the stove. But the bus was far from ready to have its picture taken. In fact, we didn't get around to painting it until the tour was half over, so we didn't get our story in Christian Science Monitor. It was the Monitor's editor that showed some surprise that there would be both men and women in the bus, and we began to realize that perhaps we were a little naïve in expecting people to accept the unusual situation. One day, Richard [?] from Yankee Magazine came to visit us, and stayed all day and almost all night. The account he wrote for Yankee illustrated in his own pictures records his impressions of the wonderment, fascination, and delight. The regional editor of the [?] Citizen was most cordial and spent most of his time discussing the theory and practice of our work.

Our costume problems, to an outsider, would seem simple enough because all we required was the most basic possible costume to show the beauty of pure human movement. But to find a basic costume which was both becoming and

decent... there were by no means any to be had. I'd been working on the problem for nearly 20 years, with more or less satisfactory solutions according to what I could find on the market at the time. We finally settled on a kind of elasticized jersey leotard, just put out by a maker in Chicago in a few different colors. I like to have a group wear all black, because it furthered the element of abstraction and set off the beauty of the natural colors of the human body. And we realized sometimes when we were moving and performing in grand gymnasiums that black would not be lively enough. Then we were undecided as to what color to chose and finally settled on red, as a strong, active, basic color. Realizing however that some environments might not be suitable to red, we decided to have a third alternative, green. And so we had to take along a black, a red, and a green costume for each of us.

The women's costumes were fitting, one-piece suits with straps over the shoulders, and Marsha had to make for the men out of the same material trunks. The group had a tremendous laugh over my costume. I have an unusually long torso and flexible waist. I seem to wriggle out of most costumes with the greatest of ease while I'm dancing. So an especially long one had to be ordered for me. When it came, it was so long in relation to the narrow tubes of elasticized jersey that it really looked out of human proportions. But it fitted me, and it was one costume I couldn't wriggle out of. It seems to me that it would be amusing for someone who was accustomed to elaborate costuming of most dance groups to observe our critical study and trying on and discussion of these simple, basic tubes, and showing just as much effort and attention to the perfection of these as the wardrobe mistress of the most elaborate, theatrical costumes could have done. The men's trunks were quite a problem. The two boys were such different shapes that they liked to wear their trunks quite differently. Will liked to wear his very high, and Bill just couldn't keep his up so he preferred a low level. Marsha kept busy sewing and cutting and trying and fitting and redoing to please our fussy males.

We needed certain instruments which we had become accustomed to working with and improvising with in our performances. We needed six pairs of shakers. We wanted sturdy ones that would stand up to wear and tear. We also wanted some that were simple and basic in form and color. After thoroughly investigating the field of rattle manufacture, Bill decided with the rest of us that a certain type would be best, a rather large plastic rattle with a black head. We were amused to find out that these heads were made of colored ball floats. We needed five pieces of fabric or material which we could improvise with in ways which we were accustomed to doing. Cora canvassed the Boston waterfront and came back with some wonderful fishnet which she and Marsha and I liked very much and which we all worked with for a while, but for some unknown reason the boys never liked to dance with the fishnet. The one point at which they were unified completely and wholly; they just didn't like it. We used it for half the tour, and then couldn't live with their complaints any longer and switched it to yellow cloth, which satisfied us all although we three women always preferred the net. It was a mystery to us just why the boys rejected it.

Tour Story Tape 3: Final Preparations and Start. Goddard College.

As the summer went on, invitations for performances and workshops began to come in, but oh, it was a long way from an invitation to a performance. There was the matter of fees, which always seem to be too high, and then the matter of location, because we had to follow, of course, a continuous route, and could only accept one engagement after another if they were in nearby

locations. Having never toured before and having no idea what transportation in the bus would be like, we really had no way of knowing how much time to leave between engagements. As it turned out we sometimes had left too little time and had to scramble to make our dates.

The first engagements which were settled were at the beginning of the new year and in spring, and it seemed to be difficult for us to fill in the time in the fall and early winter. But with much juggling and bargaining and writing and whining, Cora and Bill managed to arrange a route which would begin in Vermont, go down the East Coast to the South, come back to the Middle West in the Spring.

In the meantime we had come to realize that the bus alone would not solve our transportation problems. We knew that we would have to park it in some trailer park where we could do some housekeeping, but from there that we would have to run around a good deal and would need some other kind of transportation. So there seemed to be no alternative to taking along a car as a sort of tender to the bus. We had a jeep station wagon which we had intended to sell, but we took that and turned it in on a little Ford 6 cylinder sedan. Paul made the deal, and it was a good one. But alas, the Ford was black; that was about the last color in the world we wanted. But since it was the best bargain that Paul could make at that time, it seemed the only thing to do to take it. It was a fine little car, and by calling it "the Cricket," we actually became fond of its shiny blackness. By now we had acquired five sleeping bags, one for each of us, and two air mattresses for the boys. The boys had the special luxury of air mattresses because they were sleeping on the floor of their compartment whereas we women had upholstered seats on which to put our sleeping bags. It was a questionable luxury, because their mattresses were so narrow it seemed to me it would require quite a feat of equilibrium to stay on them at night. My bag was an arctic one, made of wool and down for the bitterest cold. I wanted to be comfortable in the North, but oh how I steamed in the South! There was no room for blankets or anything like that in addition to our sleeping bags, so wherever we were, our bags were our beds.

The weather was getting cold at Rock Ridge, oh how very cold. As anyone who is from New Hampshire knows, from the middle of August on winter approaches perceptibly. We stayed at Rock Ridge until the end of October. It was no small task keeping warm. Rock Ridge is a summer place, and it was all Paul could do to keep the water system from freezing up completely during October. We had a gas stove in the kitchen and oil stove in the living room of the main house, but all the other living rooms and lined up apartments were icy. Paul and Edith had one electric heater for their two little apartments, and I had one for my three rooms. Fortunately, the small studio had an electric panel, which we always considered too expensive to use, but this time we could not have gotten along without them. We sometimes had to do our dance work all bundled up with sweat suits and sweaters and socks. Every night, Paul would drain the entire water system, then have to get up early the next morning to turn it on again. Many mornings, it had frozen anywhere, due to some collection of water in the pipes, so sometimes we didn't have water until well in the morning, until Paul had managed to thaw it out with a blow torch and other methods. Edith and Paul and their two boys were getting ready to go out to Arizona to prepare a place for us there where we could come at the end of the tour. So in addition to all our other preparations there were problems of closing up Rock Ridge, sorting out the accumulations of professional and personal material which had been collected over many, many years.

It was decided that we would have to have publicity pictures, and it was arranged with Gerda Peterich, one of the few experts in the field of dance photography, to come and stay with us for a few days at the end of September. She's a very thorough worker and wanted to become thoroughly acquainted with our work so that she could give complete coverage of pictures which could be used for all sorts of publicity purposes. The pictures had to be taken in a big barn studio which could not possibly be heated in any way, and oh how we froze! We had to be in our leotards when the pictures were taken, but between times we bundled up with all sorts of warm clothing. I'm afraid that Gerda was the coldest of all because she did not have the opportunity of movement that we had. This torture went on for about three days, but the results were well worth it. Getting good pictures of improvisation is really hard, but we did it like this: we would improvise for a while, and Gerda would tell us which scenes she thought would make good pictures. Then we tried to capture those scenes.

By the end of October, we were all set for a trial run, by making a trip up to Plainfield, VT. Cora and Bill had persuaded Goddard College to take us in for a week workshop. The bus was not ready, but we didn't need it anyway because Goddard College was going to house and feed us. So on Sunday, Oct. 25th, we loaded up the Cricket with instruments and costumes and personal clothing and started off for Goddard. I myself was tired and a little uneasy, and I was never wishing that the trip would last a long time. In the dance studio, our group worked together in almost perfect unity, submitting itself like a flock of birds to the laws of pure movement. But once out of the studio, in the crowds of daily life, the individual temperaments became dominant, and of course there were many conflicts to be ironed out. Of course already on this first trip to Goddard, the problems of where to eat, when to eat, and how to plan the trip were there. We were trying to act as a cooperative group; perhaps that was a mistake; perhaps it would have been better if from the start I had directed all our affairs with a firmer hand. But I found we all learned to put up with the peculiarities of the others in the common interest of our work, and we got things done.

We were guests at Goddard College for a week, having rooms in a little guest house and our meals with the students in the dining room. Every day we worked with the students for an hour and a half for five days and then at the end of the week on Saturday evening we gave a performance. Each morning we spent practicing by ourselves in our own work. We had looked forward to Goddard because we had heard that it was an experimental college with a free approach to education, and we thought there would be a good understanding of our work there. There was good understanding, and enthusiasm of a large part of the student body is described in an article in which Marsha has written about this experience. The students seemed to appreciate our general organization. There seemed to be very little organization at Goddard; we found ourselves having to organize the framework as well as the content of our work there. The faculty seemed to leave everything to the students and the students themselves don't seem to have very much discipline. We, who quite often seem to shock people by the freedom of our approach, were actually quite shocked by the extreme lack of discipline at Goddard. It was an intellectual atmosphere and the students grasped immediately with their minds the significance of our work, yet in some ways it was harder for them than for most groups to put it in to practice. They seemed to be more used to theorizing than actually coping with real problems. They were totally inexperienced with any sort of group work; there was an overdeveloped sense of individual quality. We had a lot to give them that they needed and knew they needed, and we really quite took the student body by storm.

Our performance at Goddard was notable because it was our first performance as a group and a first experience for this group giving an entire performance in improvisation. We were definitely somewhat timid, but the strength of the material carried us and our audience along. Although all movements were improvised, our performances were planned to follow a certain form. They would begin with an introductory talk by me which led the audience in to some improvisational movements to give them a firsthand experience in creative dance. Then the program developed into three parts: the first, pure movement; the second, sound and movement, and the third, design. The next to the last dance in the final design section was planned to be a duet showing movement in relation to some stationary object. This duet was to be done by Will and me and was entirely dependent on whatever stationary object we could find on location where we were to perform. This always meant quite a scramble, especially if our preparation time was short. Will and I had to dash about, looking for something suitable, come to an agreement about it, then do a sufficient amount of improvisation relating to it so that we could dance efficiently at performance time. We had plenty of time at Goddard, and did one of our best duets which was in relation to two stationary columns in the room where we gave our performance. As time went on we had less and less time to find objects, and by the end of the tour we had to leave out this dance entirely.

Our programs varied in length from about 55 minutes to an hour and 15 minutes or more. Sometimes at the end of the program the audience was asked to stand up and stretch and relax before going home. Since the general shape of our program remained the same from the beginning to end of our tour, since I think it is an interesting one, I'll go into more detail now in describing the outline of it.

Whenever possible our audience was seated all around, and that was the case at Goddard; we decided to give the program in the large dining hall and were able to have the audience around us. The group and I would come out in the middle of the dancing space, they would sit down and I would stand and talk to the audience briefly and give them a chance to improvise just where they were sitting on some of the themes that we would improvise on during the program. Then we would all start the pure movement section, improvising on the theme of expressive use of separate body parts all together, first the head and then the arm and the trunk and then the whole body. Then we would improvise individually on the theme of abstract qualities of movement. Will would show slow movement, Cora fast movement, Bill large movement, Marsha small movement, I smooth and jerky movement, and Cora, tight and loose movement. Then we would show a duet with Cora and Bill and a trio with Marsha and Will and me and then an improvisational movement with the pole.

And the second section, which was sound and movement, would begin with three vocal sounds, an individual improvisation by Bill. Then another improvisation by the whole group and Cora, using natural sounds, Cora using her voice and the rest of us using not voice, but hand and feet clapping, the floor, and our bodies and hands together and so forth. Then with some individual instrumental improvisations, Will would use two cymbals and I used sometimes a hand drum and sometimes a little wooden African dog bell, and Marsha accompanied herself with two Cuban sticks, Bill a tambourine, and Cora with a lute. Then the whole group would improvise with each member carrying a pair of shakers.

And then in the design section, Bill would begin with an individual improvisation with a length of rope, and Marsha used a bamboo pole, and Cora had a coil of wire, of aluminum wire, and Barbara and Will would use some

stationary object, and the entire group would dance with pieces of fabric. First as I have said already, we used fishnet, and then later we used yellow cloth.

We kept our instruments and design objects outside the improvisational movements which I had the audience do before the program started because they were already quite successful. First I let the audience try out movement with separate parts of the body, the head and the hands. They could do this just as they were sitting there in a very easy, natural way. Then with their hands I let them try abstract qualities, first slow and then fast, then so they could experience group movement, a small group of two, I would ask members of the audience to turn towards each other forming couples, and to use their hands to find some relationship to each other. Then I would have them experience the use of breath in relation to movement, they would all exhale together and I would direct them in this, then making their breath audible so that their voice was used in the exhaling, then adding a clap of the hands and then a stamp of both feet on the ground, so that all together there would be a kind of shout and stamp so there would be some movement. Then in order to use some kind of instrumental sound in relation to movement I would have them look in their pockets or their purses and find some object which made some interesting sound, and then while they played that, or made the sound, they tried to feel the quality of it, and let the whole body move with that quality, a sort of shaking or scraping sound, to try to experience an expressive movement. Then, so they could experience the design element of movement I had them take their hand and draw lines with that, visualizing the line and then trying to move their whole body in accord with the line their hand was drawing.

The form of our programs was quite unique in many ways. First of all, the content, the demonstration of dance as something natural and easy and coming right out of individual need for movement, then training the different individual qualities, each one dancing in his own way, according to his temperament, his age and sex, life experience, then the group dancing, the individual quality of each group or each duet, each trio, depending on the personalities of the people in the group. Our approach to movement was an abstract approach; we didn't tell stories, we didn't interpret music or drama, we simply presented pure movement as creative expression, and part of our program was just silent, showing how pure movement brought that out, and of course our use of sound, making our own music using our natural means of the voice, everyday objects, and any instrument we could get our hands on, making all our own music, not relying on outside music, not using music as background.

Our approach to costuming, paring down the accompaniment to the body to a minimum, then using materials such as fabric or wire or net or rope to enhance the movement. We used these sometimes as body covering almost like costume. And then of course the improvisation, showing dance and completely creative experience coming right out of the moment, using all one's faculties, all one's senses to create a real experience for the dancer, here and now, which then could be communicated or shared with the audience, and for this purpose we had the audience all around so the audience could observe the program like a picture in perspective. It became very much a part of the dance, they were breathing the dance, they were almost able to touch the dancer. These are the unique features of our program and these were the creative things that we wanted to show on tour.

Wherever we went, the program was received as something entirely new, and because of its newness it was sometimes accepted and sometimes rejected.

Always in the audience there was someone who found in our program the answer to many of their creative needs, and who were deeply satisfied by it. At the other extreme there were those who couldn't make head or tail out of it and found it disturbing and couldn't accept it. Of course the large bulk of people in our audiences were highly entertained, enjoyed it, thought about it as it was going on, accepted it as improvisation, and then probably forgot about it, or even may have wondered afterwards what it was all about and why they liked it. So the newness of our program was both an asset and a liability, an asset because we had no competitors, really, there was nothing like it, and a liability because anything strange can be hard to take. The success of our programs depended upon the liveliness of our audiences, and the open mindedness, and the naturalness and simplicity of them. Sometimes highly sophisticated audiences enjoyed them less than simple, natural people. I don't know of any other group which approaches dance in just this way, and besides myself will never take a group on tour again, I feel like this tour does occupy a certain unique place in the history of dance, and that the unique form of our own relations simply reflected the uniqueness and the content in the work.

Of course Goddard wanted to engage one of us as a teacher of dance, but this wasn't possible. I believe they did engage a dance teacher for the first time the following year, and there were several students who wanted very much to study with us. One young boy followed us around from morning to night and begged to be allowed to join our organization. It was too bad to light such a fire and not being able to keep it beside the fuel. This was the frustrating part of our whole tour; wherever we went, people wanted more of what we gave them, yet we had no way of giving them more. There was no one to who we could send them and we ourselves were not in a position to accept them as students. That was the main reason why, at the end of the tour, I had to completely revise my way of work.

[Gap in tape: Tour Story Tape 4 indecipherable]

Tour Story Tape 5: On the Road: Philadelphia, Washington D.C.

We decided to park our bus in a trailer park in Camden, NJ, which is right across the river from Philadelphia where we were going to give our performance. It was Wednesday night and we were not to give the performance until the following Tuesday. We wanted all this time for an extended preparation period. We were uneasy about our program, realizing that it was still very green. We would stay in the bus for a few days and then move over to the city to be nearer the YWCA where we were going to give our performance and workshop. In Camden, we found there were many kinds of trailer parks, deluxe and otherwise. The deluxe ones were not for us, partly because we could not afford their fees and partly because they did not seem to think we were up to their standards. A bus is in a distinctively lower social category than a trailer. But we found a nice park that was willing to take us in. And here began our first real experience with domestic life in our bus. As usual, the bus attracted a number of curious bystanders as it was rolled into its position with the park chief.

One of them, a round and jovial old fellow with a friendly smile, asked me if we were in show business. I said yes, realizing of course that he meant something quite different, but not knowing what other category to place it. "I thought so," he said. "I'm Toby the clown." And we shook hands on it, feeling ourselves to have a sound basis for mutual understanding. His admiration for our bus and assurance that it would be a much more practical means of transportation for us than the usual trailer pleased us mightily,

and seemed to classify us in the top ranks of show business society. Because we had no toilet facilities in our bus, and most modern trailers do, we were put near the wash house which added to our comfort and convenience. By this time our duties were pretty well defined. Will had all he could do to look after the bus, seeing that it was properly parked and leveled, and checking up on it so that it would be ready for the next trip. Bill had been assigned as Marsha's household staff and helped her with the laundry, which was a two-man job. He also took care of garbage and rubbish and the dish wash water, which had to be carried out to the drains at the washhouse in pans.

Cora had been put in charge of housing arrangements, and Paul, social contact, leaving me out of these as far as possible. It is often very difficult for me to fulfill social responsibilities in connection with my work, especially the job with the new... Each new engagement presented a real creative challenge to me, planning the work in relation to the new situation. And the group was wonderful, trying to relieve me of everything except the overall planning of the performance and the teaching workshop; most of the time to try and get a picture of the task we had undertaken on this tour. The fact that we five dancers had to do absolutely everything by ourselves loaded every one of us with responsibilities and work which were just about all we could carry. I'm sure that anyone who has ever toured even under luxurious conditions will tell you that it was no joke. Our conditions were far from luxurious, doing all our own housekeeping in our trailer park under primitive conditions, managing our own business and publicity, writing and typing our own letters, maintaining two vehicles, one of them a heavy piece of machinery, meeting new audiences and students, having to adjust our material accordingly, and moving from place to place on a tight schedule which took us uninterruptedly from one engagement to the other. Keeping up the level of our dance technique and maintaining a level of freshness. All this would have been hard enough if our program was ready, but it wasn't. So in addition to these duties, we had the added strain of trying to improve the creative level of our work. It makes us smile when people say to us about the tour, "Oh that must have been fun." It was a uniquely interesting and worthwhile experience; I don't believe any of us would call it "fun."

This is not to say that it didn't have its lighter moments, some of them delightful, some of them hilarious. But there was no time for play. I remember with chagrin how I told the two girls before we left that they would have every opportunity to meet men under the most favorable circumstances along the way. Well, nobody had any time to meet anyone. We had absolutely no social life. There was no time for it. In the cases where our sponsors gave some sort of party for us, it was a one time affair with no possibility of developing any social contacts which were made there. We didn't even have time to think about or want a social life. It was only later that I began to realize the false premises on which I had brought the girls along. Both girls wanted to be married, but of course so did both the boys. Some might think, well why did not our two boys and two girls get together? Well, it seems strange that they couldn't. All of them such exceptionally wonderful people with the same intense interest on the subject and the dedication to the same goal. Perhaps it was our same goal that made us more like a family unit, so that romantic thoughts would really have been out of place. We lived together like a family, and worked together like people in a laboratory. We were together day and night and developed a high degree of skill in moving in relation to each other and adjusting to each other's individuality. There were times of tension and nervousness and irritability, but the pressure of work made it impossible for anyone to indulge himself in these directions. We simply had to learn to learn to work together efficiently. The philosophy of our work was one of health and naturalness and cooperative group effort, so

we tried consciously to apply these principles to daily living and I believe we succeeded to a remarkable degree.

We demonstrated in our daily life the principles which we were demonstrating in our dance work: the ability of a group to generate creativeness from within, a kind of creative organism by adjusting to the individualities of its separate members. There were shifting duets and trios within the group of five in daily life, just as there were on the dance floor. Sometimes it was the two men opposing the three women. Sometimes the three in the Cricket opposing the two in the bus. Sometimes the two from Georgia taking sides against the three from Boston. Sometimes the three college graduates, Cora, Bill, and Marsha, misunderstanding the working man, Will, or vice versa, with me in between trying to maintain equilibrium. The interaction of course created drama, just as it does in movement. And our training in creative movement enabled us to control these forces and not let them get out of hand.

Early morning in the bus would find the three women sleeping peacefully in their sleeping bags on their upholstered seats, which had been turned into a bunk in the interior of the bus, and then men in their compartment on top. Marsha's alarm clock would ring, because she had to be the first one up to get breakfast. Usually about the same time the bus would begin to rock. One of the boys would scramble over the side and down the ladder to the ground. One by one we would emerge, in bathrobes and disheveled, carrying our little bags with toothbrush and other toilet articles. And we would proceed to the bathhouse. Marsha would put the kettle on when it was cold and light the gas oven to warm up the bus, and the boys would bring up one of their electric heaters. Gradually the bus would become the scene of great activity. One by one we would come back from the bathhouse and make ourselves ready. That meant fishing things out by our compartments, rolling up our sleeping bags, transforming the bunks back into seats, and getting our night equipment packed away. There was much going back and forth, up and down the aisle, in and out of the door. All of us insiders, each one intent on his own problems. The women tidied up the bus, opening up the curtains which had been drawn at night, and the men would clean up on top.

Then came breakfast, always a good hearty breakfast; Marsha was most concerned about our eating. Fruit, cereal, fried eggs, bacon, pancakes, all good things. And we would sit, tightly squeezed in the little Pullman compartment which later would become our beds. Dishwashing would be done by the one who had least to do in other directions. Then we followed preparations for takeoff. In Camden, this meant loading up the Cricket so we could all go over to Philadelphia and use the YWCA for practice. There would be another scramble to get our practice clothes and instruments and publicity and load them in the Cricket. Finally we would be off, and our day's work would begin. At night we would come home again, stopping somewhere along the way so that Marsha could do her grocery shopping. She would get supper while Bill tended to his financial matters, Cora wrote some correspondence, and Will looked after the bus. More often than not, I would flop down and rest, trying to keep my brain clear so that creative thoughts could flow.

Our performances always included a considerable amount of explanatory talking by me, and that was by far the hardest part of my responsibility. Words are not my medium, and yet the verbal explanation was an important element in our program, enabling the audience to find a relationship to the new material we were showing them. So I always worried a good deal about these talks; only very gradually did they get easier for me. After a good supper, we were ready for bed, and the bus would become again a beehive of

activity getting ready for the night. Dishes and typewriters would be put away, out would come the sleeping bags, up would go the tent on top, seats unhinged to make bunks, curtains closed, until we would crawl into our bags and all would be still.

After a few days of this routine, we loaded up the bus and moved into Philadelphia to be nearer our place of work. We would give a performance Monday evening and a workshop the next night. The Philadelphia event was not notable for the size or enthusiasm of our audience, and involved an incident which could be considered unpleasant or comical depending on the way you want to look at it. We were performing in the gymnasium, which we expected the staff of the YWCA to prepare for us. But by 4:00, nothing had been done. Inquiries gave us the information that the workmen had gone home, and there didn't seem to be anyone around to do what had to be done, which meant cleaning the floor, putting up seats, and taking out of the room furniture and decorations from a previous occasion. We decided to take the matter into our hands ourselves. So utilizing our forces, we went out in different directions to make our room ready. The floor was filthy, and Bill, ever resourceful, found himself a pail and a mop and found himself washing it. That was that.

The morning after the performance, I was met by the director by the YWCA who was quite drawn from a sleepless night. Her anger was hard to control. "What did you do to the floor?" she said. "It's ruined. That floor is never supposed to be washed." I could see us being sued for the laying of a new floor, and I tried to bring a counter attack by telling her how we had been left in the lurch. Then I remembered the insurance we had taken out to protect us against such accidents, and I told her we would be glad to lay a new floor. But the storm was over; she had let out her pent-up feelings, and ended up only charging us five dollars for a new mop.

The morning of our Philadelphia performance, we appeared on TV, the Allen Prescott show. It was in the early hours of the morning, something like 8:30 which meant that we had to be at the station long before that to rehearse the program with the director. Our program was a short sample of the program we were going to give in the evening. We take to TV programs like ducks to water; it seems to be a most natural medium for us. The atmosphere of a TV studio is entirely improvisational, and the improvisational nature of our approach seems extraordinarily well suited for it. As we improvised we could easily adjust to the requirements of time and space, and the technicians seemed to have a wonderful time working with us. When we come in to the studio, they all look bored, expecting just another theatrical dance group whose work is not made for the confines of the studio and on which they don't expect to be able to do a very creative job. Then we start to work, and they come to life. They come to action during the program, experimenting with the angle and superimposed shots. When it's all over, they congratulate us on the unusually reliable quality of our work. So it was in Philadelphia, and our TV program was the most interesting part of our stay there. On TV programs, we women wear skirts over our leotards and the men wear slacks. This is to pretty us up a bit and to avoid any criticism of our exposure of bare flesh. The evening after our performance, I gave a workshop for a small group at the YWCA, and the next morning we returned to our bus for the next lap of our journey.

The next stop was to be Washington, D.C. We had no performances scheduled, but two workshops, one at Gallaudet College for the Deaf, and one at Howard University. We all were to remember this as the place where we almost lost the Cricket for good. It was dark as we approached Washington,

and we made the mistake of not stopping at a trailer court before we got into the city. We just kept going, and found ourselves in the heart of Washington with nothing to do except go on and look for a trailer park on the other side. The bus in the lead took a wrong turn, and in trying to get back on the right route, it became turned around and it was some time before we found that we were going north, just the opposite of where we wanted to go. The Cricket had failed to trail us this time, and was somewhere out of sight. We never seemed to be smart enough to arrange definite meeting places in case of emergency, and this was an emergency. We had made no arrangements about where we would stop, although we did know the route number that we would take out of Washington. So there was nothing to do except follow this route and, after finding a trailer park, hoping the Cricket would find us. Here was the snag: all the trailer parks were full, and one by one they turned us down. By the time we found one that would take us in, it was so late that the park was closing, and instead of allowing our bus to remain out near the highway where the Cricket could find us, they bundled us into a back corner, and then turned the lights in the park out.

Well, the poor Cricket rode up and down that highway from Washington and Alexandria and back innumerable times that night, thinking we had vanished into thin air. In the meantime, Will and I alternately remained out on the highway, trying to locate the Cricket as it passed. It was bitter cold, and as one stamped and slapped himself and jumped up and down on the highway to keep warm, the other kept the fire going in the bus and prepared warm soup. But no sign of the Cricket. Towards the night, we realized we might be able to make contact with them through Gallaudet, so we called the college and left them a message as to where we were and went to bed. Finally the Cricket rolled in, and its occupants stumbled out and in to the bus, more dead than alive. This incident is continued on the next side of the tape.

Tour Story Tape 6: On the Road: Washington, D.C., Chapel Hill, N.C.

This is the time when Cora insisted that Will talks in his sleep. Will was in Cora's bed because it really looked as though they would not come home that night, and Will was so cold and tired that he wanted to avoid the job of putting up the boy's compartment. So when Cora came in and lugged him out, she insists that she heard him say, "Advance slowly men."

We had a few days in Washington before our engagement to catch up on the laundry and professional correspondence. Tour arrangements for the entire trip were by no means complete, and there were innumerable letters to be written. Mail was constantly coming and going and it had been quite an organizational problem to set up a system whereby our mail, which would all come by way of our New Hampshire studio, could reach us promptly. We had made Faith Metcalf in New York City our clearinghouse. Ray Tinkering, the Meredith mailcarrier, would forward all our mail to her. She would sort it out and open and read those professional communications which she thought might have to be attended to immediately. Then she would write or wire us so that we could take action. Some business correspondence she could forward directly to [?], our accountant in Boston, or Robert Reno, our attorney in Concord, New Hampshire. Our personal mail she sent to us wherever we were. For an amusing account of her role in this capacity, one would have to go to Faith herself, at the same time asking her to tell an elaborate story of her trip from New York City to the Meredith studio in the fall before we left. Faith is a fabulous storyteller and always has plenty of material on hand since she works in the Spanish section of the United Nations.

On the afternoon on which we drove over to Gallaudet College for the Deaf to take up residence there for a few days while offering a workshop, we were touched with the greeting by a huge sign covering half the length of the administration building reading, "Welcome Barbara Mettler." The warm welcome which we received in Gallaudet, the genuine appreciation of our efforts, and the wild enthusiasm among the students for our work made this experience one of the happiest and most worthwhile of our whole tour. Gallaudet College was the only college in the whole world for the deaf, but it was supported by the District of Columbia and is directly responsible to the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare. It is an inspiration for any teacher to have contact with the members of the faculty of Gallaudet. Teachers that are handicapped anywhere seem to me to be way above the average teacher in the seriousness of their attitude toward their work and their selfless efforts to achieve their goals. Here at Gallaudet I feel that the educational work is on an especially high level. Gallaudet is a part of the Columbia Institution for the Deaf for which the Kendall School for children forms a part. The students are totally deaf and for this reason do not speak until they are taught, making the teaching of speech painless as well as fruitful for the deaf. It's one of the hardest tasks that teachers face. Speech is an entirely artificial technique for those who do not hear, and in the teaching of it, the senses of sight, of touch, and movement have to be skillfully employed to substitute for the sense of hearing. Such patience and understanding and love as those teachers of the little children show, and such hard work it is for the child! By the time they get to college most of the deaf students can make themselves fairly well understood in speech and many, but by no means all, can read the lips of a normally speaking person. But because speech is such an artificial means of expression for them, they often resort to sign language, a marvelously beautiful, symbolic set of hand gestures which are pure dance and delighted the members of our group.

We seemed to be the only studio that approaches dance as pure movement without relying in any way on sound. Our work in sound comes as an additional element after the experience of pure motor rhythm has been established. In studying our work, the deaf student is not only not at a disadvantage, but he has an actual advantage over the hearing person, and in an area of creative activity in which he can naturally excel. The deaf student is less distracted than the hearing one. He is used to centering his attention on the communication of pure movement forms. Movement is his natural, everyday means of communication, and he is completely at home in it. Whereas for the hearing person, speech is his everyday language, an ability to communicate through movement is usually very undeveloped. Then there is a matter of self consciousness. The hearing person learns to be self conscious of movement expression, whereas the deaf can hardly be that way since he is so dependent on it. I explained these things to the students and teachers, and of course it was a happy thing for them to know.

The workshop which I taught was in the evening, and a very large number of students took part, both boys and girls. Contrary to our usual custom, we had consented to give a short demonstration for the whole college before the workshop began. The seats all round the edge of the big assembly hall where we were to work were full, and we have never had a more concentrated, attentive audience. As I spoke, a skillful interpreter quickly translated my words into sign language. Their response to our improvisations was natural and immediate. It was their language. They understood it. Of course a group like that is unsophisticated, and that always helps in comprehension of our work. Children love our performances and had no problems of understanding, and there was something childlike in these handicapped persons.

When our demonstration was over and the audience had been dismissed, I threw myself into the problem of giving the workshop group a strong experience in creative movement expression. It was not difficult. They followed me with the greatest of ease, sometimes even anticipating developments of themes before I had a chance to present them. The test of validity of my approach to teaching creative movement expression has always been this tendency for children and simple groups to press on to the next step, sometimes ahead of me. For instance, I might outline a series of creative problems, say one, two, three and four. Perhaps while I was still concluding step three, the students would already be opening up the areas which would be indicated in step four. This is the way it was with that group at Gallaudet, and the members of my own group observing from the sidelines were wide-eyed and breathless in amazement and delight.

I believe this is the only adult group I've ever had which came to me with an already highly developed feeling for group movement. This faculty can be developed in every average group, just sometimes it takes a long time. As I do in every demonstration class, I included toward the end some exercises in creative group movement. But long before I got to them, the group feeling was so strong in that body of students that I almost felt as if I couldn't teach them anything in this direction. Feeling for basic group forms, which I usually have to develop laboriously by means of a long series of systematically graded exercises, was there immediately. This group seemed almost to begin where others, at the end of the lesson, would have ended. One of the goals of our work is the leader of the group, where leadership has to be found according to the needs of the situation, and individual impulses are subordinate to the laws of movement to which the group is a whole in subject. Without any explanation at all, this group instinctively sensed the meaning of this experience and set about creating it for themselves with spontaneous ease and enormous enthusiasm. Deaf people laugh and shout and make all sorts of natural sounds as expression of emotion. It's only the verbalizing that is unnatural for them, and this room was full of sound. The breathing, the stamping feet, all sorts of vocal sounds expressing utterly natural joy in an entirely new experience. They just loved it and so did we.

We didn't like to leave Gallaudet, and planned to come back some day. The next morning I had an equally enjoyable experience with the little children. They were very little ones, about six to eight years old, and of course the handicapped child tends to be younger for his years. There were about fifteen children, little girls and boys, and not a word was spoken the entire time. Our communication was entirely through movement, and we had no trouble at all understanding each other. I put them in a circle around me, and gradually made them understand that one after another, they were to come in the center and make any movement they wished, and that the whole group would do the same thing with them at the same time. The first children were a little timid, but gradually, as we went around the circle and the idea became clearer and clearer, the excitement snowballed and each child outdid himself in the use of his movement and imagination. Everyone was on an equal basis, the little spastic girl who could hardly walk in a coordinated way was still as able to make just as interesting movements as anyone else because she could do anything she wanted. Even a vague little child who they said was aphasic was drawn into the spirit of the thing and contributed to the experience of the others. Oh, what fun it was to hear them laughing and gurgling and squealing with joy as the movement experiences unfolded entirely on their own terms. Here were movements completely adjusted to physical, emotional, and mental level of the child and created out of a need. Because the individual experience was so real and so satisfying, so was the experience as a group. The children had just as much fun doing each other's

movements as they did their own, because they knew that their turn would come and the others would have to follow them.

The contrast between our Gallaudet experience and the experience between our other Washington engagements was so great that to have been [?] if it had not been more nearly tragic. We had looked forward to our engagement at Howard University because it was a Negro college, and the Negro people are among the world's most naturally rhythmic. I had thought that our sponsor and I had understood each other. I was to give a workshop, open for participation by the entire university in which the relation of dance and all the arts were to be actively experienced by students from different departments with little or no dance training. When we arrived, the studio was set up as though for a performance, with rows of seats at one end. It became clear that we were expected to give a show with our own group, and that the teaching program was to be an entirely subordinate role. After our performance, my students were to be the members of the Howard University dance group.

We were not prepared to give a performance, and it would have been impossible for us to do so, but our sponsor was so [?] disappointed as to become insulting and abusive. I felt sorry for her; she had counted heavily on a performance and had publicized it, hoping it would strengthen further the prestige of her department. I told her that I could support her ideas about the unity of the arts much better by having an actively participating group than by giving a show to passive spectators, but she hardly heard me. She thought we had cheated her. And the real tragedy was that she thought that she was receiving a raw deal because they had been able to pay us only a nominal fee. Her insults rained about my head and I had all I could do to swallow my pride and pull myself together.

At a time like that, a professional falls gracefully back on the technique which will carry him through, though the heart may be failing. I had in addition the moral support of my outraged group, whose sympathy with the difficulty of my position and indignation bolstered my ego to withstand the attack. At the same time, I was concerned for them; I wasn't quite sure what they would do. The look in their eye was definitely ferocious. It took my attention off myself and relieved some of my nervousness. It was a horrible experience. Apologetic introduction by the sponsor, disappointed audience, an impossible group to work with. Those little dancers had had all naturalness trained out of them by the program of mixed modern dance and ballet which they had at the college. They were self conscious and silly, never getting to the heart of the problem. I worked as hard as I had worked before, but with very few results. After a while, the audience started dribbling out. It was mostly so they could get to other classes on time, but it had a distinctly demoralizing effect.

When it was all over, although I was a wreck, our sponsor reversed her attitude and told me she saw what I meant about the value of active participation. But I was in no mood to be patronized, and I told her we didn't want our check. She gave it to Bill, who knew nothing of my refusal of it, but after we had left the university I sent it back. Oh, how tired one can be after such an experience. We decided to splurge and had an extravagant fish dinner at a famous restaurant which Cora knew about.

It was quite a trip down to Chapel Hill where we were scheduled to give a three-day workshop and performance at the University at North Carolina, but we made it in one day. At least we made it to the outskirts late in the evening, after a trip full of hazards. As we came into the South, the roads

narrowed and driving became a nightmare for Will. Sometimes it almost seemed as if our bus and a passing truck were not going to make it. Then came the storm, with water pouring down in sheets and the wind trying to blow the bus off the road. Through the night and the storm we rolled, careening down the hills, crawling up them. I forgot to mention that the bus had some sort of defect in its gearshift which made it all but impossible to start again if one had to stop going up a hill. This required a special kind of vigilance on Will's part, and nervous strain on every hill.

We in the bus would have been very worried about the Cricket if we had not been so much occupied with our own affairs. Will's eyesight was not the best in the world, and driving conditions were really difficult that night. To make matters worse, civilization gradually thinned out, and there were no towns, no trailer parks, or any way of knowing if we would ever find a place to stop for the night, so we just had to go on. Will developed a terrible headache which did not respond to my constant massaging. So I resorted to running back and forth between the refrigerator and the driver's seat, trying to keep a handkerchief soaked in cool water which I found in the tray under the refrigerator's freezer compartment. It wasn't very cold, and soon Will decided that by putting the handkerchief out the window, the rain would cool it more. But the problem of the headache and of keeping the bus on the road and of looking for any place where we could spend the night occupied us completely to the exclusion of all worries about the Cricket. As it turned out, the Cricket too was having its trouble, but one would have to go to its occupants to hear about those.

Finally, oh joy, a trailer park! We pulled over to the side of the road. Will flopped on the seat and I jumped out to see what could be done. Now I am not fussy about living conditions and I'm willing to put up with almost anything in a trailer park. But this one was beyond the pale. Sanitary conditions were such that they were worse than none, and there was nothing to do but continue on our way. On we went, but not far. We were on the outskirts of Chapel Hill and came to a brightly lighted gas station. We knew that some gas station operators would put trailers up for the night, allowing them to use their facilities. So we thought about this, and considered ourselves lucky to get in just before their closing time. That was a wild night. In due time, the Cricket arrived, and with or without supper, I can't remember, we made the bus ready and turned in for the night. The storm grew in intensity and rocked the bus like a ship at sea. The canvas of the boy's tent on top flapped until we all thought that our penthouse would be blown right off into the field. But somehow we slept through it, and by morning all was calm. And we felt like brave mariners who had weathered a hurricane.

Tour Story Tape 7: On the Road: Chapel Hill, NC, Rock Hill, SC, Christmas Vacation

Our first problem in Chapel Hill was to find a place to park the trailer and set up housekeeping because we were going to be there for several days. After contacting the University, we found that there was a trailer park for University students and that we could park our bus there without charge if we paid our own light bill. After being shuffled around by telephone from one department to another, we finally finished making arrangements and drove off to the park. And then the trouble began. They saw that there were two sexes living in our bus, which didn't fit in to the rules of the trailer park. After begging and pleading, we finally prevailed upon the manager of the park who we had talked to by telephone to come out and look us over. We went into elaborate explanations of our professional, personal, and domestic

relationships, and he examined us and our equipment from top to bottom. He couldn't seem to find anything wrong with it and was extremely sympathetic of our tales of woe of how difficult it would be for us to do our work efficiently unless we were to live together in that bus. "Why," he said, "it would be just like breaking up a family." And so we were allowed to stay.

Indeed we had grown so close in our interlocking functions that I felt very much like a mother animal with her litter around her. It was almost a tactile sense of security. If anyone were missing, without knowing who it was, I would instinctively become uneasy and would not feel comfortable until everyone was in his accustomed place again.

Our reception at the University was very friendly. They seemed to be glad to have us and had arranged a three-day workshop in addition to a performance. There were about 100 people participating in the workshop, men and women, students and teachers of dance and physical education from the University and nearby schools and colleges. The workshop was held in a perfectly huge gymnasium, so we had plenty of room in which to fly around. It was a responsive and lively group, and enthusiasm mounted rapidly over the three-day period. It was the first time we had experienced an insistent demand for more and more of our work in sound in relationship to movement. It sometimes took the group a while to get in to this type of material, but this group leaped at it the first time it was presented and kept begging for more of it for the entire time.

At this time, our group had settled into a smooth routine in the execution of its duties in connection with the workshop and performance. We were a good team. I kept my fingers on the dance material while the group provided the framework. Marsha's job was to sit with pencil and paper, recording as fully as she could all that went on. This was for our professional records and, as we hoped, the story of the tour that would be written some day. We also had the problem of finding a place to set up this machine, the tape recorder, and to get as accurate as possible a recording of everything that went on. Bill had the responsibility of instruments and any exchanges of money that occurred. He also was my assistant in class, moving around the room and helping in whatever capacity he could. Cora was the lovely, sociable intermediary between our program and the people who attended it. After the size of our workshop group and their intensity and enthusiasm, our small audience that night at the performance, but the staging of that performance was the very best we'd ever had. By putting our audience all around us, we had always had to put up with having them all on one level. But here we had bleachers on all four sides, and a battery of boxing ring lights overhead. The problem of lighting in the gymnasium is always such a handicap to our work. But this was exactly right, and all that we could have asked for.

From Chapel Hill, we headed south for Rock Hill, South Carolina, where we were to give a [?] week and performance at Winthrop College. This was the middle of December, and it would be our last engagement before a two-week Christmas holiday. Sometimes we wondered how we would make it to that holiday; we were getting very tired. I had a very strenuous teaching program at Rock Hill and only the fact that we women were housed at the luxurious faculty club saved me. We were so grateful for the comfortable rooms and delicious, well-served meals at that club. The boys had a room in the home of our sponsor, and the bus was parked on campus. I taught several college classes every day, and gave demonstration lessons for children. Cora taught a high school group from the laboratory school at the college. They were hungry for our material, and kept us busy feeding it to them.

It was here that we found that there was a certain danger in working too long or intensively at such a place. The students become fired with enthusiasm for our work, and get into it just deeply enough to want more. And then we leave. The teacher has not been given enough to carry on the material herself, and so the students are thrown back in their old routine, resulting in dissatisfaction. Almost everywhere we went, the teachers would have liked so much to use our materials themselves after we left. But just because it is so basic, it is not easy to teach, and we were quite frustrated in being unable to help them. At Rock Hill, the students put up such a demand for our approach after we left that the instructor told me quite frankly later that, as far as her program was concerned, we had done more harm than good. This was the really frustrating part of the tour; we were introducing new material which inflamed people and made them want it, but there was no place where they could get it. There was no one else using this approach, and I had already decided to discontinue my own summer school in favor of trying to solve this problem by turning my attention to the preparation of written, recorded, and filmed teaching material.

The audience at our gymnasium was young and enthusiastic. We all have a good time. Our performances draw the audience right into the dancing with us. Because it is all improvised, we ourselves do not know what is coming next, and the audience is wrapped in intensive silence, wondering moment by moment what will happen. The mood of the audience can even shape the dance, which happened once when Will and I were improvising and came to a pause in our dance. We had intended to continue, but we were not decisive enough in our movements, and one child, thinking it was the end, began to clap. So it was the end. The audience had got it. And so did we. The audience had actually created some of the shape of the dance. While we were in Rock Hill I had an engagement in a nearby town, Chester, South Carolina, where I had been asked by a private dance teacher to take over children's classes for one afternoon. It was a good group of children, and she was a fine teacher, but I am so much happier working with untrained students.

Although most of our meals were taken at the college, there were times when, because of our schedule, we had to eat in restaurants. This always involved the problem of selecting meals according to our budget, because our budget was a very tangible thing. My studio was obligated to provide food and lodging for the entire group while we were on tour, but we had had no idea how much money would be needed for this, so we could not plan a budget in advance. Money was simply given to Bill as it was needed to pay all our bills. The \$50 a month which all group members received was for purely personal items. In restaurants, each one of us was free to chose exactly what he wanted. But, being keenly aware of the fact that we had not a penny to spare, all of us tried to be economical. The situation required the greatest of tact, because food situations are a highly individual matter. And if one ordered steak, the others would look at him askance, not realizing that he would fast at the next restaurant. Some of us had to eat between meals to keep going, and others did not, so it was necessary to keep a very charitable attitude towards one another. On the whole the group did very well, although it is very hard for young people to understand each other when each one is trying desperately to establish his own individual shape. The night before we were to leave Rock Ridge, we had a Christmas celebration at one of the town restaurants with everybody giving everybody else foolish presents.

We had decided to separate for two weeks over the Christmas holidays, and to reassemble again in northern Florida. We had no definite engagements for the month of January and only indefinite ones for February and March. We

were travel worn and tired, and our program was still not at all what we wanted it to be. So we decided to park the bus somewhere in Northern Florida after Christmas and dig in to lick our wounds and prepare a solid program for the future. We had a number of engagements in April which would take us into the Middle West and then back to the east coast, but the first month of the year still had to be filled in. We simply had not had time to do a good job on the business plan of our tour.

So Marsha went north, Cora and Bill went to Georgia, and Will, after driving the bus alone down to Jacksonville, Florida, parked it in a trailer park and went home to Louisiana. In the meantime, I, in luxurious solitude, leisurely drove the Cricket down the coast, through the marshes, reveling in my aloneness, to the bus in Jacksonville where I would spend my vacation. It was a wonderful relief to be free of professional responsibilities and the bus and each other, and I certainly enjoyed that trip. It was an opportunity for the Cricket and me to get acquainted with each other, and we started a friendship which was to be very rewarding during the next month.

Although I tried to make the trip as long as possible, it only took me about a day and a half to get to Jacksonville, and following Will's directions which he had communicated to me by telephone in Jacksonville while I was still in Rock Hill, I found my way to the trailer park. It was a very cheap park, and I didn't think much of it for a two week stay and a Christmas vacation. Will and I had arranged that I would move it to another park after I got there if I saw fit. Not far away was a very nice looking park, and I set my heart on that. It was there that I found out just where we stood in the social ranks of mobile home owners. Entering the park in the Cricket, I made inquiries about space and was treated cordially. When the arrangements were nearly complete, I made a casual comment about the bus. It was like a bombshell. "You have a bus?" the owner said. "We don't take buses."

"Why not?" I asked. He couldn't seem to tell me. He just said that he didn't take them because trailer people didn't like them. Then he proceeded to tell me the sad story of how he had one very elegant trailer, had had it for a long time, and when he parked a bus beside it, the desirable trailer customer up and left. It seems that there are class distinctions even in a trailer park, which I had always found to be the most democratic of all societies. I tried to explain to him that our bus was a very special bus, and half of one at that, but he just wouldn't take it, and so I had to look for another place.

The friendly Italian owner of the Jacks/Miami trailer park (we were on the Jacks/Miami highway, south of Jacksonville) was definitely not enthusiastic over the prospect of having a bus in his trailer park, but he liked me and saw that I was in a fix, and finally relented. His son drove with me over to the first trailer park and we made preparations to move the bus. I had a key to the bus, but aside from that I was no help at all in operating it, and I couldn't explain to the young man why a loud buzzer sounded when the engine was turned on and simply couldn't stop. Will told me later that it had to do with the air pressure in the brakes, and I had known that once, but at the time I forgot, and we had to drive out of one trailer park, down the highway, and in to the other one, with this extremely loud, unpleasant noise accompanying us.

The bus was too big for one of the regular trailer locations, but they found a place for it on the grass between two lanes and not too far from the wash house, and I settled down to enjoy my solitary life in the bus. It rained a good deal during the first few days, and I found myself living in an

electrified bus. Entering from outside one day, I got a severe shock as I touched the door, and had to disconnect the outside wire before I could get in. This happened quite often, and I later found out that it had something to do with the fact that the bus was standing in water. In fact, the water around the bus was several inches deep for a while, and I had to slosh in and out of it in my rubber overshoes. In order to use the gas oven, one had to open a door on the outside of the bus in back and open up the gas tanks. This door was locked, and Will had written me instructions about how it could be opened. It was to be opened with a file which he had carefully hidden underneath the bus, and which could be found by reaching around in a certain way. I simply couldn't find that file, and finally had to ask the son of the park owner to help me. He couldn't find it either, but solved the problem by using a file of his own. That was on one of the bus's electrical days, and after getting a severe shock and surprise, the young man hurried away, never coming near the bus again. In the meantime, I tried to telephone Will and finally wired him asking him for more explicit directions about where to find the file. I received an indignant wire in return including the exact same directions, with only the addition of a few contemptuous words.

Life in the trailer park is a story in itself. It is almost communal in some ways, since the residents share the same washing and toilet facilities. There's a common bathhouse and laundry house and a common laundry line, and everyone had exactly the same problems. Although there are more or less luxurious trailers, trailer life can never really be called luxurious, and housekeeping problems are just the same for all. Messages are sometimes delivered by loud speakers, such as "Mr. Johnson, your wife is on the telephone," or "Mrs. Smith, your husband wants you to pick him up at 5:00."

There are always lots of children in trailer parks, and it's a wonder to me how some of those families fit in to the little trailers. Next to me was a young couple with four children, one of them a tiny baby. They had no bath or toilet facilities in their trailer, and had to walk quite a way to the bathhouse. But they seemed to manage perfectly well, and it was the most orderly, clean and harmoniously happy household I had seen in a long time. It was Christmas time, and every trailer had its small Christmas tree and lighted wreath. At night, as I walked about the park, the colored lights and the Christmas music coming from the radios was very home-like and cozy. Of course I had lots of child visitors in my bus; I could hardly keep them out. But once in a while, I would make a party out of it and invite them all in, and let them inspect every corner.

I enjoyed myself for a few days, resting and catching up with correspondence, and exploring Jacksonville and the beaches, but I began to realize that I had a job to do. I had to decide exactly what we were going to do when the group got together again. One thing was certain: we needed a place where we could settle down and get to work — work on our program and work on a solid lineup of future engagements. This meant dancing space. In decided to come to Florida, we had some vague idea that we might be able to use the beaches for dancing, so I decided to investigate every possibility in this direction. I drove up and down the beaches several times, from Jacksonville to St. Augustine, looking for flat sands or cottages with large floor areas. Not finding anything that seemed just right, and wanting to explore every possibility, I decided to go over to the west coast to see if perhaps that would offer something better. So one day I started out in the Cricket and drove west to Lake City, Tallahassee, and finally down along the Gulf Coast to Panama City. It was a thrilling drive through lonesome areas and through a Gulf storm, but it was clear to me that the east coast would offer more selection, and so I turned right around from Panama City and came

back again. In the meantime, a real estate agent at Jacksonville Beach had turned up something: a two-story building with an empty store on the ground floor.

Tour Story Tape 8: Jacksonville Beach, FL, The Film

The empty store was just the right size, and had a tile floor. The apartment upstairs seemed to be made to order for us. It had five tiny bedrooms, in addition to one large dining room and a kitchen. The trailer parks in Jacksonville Beach were few and poorly equipped, and I had just about decided that if we were going to do any really concentrated work, we would have to have a little more spacious living quarters than the bus. Five people in that bus would be too much on top of each other to allow for the repose necessary for real creative work. So it looked as if this building had been presented to us to solve the problem. The building was at 111 Second Avenue North, just a block from the beach and right in the heart of the business section of Jacksonville Beach. If it had been in the season, this would have been an impossible place, because Jacksonville Beach is like Coney Island in the summer. It is a summer resort for people in Florida and other southern states, but this was the dead of winter and the beach was as quiet as a grave. A few business people and seagulls seemed to be its only inhabitants. The weather was cool but there was a little gas stove in the upstairs apartment, and we thought we could stay warm dancing in the studio. It would be an extravagant move into this building, but not to make use of the group's time in the next month in some creative accomplishment seemed to be even more extravagant. So I decided to rent the building for the month of January, and I put the money down. When the group reassembled, it was necessary for us to spend a few days cleaning up the place, and so we moved the trailer to a park at Jacksonville Beach right on the ocean front. Living in the trailer so close to the water's edge was quite an experience. The tide would come up almost to our very door. From where we lay in our bunks, we could watch the sunrise over the water, and the air ripped through the bus and rocked it continually.

For a few days we had this division of labor: Marsha and Bill were set to scrubbing the building from top to bottom. Will negotiated with the garage adjacent to our new quarters to park the bus and do some necessary work on it, while Cora and I put our heads together to plan the next phase of our work. In a few days we were ready to move in. The former owner had lent us a table, and for chairs we used nail kegs and crates. The women put their sleeping bags right on the floor, but the men had the luxury of their air mattresses. That was all the furnishings we had, except a folding chair from the bus which went into my room. It was decided a little card table would have to be bought to facilitate my work.

As it turned out, we stayed at Jacksonville Beach for three months, and this place became a real home for us. Our housekeeping settled down to a regular routine. It took much time from our dancing, but that couldn't be helped. Marsha and Will did the shopping every morning at a nearby chain store. Since they came regularly, and bought such quantities of groceries, people were somewhat puzzled as to their relationship. They were hardly old enough to have a family large enough to eat all the provisions they bought, yet it was obvious that they were doing family shopping. Bill usually had charge of the laundry, which he did in a laundromat, and we could never tell what color our sheets would come back. Once they came back a beautiful pale grey, which we considered quite attractive, but Marsha was not so pleased when her white underwear came back a kind of coffee color. Marsha was the

chief cook with Cora as her assistant. Marsha took her job seriously and became a real mother to us all. She tried hard to prepare things that were nourishing and pleasing to our individual taste, as well as economical. Her greatest ambition was to fatten up Will, which would have been a challenge to any cook since he was the slender type and was subject to the fast regulations of the Catholic church. During Lent, when even beef noodle soup wasn't the answer, Marsha worried about him a great deal. Like all beginning housekeepers, Marsha used to fret at first that people were not on time for meals or would not eat with relish what she prepared, but that stage passed, and before long, like any family mother, she was finding ways of keeping food warm for the latecomers and trying out all sorts of tempting things to stimulate finicky tastes. Will didn't have a very good sense of time and when he got on to a job, he tended to stick to it until he was finished, regardless of meal hours and other things. At first this was a source of irritation for Marsha, but later on she was more concerned about Will's health than her own inconvenience and would keep his meals waiting indefinitely, or even take something out to him, where he might be sprawled out on his back, under the bus, attending to the machinery, or perched on the top fixing the roof.

Because of our individual preferences, the problem of our breakfast beverages was served as follows: on the table there would be cans of powdered coffee, powdered Sanka, powdered cocoa, bags of tea, and a bottle of milk. Cora or Marsha would come in with a tea kettle of boiling water and make our drinks to order. Being from Louisiana, there was one thing that Will loved, and that was shrimp, and he said he knew how to cook them. So one Friday night we bought a pound of shrimp for each person, and Will took care of it in Louisiana style. That meant simply boiling them with spices, then putting them on the table to be peeled by hand and eaten in great quantities with nothing else on the table except a big tossed salad. Since shrimp was about all we ate at the meal, we found that it was not more expensive than our usual dinners, and so we made it a regular Friday night custom.

On New Year's Eve, we decided to have a party. This was a purely intellectual decision, since we were tired and none of us were at all in the mood for it. I suggested steak and sparkling burgundy, since this was a combination that Will talked about continually. Marsha bought sparkling burgundy at the chain store, too late to put it on ice before dinner time. When it was served it was lukewarm and Will simply couldn't stomach it. We put it on ice and waited and waited until the party was in danger of passing out entirely. When we finally drank it it was still not cold, and our spirits were anything but lifted. It was one of the dreariest New Year's parties that any of us had ever attended. Everyone was slightly irritated at everyone else. I think one of the girls could tell this story better than I have.

Each day we danced for as many hours of the morning and the afternoon as we could steal from our housekeeping and deskwork. We were still negotiating our late spring performances, but in the meantime we had decided to make a movie. We had no definite engagements until April, and we really had a beautiful dance work which we knew many people would enjoy seeing. By this time we realized that at the end of the year the group would have to disband. It would be impossible for us to solve our economic problems together, and each one would have to go out and earn his living in his own way. So this unique work in group improvisation as we had been doing would not be continued by this group, and might not ever be repeated in exactly the same way.

We decided that it should be recorded, and this meant making a motion picture. I knew that there would be a demand for such a motion picture in schools and colleges, and there was noted publicity which we had received in connection with this tour. At the same time, I felt that it might also have some value for television if we were skillful enough in making it. We shopped around for a filmmaker and finally decided on Hunt Houser of Tropical Films, West Palm Beach. Houser was very enthusiastic about the project, and seemed anxious to throw himself into it with more concern for the quality of the product than the profit he might make out of it. Houser arranged to come to Jacksonville Beach with his crew and shoot the film in our studio.

This meant that the studio had to be prepared for sound recording as well as for the camera. I turned the construction over to Will with Bill as his helper. It was quite a job. Walls and ceiling and floor had to be lined with wallboard and then painted the color blue which the film maker had advised for the background. It was to be a color film, and we were going to wear red costumes and carry the yellow cloth from the design section. After much experimenting, burlap back walls were put up to deaden the sound. In the meantime, I was preparing the script, and we were all giving as much time as we could to the dance work. Houser arrived with his many cameras and his two assistants. Dan, who took care of the sound recording, was an easygoing fellow whose calm manner always poured oil on troubled waters. Nanette, who recorded the tape, and held up the identification boards for each scene, was a charming young woman who became so much interested in our work that she decided she wanted to learn how to teach it. Hunt Houser was a tremendously active person with so much outgoing energy that it was difficult to get ideas across to him. He had just as many ideas as we did about how the film should be made, and it took the greatest of tact on both sides to avoid head-on collision. He was fascinated by our material, and optimistic about its future in television. So we all set to work to spare no effort to make it a success.

While the film crew was in town we worked steadily from early morning until late in the evening. Because of housekeeping duties and the usual technical preparation we always had to make for dancing, we would not get started on our picture taking until 1:00 in the afternoon. Picture taking was strenuous work, as anyone who has danced before the camera will tell you. And in our case, as we were trying to show the spontaneity of improvisation, it was especially demanding. We worked with Houser for about ten days, taking pictures of every phase of the work, first in black and white and then in color. Houser then decided that he wanted to make a break to study the results of his first shooting period, so he would go away and come back again in another ten days. This was a fine thing for all of us. Film making was an entirely new experience, and we had learned a lot during the first shooting period. We knew that we could improve upon our work in a second session. So with the film crew gone, we settled down again for a quieter routine. In the meantime, the weather had gotten warmer and we were able to do some dancing on the wide beach at low tide. The beach at Jacksonville Beach is similar to the widely publicized one at Daytona, wide enough for automobiles to drive along at low tide. There were very few people around, and we had the beach to ourselves, enjoying it thoroughly, improvising in and out of the water. Even the seagulls had a favorite recreational activity. What an experience it was to have a crowd of them over your head, beating their wings and catching the bread that you tossed to them. Bill was especially fond of this until one day there was an accident which dampened him a little bit.

Where the fleas in our apartment came from was a mystery. Hunt said they were sand fleas, but they seemed to look more like plain old animal fleas. But we had no animal, and the apartment had been thoroughly scrubbed

before we moved in. Bill's room and Cora's seemed to be simply full of them. Of course, all bugs like Bill; he has a peculiar attraction for them, and they cause him all sorts of torture. We tried everything to get rid of these fleas, but it was impossible. One night we found a stray cat and walked the cat through all of the room, hoping that if there were any fleas around they would leave us in preference for the cat. But after the cat had left, Bill and Cora were bitten just as before. I never had any fleas in my room, but I think Marsha and Will had some. But they were a real problem for Cora and Bill for quite a while until gradually there didn't seem to be any more.

I found myself a public secretary in Jacksonville, and once a week I spent a day with her, catching up on all my correspondence and business. On Sundays we stopped all work, and went off in different directions, making a point of not being together and each doing what was most refreshing for him. Will usually took the bus down to St. Augustine to visit a little shrine down there. Bill, all dressed up, would take off for unknown points, and we could never find out from him at the end of the day where he had been. Cora and Marsha would go sunbathing and sometimes make an acquaintance they met on the beach. Near the end of our stay, they brought home two sailors, but for the most part there were just too few people in Jacksonville Beach at this time of year to offer any kind of social life. The group decided that I was to have the Cricket on Sundays, and I had some lovely trips driving South of Jacksonville Beach. It was an unspoken agreement that we didn't ask each other where we had been on Sundays so that we each had room to do anything we wanted, no matter how foolish it might seem to the others.

In the meantime, the local newspaper, the Ocean Beach Reporter, had taken a very friendly interest in us. They looked upon us as a great addition to the cultural life of the beaches and did everything they could to call people's attention to us. They would have pictures or stories describing our work with understanding and enthusiasm. Mrs. Catherine King, the reporter who interviewed me several times, came to the conclusion that our kind of dancing was something which might have helped her so much during her life to compensate for the handicap of defective hearing which she had. We were also interviewed by an intelligent young person from the Jacksonville Journal who wrote a story about us, and who also recognized the value of our work as an activity for the average person. Our landlady, Mrs. Starfus, was very fond of us. She told me once that there was something angelic about our group. I guess we radiated so much sincerity and honesty and naturalism and good will that no one could criticize us for our unconventionalities such as all of us, unmarried men and women, living together in the one apartment.

The motion picture crew returned and the second film making period began, even more intensive than the first. This time, we had a deadline to make. It was the middle of March, and we had to be on the road again by the first of April. There were many scenes to be re-shot, and much additional material to be filmed. The background and the lighting was improved, and both the film crew and dancers knew much better how to approach their problems. Day and night we worked, sleeping in shifts to keep the work going without interruption. While certain scenes were being shot involving only part the group, other members might go upstairs to rest or get a bite to eat. Then, if there was to be sound recording, we had a signal system of banging on the radiator so that the ones upstairs would be perfectly quiet. Even the carpenter next door cooperated, and would stop his pounding for the duration of our shot.

Toward the end we had a more serious sound problem. Jacksonville Beach was beginning to open up for the summer, and over the weekend the carousels

would run. This meant that there could be no sound work in our studio in the afternoons because our walls were not soundproof enough to cut out the music. The music of those carousels which played under our windows for the last few Sundays will always ring in our ears. Because they were associated with Sundays, which were enjoyable days for us, our memory of them is a happy one.

On the final night of our film making, we worked until two or three in the morning to bring the work to a satisfactory conclusion. Then the film crew left. We had a day's rest, but there was still one more job to do before leaving the beach. We had consented to give a benefit performance for the Pilot Club, a women's charitable organization. The beaches had been so cordial to us that we felt we could not refuse their invitation. We finished filmmaking on Saturday night. The performance was to be on Monday, then there would be a couple of days preparation before leaving to continue our tour. It was at this performance that we realized how greatly the film making had dominated our dance work. In order to capture an improvisation, it was necessary to repeat it, and this repetition of short improvisations for the past few months had taken the place of our completely free improvisation, which was really the goal of our work. There was no time to do anything about it, and all of our performances for the rest of the tour reflected the film making period in a certain rigidity. In the group's mind, the performance at Jacksonville Beach was notable mostly for the party afterward, and here one should go to Cora or Marsha for the story. It seems that I put them on the spot in a way for which they'll never forgive me.

Tour Story Tape 9: On the Way Home: Southern Illinois University, Easter Vacation, Michigan State College, Toledo, Morgan State College, Baltimore, Back to New Hampshire.

Some former students of mine had come to the performance from as far away as Orlando, and wanting to be cordial to them, I innocently suggested that we have a party in the apartment. Since Cora and Marsha were responsible for all things that had to do with the kitchen, it was their job to see that the party got underway. Apparently there was nothing in the house, and they had to find something open so they could buy some ginger ale and ice cream. We were all simply exhausted and they considered themselves very much abused. But the thing for which the whole group really never will forgive me is the fact that I kept on talking to these students until about 2:00 in the morning. The group was so tired and we had the sleeping bags and air mattresses out in the living room sitting on them so that they couldn't go to bed, and they just had to wait until I got through with my impromptu lesson. The next day the group complained that they were too tired to do any work at all, and I came home from my trip to the Jacksonville secretary to find them moping around the house in a terrible condition, grumbling and muttering, making it clear to me how they'd been put upon the night before.

But there was no getting around it; we had to leave in a couple of days and there was much to be done. The place had to be dismantled, the studio returned to its original condition, borrowed articles given back to their owners, bills paid, the bus packed, and the building cleaned. In addition to all this, the bus was going to be painted. Will had made some deal that was going to save us a lot of money, and which we couldn't afford to turn down. The paint was going to be sprayed on, which would not take too much time. But the time-taking part was the masking of all the windows and doors and metal trimmings. That in itself was a big enough job, but the weather was against us. Wind tore the newspaper with which we were masking off the bus as fast as we put it on, and rain started and stopped just frequently enough to keep the

painting from getting started. This went on for a couple of days, working us up in a frenzy of excitement, fearing we would not get the job done by the time we had to leave. I believe we even postponed our departure for a day, cutting down our time on the road and giving us additional cause for nervousness. The wind kept up till the last, but finally the rain stopped and the paint was sprayed on and the bus was packed. The scramble seemed almost worth it; an old sailor who lived next door told us how handsome the bus looked, and if he had the money he would give us \$4,000 for it.

So now we were off, with the landlady and the old sailor waving us goodbye, El Pachydermal followed by the Cricket heading north. We are leaving Jacks Beach without having told half the story of our stay there. There are so many things to be remembered, like the sunburns which Bill and Marsha got just before we started our second filming period, and the scolding I gave them, thinking that it would ruin the continuity of our color film. For the contrast between the dedicated atmosphere of our studio and the drunken environment of Jacksonville Beach. For the movie house around the corner where we used to go for what we would call the "occasional brainwash." For the two girls' inordinate love of shopping which sent them to the stores during every available free moment. One should go to Will for a description of Barbara's interview with the TV station director, or her attempt to explain the philosophy of her work to Parishier, the film producer. It might be interesting to mention, too, that during the film making we had the problem of educating Hunt Houser in an abstract approach to the subject. He was used to straight, matter of fact, realistic recording with his camera, whereas we were always only concerned with the abstract quality of the material. This required imaginative lighting and different angle shots, and sometimes Will or I would have to get behind the camera. Because of his visual imagination and feelings for technical things, I had made Will a kind of go-between between me and the camera crew. This helped a lot; I think left to my own devices I would never have been to get together with Hunt Houser.

But now we are on our way north, starting off on a two-day trip for our next engagement at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, IL. We were glad to be rolling again, and on our way home. But oh, we were tired! And even little problems seemed like big ones. Decisions as to when and where to stop for a meal and how to do our shopping and how long to take were hard to make so that each member of the group was satisfied. We were battle fatigued and showing signs of strain. Will wanted to drive at night because it was much easier for him to manage the bus when the roads were clear. For the rest of us, daytime travel was more convenient, so I finally made the decision to separate the two vehicles. The three women would go on ahead in the Cricket, traveling by day and stopping at motor courts at night. Bill would accompany Will in the bus, adjusting to whatever schedule was most convenient for the driver. So, taking with us only the bare essentials, we women started off in the Cricket. It was a lovely drive following the spring north. We did a little sightseeing in Kentucky at the battlefield of Shiloh, and again at that most impressive place where the Missouri and the Ohio rivers come to join to form the Mississippi.

Coming through the mountains of Tennessee, we worried a good deal about the bus. Will had predicted that he would be in Carbondale before us, but when we arrived and found no sign of the bus, we began to worry. We arrived on Sunday night, expecting to have three days of preparation before our performance on Thursday. On Monday morning there was still no sign of the bus. We went over to the college and made arrangements for rehearsal space and time. We had registered at a hotel. About noon, a long distance call came for me from Savannah, TN. My heart stood still; I knew it was the boys. Sure

enough, the bus had broken down. A defect in the motor had prevented oil from getting through, and it was completely burned out. Savannah, TN was about 200 miles south, and there was our bus, with all our performance equipment and clothes and personal possessions, unable to move, and we could not tell how long it would take to repair that motor.

The boys said they would pack up the things we needed for the performance and come along by bus, which would take 17 hours. Once we'd gotten through the performance, we could decide what to do about the rest of our things and the future of the bus. It seemed much better for me to start right off and drive down and get them. We would not arrive until evening, and we would have to turn right around and turn back, but Will doesn't mind driving at night and we would all be together sooner. So off I went, leaving the girls to do all they could do without me to make arrangements for our performance and the workshop we would give the same evening. Before leaving, I had to get a list from the girls of everything they would need from the bus. This took a long time, and I was later in starting than I intended. So I arrived in Savannah, TN perhaps two hours later than the boys had expected me. All that time they were frantic with worry. It seems that there were a great deal of accidents in that part of the country, and they were at a garage where people kept reporting one accident after another. When they heard of two women who had gone off the road a little way north, they were sure it was the Cricket.

It was dark, and there was no light in the bus, and we had to use our flashlights in collecting all the professional and personal equipment for the entire group for the next few days. The boys had already done a good job at selecting what they thought we would need down to the last detail, including performance underwear; but I had to finish the job since I had the list from the girls. Fishing around in one's own compartment in broad daylight used to be hard enough for us in the bus. Here we were trying to look at other people's things in pitch dark, and it was hard. But finally we got everything together, locked up the bus, and started back to Carbondale. Through the night we rode, and through a fierce electrical storm, arriving about 3:00 in the morning. That left us two days before our performance. The first day, I stayed in bed. The next day, we made hasty preparations and the performance went pretty well. With enough professional experience behind you, you can meet any emergency.

On the evening of the same day of the performance, I taught a workshop for a large group of college students, about 100 in all. It was a natural and unsophisticated group, and they did very well with the new material. In our scramble, we had forgotten to bring the instruments which I had been using for the workshop, and I had to vary my approach accordingly. But I am used to this; my most creative ideas have always come when I have been deprived of some material thing which I thought was absolutely necessary for the work.

This was to be our last engagement before a week's vacation. It was an enforced vacation, being the week before Easter. We would have preferred to have engagements, but colleges were not booking that week. We decided to separate and come together again in East Lansing, MI, on April 20th, where we had an engagement at Michigan State Teacher's College. New parts had been ordered for the bus motor, but it would take time before they could come and be installed. Will would stay in the South watching over the operation, and hoping to be able to drive north and meet us in the bus at our next engagement. Marsha went to visit some friends in Chicago and Detroit, Cora in the University of Illinois at Evanston, Bill in Wisconsin. I went to my family in Hubbard Woods. Bill and Cora met me in Hubbard Woods, and we drove

together to East Lansing. Marsha met us there, but we didn't pick up Will until Toledo, and then without the bus. Will was not needed at East Lansing, because it was just a workshop and we could get along without him.

Some food had disagreed with me and I was really sick when we got to East Lansing. We got there one evening and the workshop was the next night. The morning of the workshop I woke up feverish, as if I was coming down with some real illness. But by staying in bed and drinking only tea, I was almost miraculously cured by night. The group at Michigan State College was about the happiest one we worked with. Their dance work at the college follows a somewhat creative direction, and they were very responsive to the material which we gave them. The teacher said over and over again that that was just what they wanted, and that we had greatly furthered their own work.

The next day, we went through Lynchfield, MI, where we picked up Will at the home of Blanche Duffy, now Mrs. Gordon Packer, former dance director of Louisiana State University, where Will first became acquainted with my work. We had a pleasant lunch there, and then drove on to Toledo. But now it was Will's turn to be sick. He had had a long trip from Savannah, TN, by means of commercial bus, and he worried about our bus, which we had had to leave in Savannah. If we had had time, we too would be worried about the bus, but we didn't really have time for this until we got back to New Hampshire. Will had to stay in bed while we made preliminary preparations for our performance. He also missed our TV program the day before. This was on station WSPD, a Mrs. Frances Keller's program, which is especially concerned with music and dance. Mrs. Keller and the studio staff were enthusiastic with our program, and we were presented in the nicest possible of ways. The night before the program I gave a workshop at the YWCA which drew together dance teachers from quite a wide area. It's a strange experience for me to teach modern dance teachers; we are all supposed to be in the same field, yet my work is so different from what they are accustomed to that it is if I was from Mars. Our Toledo performance at the YWCA was well-attended. My former student, Norma Canner, had worked hard to publicize it, and we met some very interesting people there.

From Toledo, we headed toward Baltimore at Morgan State College, where we had an engagement so soon after this that we barely had time to get there. Our route took us along the Pennsylvania Turnpike at night. Our Cricket was greatly overloaded, and we were squeezed in tightly, people and bags and equipment of all kinds. Will was driving and I was navigating, studying the map and trying to watch the road signs. Marsha was eating some candy, and I foolishly shook the map out the window, where half of it was torn off and blew away. Without that map, we never could have known when to turn off the pike, but to our joy, the half of the map that remained was just the half we needed.

Having turned off the turnpike, we found ourselves in the mountains of PA: steep grades, sharp curves, and all darkness. Will was in a hurry to get to his destination, and drove faster than he realized. The rest of us were uneasy as we careened down the wandering mountain road, but I knew from experience that any criticism of any nervous person at the wheel will only create irritation, so I did nothing, but the girls complained a little. At last we were in the valley and we found a motor court. I don't remember if we were one or two nights on the road before getting to Baltimore, but I remember we arrived there about noon on a Sunday.

We took up residence at the YWCA and the YMCA. Our performance was to be early Wednesday morning. Morgan State College, our last engagement, was

one of the happiest engagements of our tour. In contrast with the other Negro college, Howard University, which we had visited early on our tour, we were received here with simple friendliness and natural warmth and understanding. They were getting ready for an arts festival to be called *The Arts in Relation to Daily Life*, and our program was to start the festival off at the assembly program early in the morning. The entire college attended this program, which was in a large gymnasium with bleachers on three sides. They loved our program and joined in more wholeheartedly than any group we had ever had at those times when I invited the audience to do some movement with us. Those members of the faculty who approached us afterwards made us feel as though we had been able to make a real contribution to the college.

So that was the official end to our tour, but we still had to get home and we still had to get the bus. Will took a place back to Savannah, TN, and the others and I headed for New Hampshire in the Cricket. What a relief to have it all over! If we could only get our bus safely back with our driver and our things that were in it. Back at Rock Ridge, we opened up the building, and Bill got a plumber to help him start the water system functioning. Then we waited for news from the bus. When it came, it was not good news. The motor had been repaired. Will had started out in it, and it had broken down again. Will decided to stay right there to see what was the trouble and repair it properly this time.

It was cold in New Hampshire, being only the first part of May, and we huddled around the kitchen stove to keep warm. Occasional telephone calls from Will did not lift our spirits much, because it was going to be a long time before the bus was repaired. The members of the bus had summer engagements and could not wait around forever, so it was finally decided that Bill would go down to Savannah and pack up his and the girls' things and send them on. There were many things, but he did the best he could to empty the bus. Will finally had to abandon the bus, because there was a disagreement as to who was to pay for the new motor. Responsibility seemed to fall between us and GM who supplied the parts and the mechanic who installed them. So Will came back to Boston, and later on, Paul came down to see what he could do about getting the bus home. It had been repaired a third time, but when he started off in it, it broke down again. So he decided to leave it there, once and for all, and see if he could find a buyer. We had been offered \$800 for our bus and were hoping that the deal would go through before too long.

Tour Story Tape 10: Thoughts on the Tour

The tour story is finished, but there are some things that I wish that I had mentioned, so I am going to add them here without trying to create any continuity between them. I forgot to mention that while we were in Florida we decided that our plan to settle down in Arizona was not economically sound. So Paul and his family planned to come back to New Hampshire, and the members of the group began to make independent professional plans. We would always be a group; nothing could ever take away from us our common creative experiences which have bound us together in ways in which few groups ever are bound. But we would have to solve our economic problems professionally. Cora decided to take a position at the Oklahoma city YWCA, which had had an outstanding dance program for a long time, and Cora decided that it would be good for her to break away from college teaching for a while. Bill decided to go back to the University of Georgia to finish the work on his Master's degree. After our workshop at Michigan State College, both Marsha and Cora were approached for a position there, and eventually Marsha decided to take it. My plan was to shift all my attention to the preparation of teaching material in the form of

films, recordings, and written work. For the film work, I would need Will, so he decided to come back to Boston with me. We had the Florida film to edit, and after that, I hoped to begin to make a series of films which would be still more useful for the layman. Paul and his family had enjoyed their Arizona experience, but they were very glad to come back home to Greenland.

The tour might be considered educational by gradually detaching us from our material possessions. Having to hold nearly everything we own in the bus and then being completely separated from it in southern Illinois, we gradually found that we could do without many things. Back in New Hampshire, with our things still in Savannah, TN, without much possibility of our ever seeing them again for a long time, I think we gradually began to detach ourselves from them, and this was a good thing. And last I forgot to mention that our tape recorder was part of our equipment on the bus, and that before leaving Jacksonville Beach we definitely decided to lighten our load by shipping a few of our things back to New Hampshire.

In connection with our program, I wanted to mention that dancers and instruments and design objects were on the stage all the time, so it was a very informal presentation without a lot of exits and entrances. The fact that I alternately danced and talked to the audience added to the informality. Of course, the program had to be arranged in such a way that I would not be breathless.

We shouldn't forget the enjoyment we had over the letters which Heather wrote us steadily all along the way. She continued to consider herself a member of the group, and tried to keep as close to us as possible. I don't think any of us had time to write to her, but her letters came regularly. She was a freshman at Bennington and having all sorts of new experiences. Gradually, three men came into her life, and she shared with us the problem of choosing between them. Finally, it was Sam who took the center of her stage, and before the year was over, she told us that they were going to be married in the summer.

I don't want to forget Marsha's lamentation that all her work had been undone when Will came back from Easter vacation thin and haggard. She had tried so hard to fatten him up. I forgot to tell about the beautiful design job on the bus when it was painted in Jacksonville Beach. It was white, with a handsome, dark blue-green design. Only a drawing could do it justice. There was an amusing incident in Toledo in connection with beef noodle soup. Will was sick in bed, and I had gone down to the dining room and ordered him some beef noodle soup. To my surprise, it took almost an hour before I got it, and then I found that the cook's sympathy for a sick person had been aroused and she had made it from fresh beef with the greatest of care. It wasn't Campbell, but it was the beef noodle soup to end all beef noodle soups, and it made Will well promptly.

The audience reactions to our program were really interesting. As I've said, some thought it was wonderful, some thought it was terrible, but the majority had a good time and then probably forgot all about it. The fact that it was controversial is shown in these two contrasting remarks, quoted verbatim. While one person said, "It's good to see someone break away from tradition," another was saying, "Nothing new, it's what they're all doing." So there you have it. We can't please everyone.