

Peter Vietze

- Born: 5/30/1944 in Brooklyn, New York
- Spouse: Deborah Coates
- B.A. in Sociology (1965) S.U.N.Y. at Binghamton-Harpur College, M.A. in Social Psychology (1969) Wayne State University. Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology (1969) Wayne State University.



Major Employment:

- Peabody Infant Laboratory - 1971-1974, Founder & Co-Director
- Mental Retardation Research Centers, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Branch N.I.C.H.D., NIH - 1980-1987, Health Scientist Administrator and Head
- Department of Infant Development, NYS Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities - 1987-2004, Executive Deputy Director and Chair
- City University of New York - 1989-Present, Adjunct Professor of Psychology
- Department of Psychology, Montclair State University - 2007-Present, Professor and Chair

Major Area of Work:

- Development of competence
- Parenting styles
- Parents with intellectual disabilities
- Young children with autism-treatment effectiveness

SRCD ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Peter Vietze
Montclair State University

Interviewed by Frances Degen-Horowitz
City University of New York Graduate Center, Center for Jewish Studies
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Vietze: My name is Peter Vietze and I'm the chairperson and Professor of Psychology at Montclair State University.

Horowitz: And my name as the interviewer is Frances Degen-Horowitz. I am President Emerita of the City University of New York Graduate Center and university Professor. My relationship to Peter Vietze is that we have been long-time colleagues and friends dating back many, many years. And today is February 18th, and we are doing this interview in the City University of New York Graduate Center, Center for Jewish Studies, where I, Frances Horowitz, am currently the Interim Director. So to begin we ask you, Peter, to describe your family background, along with any childhood and adolescent experiences that may be of interest and to include the educational and occupational characteristics of your parents, where you were born, where you grew up, what your schooling was like, any military experience and your early work experience, in other words, a biography.

Vietze: Okay. Well, I was born in New York to Jewish immigrants, who came here seeking refuge from the developing war in Europe. My father came to New York in 1935 from Germany and my mother came in 1938 from Palestine, where she had gone to escape the anti-Semitism of her native Austria. They met through distant relatives and knew each other and married in 1939 in New York. My father worked for his uncle, who was a very gifted physical chemist with a number of patents. For example,

he had developed luminescent paint when he first came to this country from Hungary, and he also invented Sterno and he held a patent for Sterno, which he later sold. So he was actually quite well off but very stingy. But he hired his nephew to work in his paint company, where they manufactured luminescent paint. My father had had a classical education in Germany, but no college. And the reason for that was that he wanted to study classical languages and classics and his uncles, who would have paid for it, wanted him to study something more practical like chemistry. Eventually in New York he enrolled in City College as a chemistry major, and they gave him credit for two years of college because of his high school education, but he never finished. My mother was trained as a dietitian. She trained in Vienna and she actually interned with some very famous people in Europe. But in 1933 she went to Palestine as a Zionist for a short period of time and liked it so much she stayed and never went back to Austria. By 1938 she couldn't have gone back to Austria, and her father had died in her absence and her mother had now immigrated to Palestine as well. But after a while I guess they decided that Palestine wasn't the promised land they were looking for because of the strained relationships between the Jews and the Arabs, and so they came here to the real promised land. And so my parents basically got married toward the end of the Depression and just on the verge of the outbreak of World War II.

I was born five years later in 1944 at what is now called Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn, but at the time it was called Israel Zion Hospital. My mother worked there as a dietician, which is probably why I was born there. We lived in a small apartment in Brooklyn and after, I think, I was a year old they rented a larger apartment with a bedroom in Rego Park, Queens. They always called it Forest Hills. And I spent my next 13 years there in--

Horowitz: Were you an only child?

Vietze: --no, in a 3 ½ room apartment. My brother was born four years after me and we both had the bedroom and our parents slept in the living room. Part way through our time in New York my father decided he didn't like depending on his uncle for everything and borrowed some money from him and started his own business and opened a similar business in Long Island in Baldwin, and so for the rest of the time we were there he had his business. And I went to the New York City public schools, was able to walk two blocks to elementary school and junior high school. Actually we started out in the junior high school and then they built the elementary school. So I grew up there and when I was in junior high school I skipped eighth grade, because we had a program in New York called The SP and it was a graduated program and so I think in sixth grade people took a test and if you scored high enough you got in. So I was a year younger than my peers thereafter--most of my peers. When I was in ninth grade I took a test for Bronx High School of Science and scored high enough to get in there, so I started high school at Bronx High School of Science, and I traveled by subway an hour and a half each way in the tenth grade. The subway trip provided time to read and study in the morning and fool around with my friends, and also in the evening. And because it was a citywide school I met a much more diverse group of people. It was the first time I had gone to school with black kids--we called them Negroes then--and also primarily kids who were not Jewish, because the neighborhood I grew up with was a primarily Jewish neighborhood.

Toward the end of that year my father took a job in Syracuse. He basically got bought out by a paint company. By this time he had switched his business to selling silkscreen supplies, printing inks and equipment. And one of the paint companies didn't like his competition and so bought him out and set him up in Syracuse as a representative there. So we moved to Syracuse that summer. That, of course, forced me to leave my wonderful Bronx High School of Science and all my new leftist friends, but the benefit of moving was that we were able to live in a house, my parents' first house. And so that was a new experience. It was interesting. It was like living in suburbia, and it was much different than living in the city. And it had some benefits as well.

Throughout my childhood family life included long intellectual conversations. My father really was a frustrated college professor who should have been a college professor, but we talked about politics, history, science, literature. Our dinners, when he was home, lasted hours because after dessert we

would just talk and argue--a lot of argument. And I developed an analytic approach to problems and a love of reading, so my father kind of taught me how to think. And my mother was more in the background, although clearly very bright. She always deferred to my father until after he died, which was a few years ago. So in Syracuse I attended one of the better high schools, Nottingham High School, and graduated in the top five percent of my class. I applied to a number of colleges. I had met a young woman in New York whom I continued to have a relationship with and I wanted--she was in New York going to City College and I wanted to get back to New York for college. But alas, Columbia didn't admit me and, although I got into Antioch, and Syracuse University and Harper College my parents couldn't afford to send me to Antioch even though I got the maximum scholarship. And that is one of the regrets I have. I recently discovered that my brother got into the University of Chicago and Princeton and did not go for the same reason; my parents were not willing to go into hock so that we could go to college.

So I went to Harper College, which was part of the growing SUNY (State University of New York) system and one of the early liberal arts colleges in the SUNY system. And while there, I played bass--I had taught myself the bass when I was in junior high school--and played throughout junior high school and high school. And in Syracuse I actually played with some college students in a band that played at the university, so I was this high school kid playing with college kids. But I attended Harper College; at the time our class kind of swamped the rest of the school. There were 12 hundred students, five hundred of them freshmen. I had a wonderful experience there. I didn't study very much. But one of the jobs I had was as a research assistant for Pavel Mahatka, who was a Czech immigrant sociologist and he was studying incidental learning in everyday life and I was his research assistant, for which I got paid. And then I also worked in several after school recreation programs for disadvantaged children run by the Salvation Army and also the Jewish Community Center. So one of the lessons I learned at home was that war was to be avoided and I was a pacifist involved in the peace and civil rights movements during most of my high school and college years. And so even though I didn't study much in college I did spend time in what I considered very important things in the peace movement and the civil rights movement.

Horowitz: And what did you major in?

Vietze: I majored in sociology. Actually I started out as a premed major, but soon discovered that I was not made for the competition, which was pretty cutthroat, and comparative anatomy at 8:00 in the morning, and chemistry at any time. And my political views kind of drew me to sociology. There was a political sociologist there named Richard Hamilton, who was a very fine teacher and there were a group of us who were politically active and so it worked for us and fit in with my political views. He actually--his dissertation was very interesting. He had published it, a huge book, on why the Nazis were able to come to power in prewar Germany and came to the conclusion that it was the middle class that brought them to power and had lots of evidence for that. But Hamilton was very influential and my advisor, who was someone else, was also very influential. But some of my interest in social justice, which I got at home, attracted me to the graduate programs in psychology at Wayne State University. And I had dual interests, some of which were sort of political and I was interested in labor unions. And Wayne State had a number of faculty members that I had read, Arthur Kornhauser, for example, who had studied the labor movement and, although he was a psychologist, he was an industrial psychologist. We read him in sociology classes. And Fritz Riedel and David Weiman[VERIFY] were there and I was very interested in children from disadvantaged homes and, ironically after I got into Wayne and went there I discovered Kornhauser had retired. You couldn't look up the department on the Internet and Riedel and Weiman didn't teach in the psych department. They were in the Ed. school. And so I got socialized in the psych department there. And throughout that time--when we talk about my research I can elaborate a little bit more--but that's kind of my background and my early childhood. I continued to be close to my family, less so to my brother who, after I finished graduate school, I moved to California and he followed me. He had just graduated from college. He was an art major. But after a year we moved away and he found himself in a religious cult where he was for 17 years. And during that time we kind of drifted apart. It was very difficult to communicate with him and, although my parents maintained contact with him, and supported him, and visited him in the

various places he went, I had difficulty with that. And it wasn't until the cult broke up and he found himself in Israel that we kind of renewed our--

Horowitz: What kind of a cult was it?

Vietze: --this was an interesting group. They called themselves Christ Brotherhood initially, and the Brotherhood after a while. It was started by one of the professors at Harper College, T. Patterson Brown, who I guess didn't get tenure and left. And after that he collected people, some of whom were Harper graduates and others of whom he'd just met who were kind of lost, which is what cult leaders do, and developed this following--there were about 150 people in the group and they moved around the country. One of the projects they had was retranslating the New Testament from the Greek into some very strange English constructions, hippie talk. My brother's role in that was since he was an artist he actually wrote the thing by hand and--

Horowitz: [Inaudible]--

Vietze: --illuminated it. It was a beautiful book. They had many printed and bound in them in leather and then went around the world giving them away to people and proselytizing. And one of Patterson's downfalls was that he was predicting the end of the world and they were on their way to India. They had spent time in Missoula. It started in Eugene, Oregon. From Eugene they went to Santa Fe, then Colorado, Boulder, then Missoula, Montana, back to Oregon and then to Spain, because along the way Patterson was arrested for sexually abusing the children. By this time there were a growing number of children, because these people didn't practice any birth control. And it's probably true that he did have sex with the teenagers, because, as far as he was concerned, they were adults. So he was incarcerated for a while and when he got out he basically left the country and took all of them with him. So they were in Spain for a couple of years and then they went to Israel and when they were in Israel he had a vision and went out into the desert for 40 days and 40 nights. And about that time some of the people realized that he was nuts. He was on his--they were on their way to India where the world was gonna end. And so it fell apart and my brother lived in Israel and resumed his artwork, became a citizen through the rite of return and lived there for a while with several of the kids that he had accumulated over the years. By that time he had two daughters and his new partner had an adopted son and while there his third daughter was born, their child, Chava. And after a while they found they couldn't live there, because his wife wasn't Jewish and felt like an outsider. So they moved back to the United States and we helped them get established. Interestingly enough, they eventually got married and he is now the director--I don't know if he's a director, but he's in charge of all child mental health services for the state of New Jersey. He got a social work degree and he also has a private practice. So he came back a long way and we've kind of gotten together again. We spend some time with him, but not a lot. He's also teaching at Montclair part time.

Horowitz: So how did you get into the field of child development?

Vietze: Well, part of it, I think, was that I was interested in children. I'm not sure exactly why. Part of it was my mother's influence saying I was good with children and that's why I was gonna be a pediatrician. But that wasn't really my goal. But I came through it a long way round. I got interested when I was in graduate school in the idea that people learn to control their own destiny. And I was introduced to the concept of internal/external locus of control, Julian Rotter's idea, and I read Julian Rotter. And my jobs with disadvantaged youth were partly motivated by my interest in social justice. And I began to wonder of the effects of poverty on child development, achievement--

Horowitz: And this is about what year?

Vietze: --and control. Well, this was when I was a sophomore in college. That's when I first switched from being premed to being a sociology major. And it was also wrapped up with the idea that I was interested in socialism and was trying to find out why people would work for the common good. But I was also interested in understanding how that developed in childhood. Oddly enough, I never have

studied pro-social behavior as some people study it now. I was more interested in the idea of control and control of your life.

So when I began my graduate career at Wayne State I was selected to work on a funded research project whose goal was to study ways to motivate disadvantaged youth to become internally motivated. It was a Department of Labor sponsored project. And I was exposed to research on self concept and its development, social reinforcement and its development, need achievement and other constructs in social motivation. The project, however, was led by a social psychologist named Ruben Barren and an industrial psychologist named Allen Bass, neither of whom were interested in development. But they helped shape my approach to research. It gave me my first exposure to collecting data, ironically with adolescents. So I learned a lot about adolescents and how they approach things and it was interesting. Some of the kids--a lot of the kids were minority kids, because it was a project that came out of the war on poverty funding. And I remember one of them. We were giving them rewards. This was part of the protocol, the research protocol. They would do something and we would give them some rewards. And we were giving them--this sounds horrible now--cigarettes. Most of them were smokers. And one of the black kids took us aside one day and said, "You know, if you're gonna be giving out cigarettes to black folks you oughta give Kools." And that was my first kind of introduction to really the subculture. I was living in Detroit and Detroit was really my first insight into the African American [INAUDIBLE].

Horowitz: What year is this?

Vietze: This is 1965. I graduated in 1965, got married to my first wife and we went to Europe on a honeymoon. And then when we came back we worked in a summer camp. I didn't work with kids. I worked with people in the kitchen--adolescents, but people in the kitchen. And then we moved to Detroit.

Horowitz: So this is on the cusp of the great society--

Vietze: Oh yes. Right in the middle, and also, in the middle of the beginnings of the Vietnam War. Everybody else was getting drafted. And one of the reasons I went to graduate school was to avoid the draft, because I think had I been free to do something else I would have traveled or done something other than that. But this was a way to avoid being drafted and, although I was a conscientious objector I had no--in my head I was a conscientious objector--I had no religious support for that, because I really was a-religious at the time, not spiritual at all as a matter of fact, and so this was the easy way out. So I basically was hiding out and not feeling guilty about it at the time. But later I'll tell you how I did become--did feel guilty. So my interest in child development and how parental behavior shaped children's behavior came first from my early interest in social justice and the idea that children were the victims of social injustice. And some of my jobs were working with children in the after school programs. And Barren and Bass shaped my research goals, but their project ended after two years. I actually got my first publication out of that project. They never told me about it. I found out from an administrative assistant after I got my first job and she was--I don't know how she found out, but she found it before I even knew about it. I wasn't well socialized into publishing in graduate school. But after their project ended I went to work for Irving E. Sigel, the famous Irv Sigel at the Merrill Palmer Institute, a freestanding research center near Wayne State, which I knew about. I had taken a couple of courses there, one with Irv and one with John Watson, and one with Carolyn Shantz. And Irv really gave me my first taste of developmental science and the opportunity to study preschool children who were in Head Start Programs, so all the Head Start Programs had research components and Detroit and--

Horowitz: The early ones.

Vietze: --the early ones, right--and Detroit and Michigan had a good share of that. Irv's interest and hence my assignment, was to help develop intervention modules to train the children to improve their attention skills. These were preschool children.

Horowitz: And that was Irv's lifelong interest?

Vietze: Absolutely. Well, their classification skills and their overall general cognitive skills, and this was actually a return to his dissertation, where he studied classification in young children. Through the Head Start research I was able to satisfy my interest in disadvantaged children while learning how to conduct development research. Irv's distancing hypothesis also gave me a theoretical starting place for my dissertation, which tested its implications for learning and memory. Along the way I went through some other phases where I studied conformity--because I started out actually as a social psychology major--conformity in adolescents and the effect of race and occupational class on conformity, with race and occupational class as the model. So that was my master's thesis. But when I worked with Irv I did a project for my dissertation. I actually did two projects. Again, the first one was motivated by my interest in social justice. We had an integrated preschool. That was unusual in 1968, but there was an integrated preschool at Merrill Palmer and I wanted to see how preschool kids learned to make friends with each other when they came from different backgrounds. And I started that project using observation--it was my first observational study--I had no experience in it so I had to develop it myself--and socio-metrics. And halfway through Irv said, "You know, you probably won't be able to finish this," because the mean director of the program was not interested in research and was probably gonna create some barriers. So he said, "You better start on another project." And I never knew whether it was because I wasn't doing research on his favorite topic or whether he really thought that. In the end I finished both studies ironically. She did not keep us from finishing and I think Irv was happier with my testing his distancing hypothesis.

So my dissertation was a side trip from the theme of how social motivation developed, which is really what I was always interested in. And I'm still interested in it. I began to wonder whether studying infants wasn't where I would learn about the origins of social motivation. So I sought a post doc to learn how to study infants and, although I did not get the post doc with my first choice, Michael Lewis at ETS--and the guy who did dropped out of the field--I was fortunate to get a position, a fellowship doing research with John S. Watson at UC Berkeley at the Institute for Human Development. John had taught at Merrill Palmer and I had taken a course with him and liked his behavioral approach to development. John was a mixture of a behaviorist and developmental psychologist and anti-Gibsonian, I would add. He had a bad experience with the Gibsons at Cornell. So John became a major influence in my research development and we completed five studies during the year I was there. In search of employment I wrote to Susan W. Gray at George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville. She had offered me a position the year before, which I had turned down to take the post doc at Berkeley and she, again, offered me a job at Peabody. Sue was very gracious. And I accepted this time. She too became a mentor and, though it was more an informal mentorship--she was one of my supervisors, and she also held the grant that I was paid on--I absorbed much of what she presented. And I learned about disadvantaged children and their families as well as early intervention really from one of the people who knew better about it than anybody else. She'd grown up in the south and she was interested in how poor, little black kids could do better, the kind of intervention that preceded early intervention for children with disabilities. Sue Gray was once described as the woman who invented Head Start by a federal official at NIMH, on one of my many trips to Washington from Nashville. And that was probably an overstatement, but she certainly had a lot of influence. So I worked in her Demonstration Research Center for Early Education, one of five research institutes at Peabody. And you should understand that Peabody was a small teacher's college in Nashville that had a very large graduate school and a huge graduate program in psychology. We had 250 doctoral students.

Horowitz: I was on a visiting advisory committee--

Vietze: Okay.

Horowitz: --at Peabody [INAUDIBLE].

Vietze: And I think that was partly due to Sue Gray, but there were other people like Nick Hobbs who was there and eventually Peabody was absorbed into Vanderbilt, maybe because they wanted the real estate and buildings as much as anything else. But it survived and has thrived as part of Vanderbilt since then.

I also learned a lot from several collaborators, how to do newborn research from Steve Freedman, also he taught me how to publish my work, and he was a peer, research on emotions from Carroll Izard, who was at Vanderbilt at the time, and the importance of biological influences from Gil Meyer. And of course, I learned from my graduate students, especially Barbara Strain, who was born Barbara Anderson and later resumed her name, Phil Strain, Martha Foster and many others--Rick Brinker, Corey Robinson, Carl Dunst to name a few.

When I moved to Leon Yarrow's lab to do a sabbatical year I eventually cancelled the sabbatical and stayed for four years, because he said we couldn't get anything done in a year and I learned from him, Frank Peterson and Kay Stanley, who were the principals there. I also had contact with Jack Gewirtz, and Howie Moss ---

Horowitz: So you left--

Vietze: I left Peabody--

Horowitz: --yes, and you went to--

Vietze: --and I went to NICHD in the intramural program and it was there that I discovered that that was the job that everybody really wanted, because the resources were wonderful, and you had all the time in the world to do research. So I had contact with Jack Gewirtz and Howie Moss, and also Leon's wife, Marian. And Howie and Jack also had influence on my thinking about the role of the social environment on infant learning and social responsiveness. I'm not letting you get a word in edgewise. So the sum of these last several informal mentors led to my interest in documenting the form and importance of maternal responsiveness, which I now realized was "the" most important thing in child development. How maternal responsiveness was defined remains one of my main interests and is now included in my current main interest, parenting style. And I would suggest that we still haven't--the field hasn't really defined that and that's what I'm working on now.

Horowitz: But then you took a detour into administration?

Vietze: Yes, I did take a detour into administration. At the end--

Horowitz: I first met you--

Vietze: That's right--

Horowitz: --in that time.

Vietze: --at the end of four years working in Leon's lab--actually the reason I stayed for four years was at the end of the second year I said, "Now, how can I stay here, Leon?" and he said, "You have to publish more, and then I can convert your position," because I was a staff fellow, which was a kind of temporary position. And Leon could bring new people in on one of those lines, but if he converted it he lost the line. But he didn't tell me that. He told me that if I published enough--I guess he thought I never would--I would be able to basically be converted to a full time regular position. At the end of four years I had been publishing quite feverishly.

Horowitz: Where did you publish?

Vietze: Well, I published in places that would publish quickly, so some of them were education journals, some of them--it was *Child Development*, a few papers in *Developmental Psychology* as a result of the work I was doing there, *Perceptual Motor Skills* where you could get quick turnaround, and so I think by the end of the second year I had--at the end of the fourth year I had about 15 or 20 publications. And I said, "Okay, Leon, is this enough?" and he said, "You know, I don't think I'm gonna do it." So I started looking for jobs and one of my offers was to go to Chicago and work with Arnie Sameroff. And this is an example of how personal life impinges on professional life.

I had recently met a young woman. I was divorced now. As a matter of fact, I got divorced the year that I left Nashville to go to NIH. And my first wife and my three children stayed in Nashville. And I haven't really talked about the influence of my children, but having three children greatly influenced my interest in child development, because watching them develop from infants fascinated me and actually was important in first getting me interested in infancy. I had my first child while I was doing my dissertation, and watching him in his first year made me realize how important infancy was and how much I didn't know about it. And so that was also important. My second and third children were twins and gave me a new respect for individual differences because, although they were fraternal twins, they couldn't be more different then and now.

So back to Arnie Sameroff. He offered me a wonderful job in Chicago at the institute that he was directing, and I had just met my second wife, Deborah Coates, and decided that if I moved to Chicago I would not really be able to develop this relationship. And so I--after first accepting his offer, I turned it down and had to look around the DC area and fortunately Norm Kretchmer, who was the Director of the NICHD and was not considered a friend to behavioral scientists, offered me a job as a Extramural Program Director in the mental retardation and developmental disabilities branch. Now, when I was at Peabody I had learned a lot about mental retardation and had done some research in that field, again, with preschool children. But I was fortunate in being offered this position, which came with it the direction of the Mental Retardation Research Centers. And it was actually through that that I met Frances, because Frances was at the University of Kansas and Vice President for--

Horowitz: I was the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies.

Vietze: --Vice Chancellor for Research and had built the marvelous Department of Human Development, a unique program. And they had more NICHD grants than practically anybody in behavioral science, so I went out to Kansas a lot and that's when I first met Frances. And although I think I certainly knew her name from the field, we probably met at some meetings, and I heard her papers, and read her work, it was really in our two administrative roles that we first became acquainted and I guess friends, and I was later her project officer on her RO1. And I have to say I recall when that grant was being reviewed by the HUD2 study section or HUD1 study section one of the reviewers said, "I don't see how Horowitz can be PI on this grant. She's an administrator. She wouldn't have time for that." And fortunately, the rest of the study section said, "Oh, Frances always gets her work done, and she's made wonderful contributions," and she was fortunate. I think at the time she had John--

Horowitz: Colombo.

Vietze: --Colombo working with her as a post doc--

Horowitz: And Marion O'Brien .

Vietze: Oh, Marion O'Brien. Well, there were some wonderful people at Kansas both faculty, graduate students and people who were in staff positions who helped to hold the place together and could do some of the best research ever. Don Baer was there and I got to know Don better. And interestingly, I had first met Don when I was site visited on my first grant at Peabody, and Don made some suggestions to me during the site visit. And we got funded probably out of generosity on Don's part, but he made some suggestions which led to, I think, three or four publications that were very good suggestions.

Basically he said run some parametric studies and they were very helpful. And so I was always interested in what was going on at Kansas, and I met Todd Risley there, and Joe Spradlin and a lot of the wonderful people at Kansas. And I realized that they were all kind of under Frances' orchestration and, even though they were great by themselves, I think without Frances they would not have produced what they produced.

So that was a very important part of my life. I had to suppress my research interest. It took me a while to--I had plenty of data to write up, and I continued to write up some data.

Horowitz: How long were you in that position?

Vietze: I was in that position for seven years, 1980 to 1987, and my wife--at that time she took an academic position. When we first met she was at APA and so we both had administrative positions initially. Then she got an academic job at Catholic and eventually developed the Better Babies Project. During my time--one of the things I liked about being at NICHD was I got to see all the research that NICHD funded in behavioral science and also, since the Mental Retardation Centers were interdisciplinary I also saw all the research in mental retardation and developmental disabilities from bench to bed and it was fascinating. I learned a lot. I had an informal education in biochemistry, endocrinology, metabolic disorders, I learned a lot more than I could have learned in any program. And among the people I met there was a man named Henry Vishnueski, who was a neuro-pathologist, a Polish immigrant who came here as a post doc himself, but eventually became the Director of the New York State Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities. And he was on one of our review committees and I think at one point or another--Frances was on that committee, many people were on the committee that reviewed centers and program projects. And so when you are on site visit research committees one of the things you do is spend a lot of time with the reviewers, and go out to eat with them, and travel with them and so I got to know a lot of these people very well. But Henry was a very special person and I got to know him very well. And he was on the committee for four years and so into the second year he started recruiting me to come to Staten Island where the Institute was for some job or other and he was never very clear about what it was. And at about 1986 the branch chief of the MRDD branch retired, Ted Josem, who was also one of my mentors. He taught me everything I knew about grants and was a marvelous man. He retired and so we had no branch chief and there were two other people in the branch, me and Felix Delacruz, and we both applied for the job. And at the time the director of NICHD, Duane Alexander, decided he couldn't make a decision between the two of us and didn't pick either of us. And I actually saw that as a vote of no confidence and decided I would look elsewhere. And Henry was still offering me jobs and, ironically, there was a job at Kansas so I applied for both jobs. And part way through the recruitment process at Kansas I decided I was not actually that interested. I also had a sense that Frances was going to leave and she was one of the things that attracted me, one of the people that attracted me there.

So I accepted the job in New York at the IBR (Institute of Basic Research) and Henry--the job that Henry was talking about was the deputy director. And I had gotten used to having a broad view, and being able to see a lot of things, and being able to orchestrate things, and that was one of the things I was going to be able to do. And he also said I could build a research program and a department in infant development and gave me a lot of resources to work with. And so I moved to New York in 1987, leaving my wife and third (?) so in Maryland because my wife had to finish her project. And so I began going back and forth from New York to Beltsville for three and a half years until Deborah finished her project. While at IBR I developed a department and raised behavioral science to a level that was befitting. It had gotten short shrift and actually had been referred to as soft science, and I changed the vocabulary and recruited some very good child development people, David Leftkowitz, Bernie Karmel, Judy Gardner, and Darlene Devoni from CUNY and we built a very nice program there. It was mostly infant development and we had some post docs and developed further the program in early development. We also had an aging program there and that continues to this day. They all do, although some of the people have left.

Horowitz: And so you ultimately left [INAUDIBLE]?

Vietze: Well, because I was there for 17 years--time flew and--

Horowitz: And you continued to publish your work?

Vietze: I continued to publish. I think by the time I left I had published about 8 books and about 100 or so articles and chapters. My interest had gone into a number of different areas. When I had been in Nashville I had started doing work in the area of child abuse and neglect and published about 15 papers in that, and that's among some of the best work that I did and, I think, maybe where I've had the large impact.

Horowitz: So after IBR?

Vietze: After IBR I left. I was actually forced to leave. It was rather sudden, but I decided to do some consulting, so I started a consulting firm--

Horowitz: You were forced to leave because of political issues?

Vietze: --I start--yes, internal and state--it was a state institute. It was run by a commissioner of mental retardation and developmental disabilities and he decided he didn't--Henry had died in 1999 and at that point the place lacked some leadership. I was not made director, although I thought that that would have been a good step for me and a good step for the Institute. But there were political considerations and things did not go as I thought they should go, and the commissioner was not clear on the direction and actually never really had an appreciation for it. And the next director ran afoul of the commissioner and I continued to be the deputy director, so I went with--he left and I left I guess involuntarily you might say. And so I was pretty upset about it, because I had lost a lot of what I had built for many years, although it continues to thrive. Dave Leftkowitz had left and gone to Florida, but there's still some. Bernie and Judy are still there and we had started a program in collaboration with the College of Staten Island, which was adjacent to us, called the Center for Developmental Neuroscience, which is a CUNY (City University of New York) center, as a master's program that also continues to thrive. They have about 40 students now and that was kind of something that I invented along with Wayne Silverman. But we got it off the ground before he went to Hopkins and I left and started consulting. And I went to City University as a consultant working on a program for adolescents in transition with developmental disabilities and also started consulting with an early intervention program on the lower east side, where I continue to work. And along the way I first became full time at CUNY in this position and then that didn't seem to be going the way the director of--

Recording paused and then resumed

Vietze: I don't know where I was, but anyway--

Horowitz: You left CUNY--

Vietze: --oh, I left CUNY--

Horowitz: --and started working in the--

Both speaking at once

Vietze: --oh, I left IBR and--oh, I left CUNY because it didn't fit with the John F. Kennedy Institute for Worker Education. And I had been applying for academic jobs. I actually applied for one at CUNY and didn't get it, and then I noticed a job at Montclair State University for chair, which seemed unusual, and I applied for that and was very fortunate in being selected. Along the way I got my New York State license. I had originally gotten licensed as a psychologist in 1975 in Tennessee and then, when I moved

to Maryland got licensed there and had a small practice actually with adults. When I moved to New York I saw no need to get a license. I didn't have any time for clinical practice anyway. But working with kids in the Early Intervention Program I realized that it would be beneficial to be able to do evaluations of these kids, and so it takes a while to get a license in another state, but eight months after I applied I got my license actually in 2007, which was also the year that I began working at Montclair State. So I started doing evaluations of little children, babies, and toddlers all over New York for the Early Intervention Program on weekends and during down-time and found that I enjoyed it a lot more than I expected. I had not done any evaluation since my days at Peabody, and I taught myself the new Bailey Scales, which was actually a big improvement over the second version or the first version.

Horowitz: Third.

Vietze: This was the third version--and I found that with the new DSM definition of autism there were a lot of kids who were being referred for possible diagnosis, and I found that I was diagnosing a lot of kids with pervasive developmental disorder. And my opportunity to consult in the lower east side also gave me an opportunity to help them develop an applied behavior analysis program to treat kids under three with autistic spectrum disorders and to study it. It's been a struggle to get the research program going, because the educators and clinicians involved don't quite appreciate the need for it. And although when we started this project a few years ago it was quite unique, it's become less unique. It still has unique features, because we have children doing ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) in Chinese, and Spanish and other languages. We have assistant teachers who speak many languages and many of the families want their kids being taught in those languages. And so we have to translate all the research tools into Spanish and Mandarin and then, of course, translate stuff back. So we've produced one poster showing some interesting findings. Oddly enough, we expected that the kids who start early do better, and the results show that the kids who start later do better. But we're trying to replicate that now and we've added some more methods and some pre-post testing that we didn't have before. We've used a number of instruments to plot, track their behavior. At Montclair I've been able to set up a child development center. The president was nice enough to give us a house to do child development research and so there are three researchers. I've recruited another infancy researcher, Laura LaKusta, who does research on cognition and perception in toddlers. And I have another researcher who does research on forensic issues in children. Of the three of us he's the only one who's funded--he has two NSF grants--a young man named Jason Dickinson, who's a marvelous colleague, and a marvelous researcher, and a fabulous teacher. On rate my professor he is rated as hot, because he's also young and unattached or they think he's unattached. And so that's what I'm doing now. I continue to do research on parenting style.

Horowitz: Thank you.

Vietze: Thank you.

Horowitz: I learned a lot about you.

Vietze: Good. I'm going to send you the rest of it, because there were other questions that we didn't cover, but are of interest. And they have some interesting questions here.

Horowitz: Well, do you want to continue?

Vietze: No, no, no. This is long enough. This is enough.

Horowitz: All right.

Vietze: I mean, I could send it in with it to her if she wants.

Horowitz: I would like to read it.

Vietze: All right. I'll send it to you. Okay. So let me stop this--

Recording paused and then resumed

Horowitz: --long-term professional friendships you had.

Vietze: Yes.

Horowitz: That's what I tell potential doctoral stu--

End of Interview