



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Interview with Howard Finster

**Contact Information**

Reference Department  
Archives of American Art  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, D.C. 20560  
[www.aaa.si.edu/askus](http://www.aaa.si.edu/askus)

# Transcript

## Preface

### Tape-recorded Interview with Howard Finster

at the Artist's Museum Home in Summerville, Georgia

March 17, 1977

Willem Volkersz, Interviewer

### Editor's Note:

This transcript is from a series of recordings made by Willem Volkersz over a number of years. They are not formal interviews, but rather records of conversations, often taped during photo-taking tours of the artist's studios or home collections.

The naive/visionary artists in these interviews have unique verbal mannerisms, many of which are difficult or impossible to transcribe accurately into written form. Thus, for grasping certain nuances of speech, researchers will find it advantageous to listen to the original tapes.

Our intent in transcribing these interviews was nonetheless to translate as accurately as possible the spoken word into a comprehensible written form, making changes to clarify but not to interpret. Thus the speaker's grammar is unedited. For example, "them" for "those," "themselves," and "gotta" were all transcribed as heard. On the other hand, certain changes were made for clarity: "'cause," was transcribed as "because," "'fore" as "before," "'yo" as "your," etc.

Other editorial notations are as follows: Bracketed words are of two types. Those with "[—Ed.]" or "[—WV]" are inserted by the transcriber, editor, or Volkersz. Other bracketed words indicate uncertainty: Two or more words or phrases indicate possible alternatives; "[unintelligible]" and "\_\_\_\_" indicate words that are garbled or incomprehensible on the tape, the former being a much longer phrase than the latter; "[noise]" is self-explanatory.

### Interview

**HF:** Howard Finster

**WV:** Willem Volkersz

[Tape 1, side A; Volkersz' No. F1-1] [45-minute tape sides]

HF: . . .this fellow be the lion, him be the dog. He lived. The other fellow gets killed. See, everything in the Bible's there. Ever'thing people needs is there; they just don't look very thoroughly. They go to some old kind of a doctor, and somebody [step] it up. They ain't no such thing as a good book, unless it originates from the Bible. That's a Roy Acuff's song, "A [Very] Very Speckled Bird Is the Bible." What could I do for you old buddy?

WV: Oh, I'd just like to look around, if I may.

HF: Yeah?

WV: I came from Kansas City to come and look at your work.

HF: Oh, it's good to have you.

WV: I've heard about it back there.

HF: Yeah, well, I just showing them around, and I'm having to work. I have to work on bicycles for a living, and I just let the people take over here and just make theirselves at home.

WV: Good, thank you.

HF: Let me show you where to start at. I got, that's my letter designs. I'm a-using some of them now for a job

I'm doing for Washington, D.C.

Another voice: Thank you Mr. Finster.

HF: Yeah, y'all come back. All right. This is a picture right here. The title of it is Can God Push the End of Time Back a Thousand Years?, and right here it says, "This old house could have lasted forty years more." And this here is examples of people that shorten their days, and this is examples of people that lengthen their days.

WV: Ah, great.

HF: And you just take and look over all of these you want to, and make yourself at home.

WV: What kind of job are you doing in Washington, you say?

HF: Ah, well, I've signed a contract to do four pieces for them. Here's two of them right here. That right there is one of them: American Folk Life Center, of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

WV: That's beautiful.

HF: Thank you. That's hard enamel. I'm going to have to paint the other side of it, in case that that cracks or anything you can use the other side of it, see.

WV: I see, uh huh.

HF: And that's the picture there, and I put myself on it and put a little historical side about myself on it, and the title of that picture is It Could Not Be Hid. Right down here is [a twelve division; A Twelve Division] in that box, and then I've got pictures. . . I've drawn 267 pictures since last year, and sold seven hundred and eighty. . . Well, when they pay me for these, it'll be around a thousand dollars.

WV: That's incredible. Have you been making primarily paintings recently?

HF: No, I just started painting out in Washington, never had painted before.

WV: When did you start the paintings?

HF: Last year.

WV: Last year? You did all these since last year?

HF: Yeah, I'll count on the gate. . . Out here on the gate, if you haven't seen on the outside, I've got a lion and a calf I made on down yonder that's about a hundred-foot front. Before you leave, why you look it over.

WV: I have been looking at some of them.

HF: And on the outside of that gate, you'll see how I got started painting, a little black sign.

WV: A one of them tells about it, huh? That's great.

HF: Yeah. This here is The Scorpion \_\_\_\_\_ A-Comin', and this here is four beasts of Daniel on down to the last one. Now, the last one's supposed to demolish the earth, and here's the web of man. There's a manufacturing plant would have give me \$75 for that one the other day, and I refused to take it because until I get to such a point where I can draw another one like it. I will eventually sell it.

WV: Because you'd like to keep one here.

HF: Yeah, till I get another one like it.

WV: Yeah.

HF: See, I sold him one down yonder, last uptown. He bought it and gave me \$75 for it. It's past the door up there. [to another person or persons:] Y'all just look around and make yourself at home, and I'll show it when you get through out here on the outside looking. [back to Volkersz:] I'll show the other painting I've ready to Washington, and it's in the workhouse in here.

WV: Great. Now, are most of the paintings for sale?

HF: Yeah, I sell most any of them that I can draw back.

WV: Okay.

HF: And this right here, that's a Indian, and that's his work [referring to Eddie O. Martin, another Georgia folk artist—WV]. Now, he don't believe in the Bible, and he's got a lot of book in the Folk Art [referring to Missing Pieces: Georgia Folk Art, 1770-1976. See, I'm in the Folk Art this year; they put me three full pages.

WV: In that Georgia Folk Art catalogue? I saw you in there, yeah.

HF: Well, thank you. And he sent me all them pictures of his work and told, every time he called me—he's called me nine times—and every time Mr. Martin calls me I talk to him about the Bible. (chuckles)

WV: Uh huh. Yeah, I'm going to go see him too.

HF: And he don't believe in the Bible, but he told me, he said, "Mr. Finster," he said, "I'm going to go to painting pictures of more meanings to 'em." Now, he's seen a. . . See, every picture I paint if it don't have some kind of meaning, I don't know what it's about, you know. [Jason Volkersz, 8 months, joined the conversation soon after it began—Ed.] And so you just look every one of them over. There's around two hundred in here.

WV: Great. Thanks very much.

HF: Yeah.

*[Interruption in taping]*

HF: Right when you go into the Library of Congress, with those books. They've never seen them yet. I want you to look at that good and tell me if there's anything where I've violated any government rule.

WV: Okay! (chuckles)

HF: See, if you crank a million dollars, it's yours. See, Mr. Hemphill done registered that picture and lent it to the folk art [exhibition, Missing Pieces—WV] he bought here last year.

WV: Uh huh.

HF: If you buy a picture from me, and get it registered, if that picture makes a hit, you can make a million dollars off of it if you want to, and there can't nobody bother you.

WV: Huh.

HF: They can't take your franchise on it.

WV: I see.

*[Interruption in taping]*

WV: [Reading:] "Hidden Man of the Heart. I came all the way down from God to bring out to you the hidden man of my heart. It took me sixty years to get around all. It has been a little rough coming down. I have a few little jobs to do before I go back. I think it is going to be harder going back than it was coming up. I have had a lot of pleasure on this planet. I have never met a person I didn't love. But really I am packing up to go back home, for no good thing could last forever down here."

HF: . . .on down. The day, a little better than a thousand dollars on my art. Of course a thousand dollars ain't much now, when you go to, you know, trying to live. But I just thought, that first year, 267 paintings of my own imagination, and a thousand dollars in money. If God's trying to show me something, that I don't need to be fooling with bicycles.

WV: He's given you the energy to do it, too.

HF: Yeah.

WV: And the know-how.

HF: That's right. I want my wisdom and my knowledge from God to go to people, to the government. It don't make no difference. If I've got anything that's good, let all the nation have it, except a few inventions now. How about [looking at] them inventions that I've been collecting patents on.

WV: That's mechanical type of thing?

HF: Yeah. I've got \_\_\_\_\_. Tell you what I'd like to do. At my age [61—Ed.] I could drop off any time. And I've got some inventions for my country. And I want to give them to 'em, and I want some way of corresponding direct with my President by mail. I want to write and tell him about these things, and get him to send an engineer to me, and draw up a blueprint of this and take it to the White House and put it to work for my country.

WV: And how would they do that?

HF: I don't know. That's what I've got to try to find out, how I can reach him. He was the governor right here in Georgia.

WV: I know it, yeah.

HF: And I never did even get to shake hands with him while he was the governor.

WV: Well, now's your chance.

HF: Let me see where the smoke's coming from, on that furnace down there. [moving away from microphone, shouting to someone/thing else:] Hi, baby! Hi there. [back to WV:] I'm painting a picture of the last war down there behind the barn, that's about 20 feet long. I'm painting it on an old piece of canvas. You can take a shot of it and. . .

WV: Yeah, I'm going to come around.

HF: . . .when you get though out there. On around this way is some pictures. They wanted to buy all these holes here, too.

WV: They did?

HF: Yeah, that fellow up on Henry Ford's place, you know, up. . . I was going to refuse to take a check off of him, you know, because I didn't know him. I told him, I says, "Mister," I says, "It's embarrassing to me," I says, "about taking a check for that much money, but," I said, "I just don't know you." He said, "Well, I guess I'll have to tell you who I am." And he pulled out his paper and showed me he was from the Henry Ford Foundation.

WV: (laughs) They've got plenty of money.

HF: Yeah.

WV: You could take that check without worrying.

HF: Yeah, I told him I'd take it.

WV: Yeah, I don't blame you.

HF: If I didn't have to hold it. He said, "You can hold it till Tuesday," and that was Monday that he was here.

WV: That's great. (chuckles)

HF: And you know what I told him? I said, "Man, I don't know what art paint is." I said, "I paint out of an old can." You know, Ace Body Shop?

WV: Uh huh.

HF: Well, they have a little paint left in the bottom of the bucket, and they bring that to me. That's what I paint these with.

WV: So it's car enamel.

HF: Yeah. I take it and implement paint. These I'm doing for 'em Washington, that man that called me told me to paint them with the kind of paint I've been painting them with.

WV: Did they tell you what to paint?

HF: No, they said they wanted me to paint my own versions.

WV: Of what?

HF: They're just two folk art pieces.

WV: Two paintings.

HF: Yeah, anything I. . .

WV: You could do anything you want.

HF: Whatever I wanted to.

WV: I like it. I like that one.

HF: You see anything on there that would interfere with any kind of rules?

WV: Even if it does, I think it should, you know.

HF: Yeah. . .

WV: You go ahead and say it the way you want to say it. I think that's what you, you ought to be true to yourself.

HF: Well, now, there's one president on there that I didn't. . . I've seen him on the TV and I might not have done much good on him, but I've drawn him with steel eyes, the one that's in there now. I couldn't put his name on there, because I didn't have no right to, but the people'll know who he is.

WV: They'll figure it out.

HF: Yeah, because it's from peanut land.

WV: Ahh. (laughs)

HF: You know they \_\_\_\_\_ about that, you know, before he got in there, you know. They kinda started to put a little mud in ever'body's peanuts. See, he's got a big peanut farm down by. . .

WV: Right, yeah.

HF: Now, I'd like to get ahold of him and give him some information on how to take care of some of these crises we're in—like the water crisis. See, I've solutions for all this stuff. If it sounds a little non-educated, it's hard to reach their engineer. But I'd like to draw a picture of some things, you know, just let them go direct to the government. After they inspect them, if they've value, or no value, let them put them in the museum.

WV: It seems like Carter would be open to that kind of thing.

HF: Yeah.

WV: He seems like a fairly open man.

HF: Well, he ought to be if somebody wants to give him something to help him in his problems, because the whole world's resting on his shoulders, almost, right now.

WV: That's for sure. You could be of some help to him, I'm sure.

HF: Yeah, I could be some help to him. If I could just get ahold of him. There ain't no way you can call the President without special arrangement.

WV: Without going through all kinds of secretaries and aides and things?

HF: Yeah. What I thought, this man that I'm working with in Washington now might be able to get a lead for me.

WV: Hmm.

HF: See, he's over this whole Library of Congress.

WV: That'd be a good contact, for sure.

HF: I'm going to try to get ahold of him and tell him about two pictures that I want to draw. I want to draw one picture about how to generate electricity, how to store just water, and how to filter it, and everything. And then I want to draw one about the planets, the unknown planets. I found a scripture in the Bible that indications are that there are some other planets, that there's living people on them.

WV: Yeah, there's a good chance.

HF: And that they might even have a different setup. See, this planet, Adam and Eve messed us up. But this other planet, they might not have, see.

WV: Right, and it might be a pretty good place.

HF: Yeah, and if these flying saucers from other planets, they must be good people or they done took us over. They could have, the way they maneuver them machines.

*[Interruption in taping; beginnings of photographing which creates some noise]*

WV: On the donation box [reading:] "Donators: Help write the Bible. I can't do it alone. Howard Finster, Summerville, Georgia, Route 2, Zip code 30747."

HF: . . .pan under that [carriage].

WV: Huh.

HF: Now, both \_\_\_\_ . . . [noise]

WV: Whose are all the names in the. . .that you put in the mosaic down there?

HF: Well, anybody that is bringing up marbles, they write their name and I'm seeing that, and I put their name in there for them.

WV: Oh, that's neat.

HF: If a man has a skillet, I can cook bread in, \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_, you know, on a block [noise]

WV: That's right.

HF: And now this refrigerator here, the mayor of Summerville [noise] brought that up here and give it to me because something was wrong with it.

WV: Did he ask you to fix it? Did he want you to fix it, or was he just donating it to you?

HF: No, he wanted to give it to me, because it. . . You know what's in back, something happened to it, and \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_, and the [late] coming refrigeration part of it. It's got a good icemaker and everything in it.

WV: I'll be darned.

HF: He brought it up here and left it and give it to me for the park and I paint on things like that, you know, and use them to keep supplies in too.

WV: That's pretty useful.

HF: I keep paint and brushes and things in that old refrigerator, and then I use it to paint pictures on. I've got a kind of a racial picture started here on the side, about Adam.

WV: Yeah, I looked at that.

HF: And you know, it's said that he made of all nations of one blood, and is before we all got split up in all these different kind of races. They originated from sort of like a flower seed, see, that's a bleeding-heart right there in that bed, you understand, that's a blueberry \_\_\_\_.

WV: Right, right.

HF: Things is mixed up. That's the way people are. There's generally, there's, generally speaking, there's one race of people to start with, you know. And they kept springing off and dividing out from one another. Like me, now, I've got five kids and thirteen grandchildren, and every kid I've got has got a different principle. Every grandkid I've got has got a different principle. And they're going to go all different kinds of different ways.

WV: Uh huh.

HF: And now some churches will claim a name and say that they're the only ones that going to make it. And actually, that's kind of like this: My last name is Finster. There ain't nothing I can do to change my last name. And every one of my brothers and sisters was Finsters.

WV: Right.

HF: But, we've every one got a different given name, see. I'm named Howard, my brother's named Leonard, and I had a brother named Fred. We're all Finsters, but we got all different names, given names.

WV: Of course.

HF: That's the way I look at the world. God's got people that don't even belong to no organization. Now, He's got people that don't even go to church.

WV: Lots of them.

HF: Yeah. And as the way I see it, I know a man right now that wouldn't go inside of a church house at all. He'll set and shed tears. He knows God. He won't go to church. The only church he's ever been to in this county is the little old church I used to pastor. He went there one time.

WV: Were you a pastor here? In this county here?

HF: Yeah, I pastored eight churches around here. I run revivals, done evangelistical work. I run a big meeting in South Georgia. Run one in Miami, Florida, at the First Baptist of St. Peters.

WV: Huh.

HF: That was two hundred and some churches in Miami at that time. I stayed on 95th Avenue, and I think it was 30 miles long. That's a big place!

WV: (whistles) That's incredible. (laughs)

HF: Yeah. I preached there. . .

WV: Were you born in Georgia?

HF: Yeah, I preached there two weeks. [still talking about Miami—Ed.] The way it was, they was building a little mission church from this big church. Well, they called me down there on a meeting in the little church. Well, I. . . [stuffing tobacco into his mouth:] I feed my scraps to my birds, I guess you notice I got \_\_\_\_ birds.

WV: (laughs) I do.

HF: And I run the first week in the little church, and these big guys from up town come out. One of them was a contractor; he's the one that contracted a three-million-dollar job out in Key West. He had big pipes laid on the ocean, and they had a big ship out there, on out on the ocean a piece. They was grinding up that coral stone, away out in the ocean, and [stuff] coming through that big pipe and filling in like you'd fill in with grout. And they was building land at Key West, right out on the sea. And putting, driving these big pilings [probably means pilings—Ed.] down, long as that pole yonder?

WV: Uh huh.

HF: And then pouring cement around, making curbs. You just walk up to the edge of that thing, look straight off down into the ocean.

WV: Incredible.

HF: And they built a. . . In fact they built a hotel right there. Well, the first week I was there, they liked my preaching, and these town dudes come out and I was in the Everglades, out in the Everglades. We was going to build a new church, little new church, branch church. They come heard me preach and wanted me to preach the last week in the big church, you know.

WV: That's great. So how many years did you preach?

HF: I preached forty years. Retired about seven years ago from pastoring.

WV: Why did you do that? Health, or did you. . .

HF: I had stroke of inner ear trouble.

WV: Huh.

HF: And this inner ear trouble, when it hits you, you can't even set here holding nothing, just draws you over



[meaning dizzy—Ed.]. There's a inner ear here, there's a fluid that gathers in it.

WV: Yeah. I've heard of that.

HF: And one time that thing ruptures, it'll collect fluid. If it ever collects enough fluid to get you off of balance, you can't even stand up.

WV: Oh yeah.

HF: And when you look, everything's turning a thousand revolutions a minute.

WV: So you can't keep your balance, yeah.

HF: No, you just fall, like you was dead, and then if you even open your eyes, you'll fall again. You have to shut your eyes and lay still, and then there's certain ways you move, and that in there, sometime I'd wake up in the morning, turn my head over, and when I did the ceiling'd just go a million miles an hour, around like that. I'd have to lay back down, and just keep messing around till I got to where I could get up.

WV: Now how did you get that fixed?

HF: Well, they said there wasn't no cure for it. They give me a congestion medicine to dry up the fluid in my body, I mean, to dry up the fluid. I've been taking a congestion liquid for twelve years to dry that up. And another thing I do, I don't drink much water. I drink about two glasses a day. And then after I retired from pastoring, I started chewing chewing tobacco to spit most of the fluid away.

WV: Out, yeah, so you don't swallow it down, yeah.

HF: Yeah, I spit most of that away, and then when I got a chew of tobacco I don't crave water, and I just about whooped it down, and for the last seven years, just about whooped it down, like that.

WV: That's good.

HF: [noise] . . . maybe God might decide to heal that again.

WV: So you can. . .

HF: You know, he healed me one time. Like I started to tell you, that I started to, when I got up in the big church in town the last week, the pastor of that church was a former school principal. And they didn't have no altar in the church. Course I've always raised up without a altar, and anybody want to come and pray, come to that altar, you know. And I thinks to myself, "Well, I'm 850 miles from home, and I may never preach here again, but I'm going to turn the hammer loose here tonight." (laughter) "Principal or no principal, First Baptist or no First Baptist, I'm going to preach and I'm going give all the call, and I'm going to give it on the front seat." Well, I got up there and I preached on hellfire and brimstone. That Henry Ford man bought a picture of hellfire and brimstone; it was right up above this truck here. He bought that when he was down here.

WV: Huh.

HF: I preached on hellfire and brimstone, and there's six young people come to the altar, and I told them, I said, "We're going make a altar out of this front bench." I think there was six come down there and got on their knees and prayed to God and got forgiveness of their sins, you know. And never nobody ever said a thing to me about it. You know, they mostly, in most of the big churches here, you just come up and check in with the preacher and tell him you believe, you know, and sign up now.

WV: And that's it, yeah.

HF: But there is such a thing as a change, an inward change, of a fellow, and I think a man gotta have that inward change, and there's nobody understands it, and there's nobody will ever understand it. They don't even understand being born to the flesh. They don't even understand that. There's nobody in the world understands it. We're planted as a little seed, come forth, make a human. We don't none of us understand it. The doctors don't understand it. If they did, they'd just go to making people theirselves. And, but you know all them flickers on that gate out there?

WV: Uh huh.

HF: Well, I use them for a purpose. I use everything. I mean there ain't nothing, you can't bring nothing here of what I can't find a use for it. It don't make no difference what. You can cut your beard off right now. . .

WV: And you'd use it, huh?

HF: I guarantee you, I'll find something. . . (laughs)

WV: That's wonderful.

HF: And there's a man brought me a whole box of them little things, and I've to studying about it, you know. You can't see the wind, can you?

WV: Um hmm, right.

HF: And you don't know which way it's coming from, and it could turn a curve at you [and do you], and when it passes by you, if you're a horse it'll carry a scent of you and that's the only way you can tell where it went to.

WV: Right, it's going to carry something along.

HF: Yeah. All right, you don't know where it goes. Well, that's the way with them little things pointing out there. There's some women in here the other day, and they looked like they was pretty well wealthy people. And they mentioned to me about them things out there, and I told them, I used them to explain about being born again. I says, "You see, the very least bit of wind will make them things move."

WV: Uh huh.

HF: "Even a little breeze." I said, "I look at them and," I says, "I talk to people and tell them that Nicodemus said, 'Jesus, how do you be born again?' he says, 'You mean, I have to go in my mother's womb a second time?' Jesus told him, 'No, he didn't understand', you know. And he said, 'Verily, verily,'"—which means truly, truly ——"Nicodemus, you must be born again." He says, 'That that's born of the flesh is flesh. When you get saved, you still [have sex]. When you get saved, you're still like a graven bread. When you get saved, you still say a bad word if you ain't careful.' Jesus said, 'That's born of the flesh; it'll always be flesh.' But he says, 'That's born of the spirit, Nicodemus, that's what I'm talking about, born of the spirit.' He said, 'It's like the wind,' he says, 'From which it comes you don't know.' He said, from where it goeth,' says, 'you don't know,' but says, 'you know it's passing by, because, you know, you can feel it.'"

WV: Um hmm, that's right.

HF: "'And you can see a leaf wiggle, and you know it's going by. You know it's there.' He says, Nicodemus says, 'That's the way of everyone that's born with God.'" And some people. . . I had one of the biggest bootleggers in the county, and he lived right here a distance from the church for the past fifteen years. And this bootlegger, I wouldn't of reported him for selling whiskey. You couldn't have hired me to have reported that man selling whiskey, because I wanted to win that man. And he had been caught several times by the law. He'd pay all of it and go right back to bootlegging, and there wasn't nobody ever stopped him from bootlegging. And I'd go to see him like he was my right-hand church member, and he was selling whiskey within two or three hundred yards of my church. I'd go see him and treat him like he was my daddy. And you couldn't have hired me to report him, and he knew it. Because that was the law's job. God didn't send me to be a police. And I was good to that old man, and one day I asked him, after I'd preached eight years there, I finally decided I'd ask him to come to church. I wouldn't ask him to come to church, beg and set around like some people do.

WV: Right.

HF: I'll go see him and tell him I'll be back, if I could help him let me know, and I was pastoring up there and all, and he'd even send donations up there and help us there.

WV: Uh huh.

HF: That might have been whiskey money; I don't know. I hoped that if it was, why it was in the devil's hands long enough anyhow, so we needed it.

WV: (laughs) Right!

HF: And so I just was so good to that old man that it, that's the best way in the world to kill a feller, is just treat him so good until you just kill him.

WV: Right, right.

HF: And one day I asked him, I said, "How about coming up to services sometime?" He said, "Oh, I could hear you preaching down there." I say, "You can?" He says, "Yeah." I says, "You understand what I was saying?" He says, "Yeah, I understand what you're saying." And he'd been setting down on his porch listening at me preach

for eight years and I didn't even know it.

WV: (laughs) That's great.

HF: And I looked back there one night and that old man was setting back there with tears running down his cheeks. And I don't know what it was I preached on, but I know he was setting back there with tears running down his cheeks. And it wasn't, he was on a conviction. He knew that I had something that ordinarily the average preachers didn't have. He knew that I wouldn't do him no harm, though he wasn't right. He knew that I wouldn't report him. And he knew I'd do anything for him I'd do for a member of my church. And it got next to him, and he got to coming up there, and you know he got converted and going to church.

WV: That's beautiful. [phone rings]

HF: And he told me before he died. . . He'd built a big fine brick home right down below here. He lived over in the country then.

WV: Uh huh.

HF: I'm expecting a call from Washington, D.C., now. If I have to run off and leave you go in the house.

WV: I'll understand.

HF: And this fellow over at library is supposed to call me and we're supposed to talk some about this work. And the first call goes out here for my son. He lives just down on the place, and he's a TV repairman, see. And then if it rings a second time, I know it's mine. And uh. . . [phone rings again]

WV: That's it, huh?

*[Interruption in taping]*

HF: . . .he said, well, he'd been sick a pretty good while. There wasn't no way they could stop him from bootlegging, he'd. . . [noise] . . .sunk into it, you know. And there wasn't nobody could stop him. He had to stop hisself, but he had had to have something to block his way without offending him. And Jesus said that a perfect man was a man that could meet the world, and so on and so forth, without offending him, you know. Run up on any kind of a feller, take him as what he is, don't even criticize what he is. Like that old gentleman right yonder, see, he don't, he said he believes there's a God, but he don't even believe in the Bible. That don't have a thing to do with my fellowship with him. If I lived neighbor to him, it wouldn't make one particle of difference. He'd be just my brother.

WV: I understand. Have you ever met him?

HF: Just a minute or two.

WV: I see.

HF: I got down by the side of him and played my French harp [harmonica—WV]. Were you down at that opening show?

WV: No.

HF: Well, I've seen you somewhere, seem like, in a book or something. I bought, it seem like I've seen you, somewhere this year.

WV: Well. . .

HF: I don't know for sure. It might have been on the TV or something.

WV: Probably not. I'm from Kansas City.

HF: Yeah.

WV: And I've been going around and taking some pictures of folk artists around the country, but I doubt whether you've seen me.

HF: Well, this man right here, he's an Indian [Ed Martin—WV].

WV: Yeah, I read about him in that catalogue.

HF: Yeah, it's Ed Martin, and if you do go to see him. . .

WV: You want to give him a message?

HF: I want you to tell him that you was by Finster's place, tell him that you seen the pictures he sent me, and tell him that they really looked nice when I got them all together. You see, I told him. . . I invented a machine that makes every piece of the trimming [framing—WV] around there. See the different kinds of. . .

WV: Right.

HF: I've invented printing heads that can print any piece of that kind of stuff and around there they are.

WV: Are they burnt, or what?

HF: Yeah, it burns it in there, and you can do it just like a woman sewing on a machine. See that little block?

WV: Yeah.

HF: I can set down, put that around a block and just paint on it. I told him [Martin—Ed.] that I'd put his pictures all together, and I says, "I found a piece of glass that was broke crooked," and I says, "I'll put your pictures all in that piece of broken glass and framed it crooked, so's people would notice it in preference to any of the other painting."

WV: (laughs)

HF: And I says, "I put little pieces of my woodwork around it." So you tell him that it's the most odd frame that you ever seen. Tell him it's just a broke piece of glass with all his pictures in it, and a frame all the way around the crooked thing.

WV: Okay, I'll tell him.

HF: And I told him that I was going to do that to draw the attention to his artwork because he's great, boy. That there's all cement work there.

WV: Yeah, they're beautiful, aren't they?

HF: Yeah, and he must have had a form and poured them blocks, you know, to get them all alike, you see, and then laid them. Now I've made quite a few plaques myself, and I can make blocks, and I tried 21 different trades before I ever painted my first painting. And everything I've ever done I done it for a living. But last year when I was shut in and couldn't get out and work on things, it come to me to do this painting. And I've always been a fellow that wanted imagination that nobody had ever done. I don't like to do nothing the same time over. I don't like to even repeat nothing the second time. I like to do a different thing every time I make anything, I want it to be different.

WV: You're doing it.

HF: And I got to painting. . . You know, I used to remodel houses, and then I've always wanted to build just a real castle—you know, a big castle. I found out, after I had a few of these inner ear spells, that I wasn't going to be no more good depending on pastoring at the church, maybe get up there fall right in the front of them, or maybe be driving and maybe just have one of them spells before we stopped; might have accident. And I decided I'd start painting, and I found out that I could just build castles and everything, setting in a chair. You know, just with a little old brush. Now that's the reason I got interested in it, and I never have loved nothing as much as I've loved painting. If I was retired on enough money, just to buy my food and not even buy my clothes, because it don't take much clothes for me. My wife makes them. I've got a daughter that can make a suit, a suit of clothes. She makes all of my suits.

WV: Huh.

HF: If I had an income to where I could my food, just me and my wife, I'd just do nothing but paint. That's all I'd do. I'd paint seven days a week. And I'd just take a break every few minutes and go back and paint, take a break, walk around, and go back and paint a little. You can't paint long at a time. That's the reason a lot of people break theirselves down. When you're painting a picture. . . Now when I'm painting a picture like that right there, I ask for the wisdom of God and I make a background. I just take a paintbrush, and that background right there, I can make that background in less than five minutes. And just set it back over my bed. I've got a shelf all the way around my bed.

WV: I see.

HF: And I set these backgrounds around over my bed, and I look at that background maybe two or three days before I start painting on it.

WV: And it comes to you, huh?

HF: And maybe while I'm a-looking at that background, I've done painting on something else.

WV: I see.

HF: And I want to show you a background right here. This thing right here now, you ought to have a picture of that good enough to where you could see this right here. I started to—this is just a piece of plyboard, like you seal the house with—and I started to wipe this off to paint it—that's a groove in it—and there was something, I got to looking, trying to wipe that off, and I couldn't wipe that off.

WV: And that was in there?

HF: Yeah. I got to looking at it, and it looked like a alligator with his mouth open, or sticking his head out of the water. . .

WV: Right.

HF: . . .and it looks like a man casting a net.

WV: Ahh, so here it is repeated.

HF: Yeah, and something told me, see, says that's what I want you to draw right there. And this Bible here—the Bible is the world's last prop. Now the reason I done that, there ain't nothing going from this world except the word of God, and a man abides in the word and believes in it, he's going with it. And everything is perished but the word. Of course, there's a place that says our earth bideth forever, but that means forever for its period. And right here the Bible's the world's last prop. It says here that, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," see. All right now, for [nesting] to Hebrew children was thrown in the fiery furnace, and they couldn't get out on their own bread, could they? But they believed in God, and believed in His word, and the Bible says, "Pray without season." All right, they prayed. That was the word of God, wasn't it? All right, they come out of there. There wasn't a, the lion didn't touch them. Hebrew children come out of there. Noah come out of there. Jonah come out of hell, even. He was in the bottom of the sea in a whale's belly.

WV: Right.

HF: And that's what a man lives, by bread alone, but every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, now, if I actually to God believe a thing, it'll come to pass. I don't even have to ask God if I need a paintbrush, because he already knows the desires of my heart, and a prayer is a sincere desire of a man's heart. Believe me, in preaching forty years, I've seen people down there praying till you could here them ever so far, and more 'n \_\_\_\_\_ their mind was on their farm work or something while they was doing that prayer.

WV: Oh, you knew.

HF: Yeah! Yeah, maybe their minds while they was down there praying was back at home, wondering if the kids all right, and things like that, and they prayed that prayer so many times and over so many times, they could just pray that prayer and be thinking about something else while they're praying it. And prayer is a sincere desire of your heart. To show you, I was ruptured when I was ten years old.

WV: Hmm.

HF: And my daddy was a sawmiller, and he sawed the lumber to build that little house. I got a picture where it says my birthplace out there. He sawed that lumber and built that house before I was born. And I was ruptured at ten years old and in school. It was right there [groin area—WV]. It was big as a hen egg there.

WV: Wow.

HF: And my daddy's a sawmiller and a poor man, and I tell you. There wasn't but one hospital in forty miles, it was. And he wasn't able to have me operated on, and he went down to the drugstore—that's where you got all your supplies then—and he bought a truss for me to wear. It had a little sponge ball on it, two iron knobs on it. And there was a strap on it between my legs, my crotch, and around my body, and I wore that thing three years, terrified with it, that strap between there. And when I was playing in school every once in a while that thing would jump out around that sponge thing, and just nearly kill me, you know.

WV: Oh boy.

HF: And I wore that till them iron knobs come off it. They was big around as a ten penny nail, where it buckled.

WV: Phew.

HF: I wore them plumb off of there, and that thing hadn't never healed up. And I become a Christian, you know, after that, and I got to praying about that. And you know what? That rupture went in and healed up without me not even wearing that truss!

WV: That shows you something; that's beautiful.

HF: And I worked as a machinist at the [Chime Glove] mill, and I worked at the Trion cotton mill three years without giving any trouble of any description, and they started working on Sunday, and I was preaching at two different churches on Sunday. And I tried to explain to my boss that there wasn't all preachers in there and they wasn't all preaching. And I thought they ought to let me off on Sunday, and if they didn't let me off on Sunday, I'd just have to be off on Sunday anyhow, because that I was working at these two churches.

WV: Right.

HF: They said, "If you don't come in on Sunday, you needn't to come in on Monday."

WV: Oh boy.

HF: And my boss told me, he says, "You know how it is, Preacher," he says, "As hard as times is now, that you don't want to lose your job," and you know what I was drawing? Nine dollars and sixty cents a week.

WV: Whew!

HF: And forty hours.

WV: That's incredible.

HF: And it went up, finally went up to 22 cents on the half hour. And then actually put on my separation papers—I didn't go in, and that's the only living I had. And I didn't go in, and I went on to my church work, and I went in on Monday morning, and they sent me out the door just like they said they would, and when I got to the personnel office, Mr. Cook—he's a pretty nice guy, the one that hired me—and he says, "The only thing on this separation paper here says, 'This employee failed to work on Sunday.'" He says, "That's the only thing I got against you," or something like that. I said, "Well, God called me to preach." So he says, "That's the highest calling in the world."

WV: Right.

HF: And I walked out of there, and right across the street was a big glove mill, and they put me in as a machinist in there just right off, to work over there—as a machinist!

WV: I'll be darned.

HF: Going around with a pocket full of screwdrivers buckled around me! Fixing machines! And I never took no training on fixing machines; I just went to work and I started fixing them.

WV: So it came natural?

HF: Yeah.

WV: That's beautiful.

HF: And they hired me as a learner, but I was in there fixing them. I'd worked on our old machines, you know. I just went right in there, started fixing them machines, you know. All right, this boss that fired me was an old man, and he come over, across over there, one time, for some kind of business. He seen me in there going around with a bunch of tools, you know.

WV: (laughs) What did he say?

HF: He didn't say nothing; he just looked funny. And things like that happen, and the Bible said, "If a man will believe in God, and if he will live for God alone," if he says, "God will manifest himself unto you." Now your daddy can't make you believe. Your preacher can preach to you for twenty years, and he can't make you believe. But if

God manifests hisself to you, he'll make you believe to where it's impossible for you not to believe.

WV: Not to believe, right.

HF: Yeah. And so, here the other day, I got out a paintbrush, and honest to God, somebody give me two or three little paintbrushes along just before Christmas, and I wore them things plumb out, and they was camel hair, cost two dollars and something apiece. And I sat down and wore them things out till there wasn't enough hairs on them to draw nothing. I told my wife, I says, "I'm out of brushes," and I says, "I'm going to have to have some brushes." I said, "I believe I'll get some brushes." And you may not believe it, but I'm telling you what's truth, that there wasn't a man come here that I didn't even know his name, and he had about seven or eight bottles of art paint and two brushes, and both of them was lining brushes. You know, that's what you just have to have, lining brush.

WV: The real thin, tapered ones?

HF: Yeah, a little bitty brush, from the littlest one up to one as big around as a match stem, on down to one that ain't no bigger around than a . . .

WV: So you get all the lettering in?

HF: Yeah.

WV: Yeah, okay.

HF: Yeah, you see. . . Let me see a line. Yeah, how little the line is. This dog store here might have a little one on it. Well, like them dots right there between my eyes.

WV: Oh, right.

HF: Yeah, and then it's you can make lines with as little as. . . Well, I don't see no little ones on there. Well, one lining brush will do 't like this.

WV: Right.

HF: And you can get a lining brush that'll even get littler than that right there.

WV: Yeah, right.

HF: Well, from this size on up to the littlest one is what you need the worstest. I wear more of them out than any. Covering space, like this right here, you use a bigger brush.

WV: Right.

HF: And that man come here and brought them bottles of paint, so help me God, and two brushes. Two lining brushes!

WV: That's neat.

HF: I didn't even know his name.

WV: Just when you needed them.

HF: Yeah, he just brought them to me! Just brought them to me. He didn't come for no other purpose, only just to bring them.

WV: If I wanted to help you out with something, would brushes be something that you could use the best?

HF: Yessir, I tell you what, now. I don't know what art paint, I mean, I never bought. . . The only art paint I ever bought in my life was two or three weeks ago, I bought two tubes, of something like paste.

WV: Like oil paint.

HF: Yeah, paste.

WV: Yeah, uh huh.

HF: And I would have to mix something with it. It was too thick.

WV: Right, I have it.

HF: Of course I wouldn't know how to, I'd have to have instructions for that kind of paint. But did you see all them paint buckets setting down yonder?

WV: No, I didn't.

HF: Oh.

WV: I saw a lot of things. I didn't happen to see paint buckets.

HF: The worse thing in the world I need is a buddy, somebody that like Lucille Ball that got \$76 million dollars, pay me just a living salary.

WV: Yeah.

HF: And take every painting that I do, and take it our yonder and put it to work and sell it and make three copies of it.

WV: Right.

HF: And just let me give it to them to feed me and let me paint instead of fixing them things. I don't want to fix them things. I don't want to do this! [fix bicycles—WV] I don't want to fix that thing yonder.

WV: You've got more important things to do.

HF: Yeah. These people that runs these body shops come \_\_\_\_\_ to see my painting, and they bring in sometimes fifteen gallons. Like that one there with just a little left in it.

WV: Oh, there they are, yeah.

HF: See up here?

WV: Well, your paintings ought to last a long time.

HF: Well, that'll last three years, you know, right out there.

WV: Outside.

HF: Yeah. It'll last three years, just like it does on an automobile. And there's a man come the other day—I got a little low on colors; I use a lot of blue, you know—and he brought me every bit of that at one time, right there.

WV: Oh, that's beautiful.

HF: Now, that's difficult, it's difficult to paint with that, like I'm painting.

WV: Now would. . .

HF: That don't, that'll dry, I say in one minute, after you put that on there.

WV: Oh.

HF: If you don't shape that, and you get from of it, it'll dry out that quick.

WV: So you've got to work real fast, and you just. . .

HF: You've got to work fast!

WV: Got to know exactly what you're doing, yeah.

HF: Yeah, I done one picture, I was doing it with something like that, I. . .

**[Tape 1, side B; Volkercsz' No. F1-2]**

HF: . . . a little boy right yonder you know.

WV: Oh yeah. (chuckles)



HF: That's a commercial. And I \_\_\_\_\_ over here somewhere, if you had some way of carrying a piece of this, you might want it just sort of for a . . .

WV: Yeah, it sure looks nice, yeah.

HF: . . .might want it just to. . .

WV: Oh, that's neat. Oh, look at all the rocks you have in the back there.

HF: Yeah, that there, it was a monument. You see, I put this picture inside of a bottle. See, you take any kind of a old jar, and you take your picture and put it inside and tape it in there where the moisture won't get to it.

WV: Right.

HF: And then you put dry cement, pack it in dry cement, and then, I mean, you know, it's wet but not too wet.

WV: Yeah, sure, sure.

HF: Pack it down behind that bottle and it presses it out here. . .

WV: Oh, that's beautiful.

HF: . . .and you lay this with a picture up like that, and when it dries that thing's permanently in there. And then you take your bottle and just mold the whole bottle in there like a rock, see. Just for an example, if you might want to hire somebody to do some work like for you some time, you can have that piece if you want it.

WV: Yeah, I'd like to have that. That's real nice.

HF: And this is Mr. Nixon, here, when he run the first time. My grandkids is bad, but the little [rascals], and they've ruint that there. That's Mr. Nixon the first time he run, and the first time he run, I voted for him. And I still got more confidence in Nixon than. . . I mean, I believe Nixon meant well. I don't believe he was against the constitution of our country.

WV: I think he maybe misinterpreted it sometimes, or maybe. . .

HF: Yeah, he made some bad mistakes, didn't he?

WV: Yeah.

HF: But I don't think he's really mean as he thought they was. There's something, if I had it off. That's President Kennedy, that first Kennedy that got killed, didn't he have a kid?

WV: Yeah.

HF: That's his baby.

WV: Oh, huh, that's right.

HF: I'm gonna try to remold that back in there, that's seven or eight years old. That's Mr. Kennedy's little girl or boy, one.

WV: Yeah.

HF: You see, I tucked that whole piece up, see. That's his little kid; it favors him. Now she's been in there all these years, right out in the rain, and she was just put in a jar like this.

WV: Yeah. Oh, she's lasted, they're all lasting pretty well.

HF: Yeah, now that's some old governors right there. This one is. Come out of an old schoolbook. What do you think about the Abraham Lincoln that I painted in there now? This picture that I painted him by, that's the way he looked. I believe they've slightly changed, or took pictures of him and done a little something to them, because that one I painted in there is just like the way he looked.

WV: Huh.

HF: And I looked at this. . .

WV: It's a penny, huh.

HF: . . .and that ain't nothing like Abraham Lincoln, the side of that old eighteen and eight-six. . .

WV: Oh course, that's a profile.

HF: Yeah?

WV: You know, usually you see him sort of full face with the beard and everything.

HF: Yeah.

WV: I forget how you put him in there. Did you use him in profile, or in full face?

HF: Oh, I just looked at him and drew his picture from my book.

WV: Oh, I see.

HF: And then Shakespeare, the first picture I ever drew of him. I put him up by the side of this book, and I looked it over real good to see if he was really the Shakespeare. That one I showed you in there?

WV: Uh huh.

HF: And it is really the Shakespeare. The only difference is it has a different look when you put them in color. Now if I'd a had a. . .

WV: Hmm, the picture was black-and-white, of course.

HF: Yeah.

WV: Yeah.

HF: And this is a picture I got started, now this lacquer right here is due to moisture. I just put this on here to run a survey to see what was going to happen to it, and you see yonder's doing a little bit right yonder.

WV: Yeah.

HF: Of course, I can patch that in a few minutes, but it's doing a little something right up there for some reason, but it ain't doing nothing here.

WV: Now is this whole thing made out of cement?

HF: Yeah, it's made over a cookstove, electric. . .

WV: Oh, I see, the corner is sort of a. . .

HF: Yeah, I had my hands laid in there. See, it's got the oven and everything still in it? See, the wires to the oven is electric cook frames. I just built over it to make the rock big without having it cost me too much.

WV: Why did you decide to leave it open in the back? Just so you could see how it was made?

HF: I wanted it for animals to go in there, you know.

WV: Oh, you really like animals, don't you?

HF: Yeah. Yeah, you see, animals come here and goes in there like maybe a cat gets run off from home or something, and he'll come here, you know, and maybe he'll go in there. And I had one duck come here and go in there and, you know, set in there.

WV: Oh, really. That's great.

HF: And let's see, what else was it I run experiment on? I was aiming to tell you about it. Now this right here, you see, this work right here. . . Now this whole thing in here was a swamp. There's three feet of, this used to be a lake in here.

WV: How long have you been in this place, right here?

HF: I've been here fifteen years.

WV: I see.

HF: It took me seven years to fill this up to where I could pour this cement on it.

WV: Huh.

HF: And these cement trucks, when they come in here to deliver my cement here—that's where I do my cement from, right here—they cracked this up right here.

WV: Oh, that's too bad.

HF: But I . . .

WV: They're pretty heavy trucks.

HF: Yeah, when I get ready to redo this, I'll take this cracked section up—see, it goes together right here—I can take that up and mold that back in somewhere else in pieces, and then I can make a new setting here.

WV: Oh yeah. Let's see what that says, is "If we meet and you forget me, you have lost nothing, but if you meet Jesus Christ and forget. . ."

HF: I didn't get that finished. ". . .you have lost everything."

WV: I see, yeah, "You've lost everything." Okay.

HF: There's a man right now, that give me that verse, that's right now in there laying in the hospital, and he lives right yonder, behind that brown house, and he's in the hospital with a blood clot right now, and he's a good Christian man.

WV: Oh boy.

HF: He's in Chattanooga right now in the hospital, and he brought that little card to me with that on it.

WV: Ohh.

HF: And I was putting it in there, and I just lacked a little; haven't finished.

WV: Yeah.

HF: And I cut them mirrors out of scrap glass. I can cut out. . .

WV: I really like these mosaics here.

HF: See, these pieces here?

WV: Yeah.

HF: Well, I got a man come here with a thing that you cut floor tile with. Ceramic tile?

WV: Right.

HF: And he went out of business, brought it to me, and [noise] glass cutting \_\_\_\_\_, and these bottles right here, you see, I used different colors to make a cloud. You can make flowers and, well, you can do artwork with broken glass and cement.

WV: Sure. [Oh. Whoa.]

HF: Now this right here, [noise], this here is rhubarb. Ever hear of it?

WV: Sure. Love it.

HF: I want to try to get that whole bed in that rhubarb. Excuse me. Be careful of that.

WV: Yeah.

HF: I hadn't cleaned this up for the opening season yet, but I wished you'd take one picture [of a small building filled with glass and mirror fragments—Ed.] I seen a woman do that, I don't think. . .

WV: Oh, it may be too dark for me to do that.

HF: Yeah. What she done was just. . .

WV: She shot down into the mirror, huh?

HF: . . .set her camera right here, just set it there, so it goes straight up.

WV: Oh, look at that! Yeah.

HF: Look up in yonder, now, you can't see the top. How far can you. . .

WV: Oh, that's right, and the same thing by looking down. That's amazing. It goes on forever.

HF: Yeah, you can't see the bottom. How fer can you stoop over and look up in there?

WV: Well.

HF: See there ain't no top. I can't see no top.

WV: Uh huh, that's beautiful.

HF: She set her camera right here and made a picture of that up in there.

WV: Probably had a little brighter light.

HF: Yeah, that's our old hen there, where Jesus used her. He said, "Oh, Jerusalem, I would have gathered you as a hen would her brood and you would not."

WV: Hah, right.

HF: Can you see that comes down right here? People. . .

WV: Yeah, yeah.

HF: And I'd like to show you [something]. You do artwork?

WV: Uh huh.

HF: I'd like to show you something about this that the Lord showed me, about this right here [\_\_\_\_\_—Ed.] I drew this, and I just made these, just a project and fooling around, like these mountains and things.

WV: Uh huh.

HF: And there wasn't a single [wonder, winder] in them. And I was setting there one night, a-looking at that, and I thought to myself, "Wouldn't that be pretty if it had little windows in it." You know, like that.

WV: Right.

HF: And something just whispered to me and said, "You go get you a razor blade and break it half in two."

WV: Ahh. And that's how you did that, scrape it away.

HF: Yeah, you see, you just take your razor blade and set it down where you want your window, and [said] just go a little bit with it, and raise it up, and just do it thataway, he says, "That'll make your windows, and then all you got to do is put a little line around it."

WV: That's a great idea.

HF: Yeah.

WV: That's beautiful.

HF: That might be a help to you, you know.

WV: Yeah, it's a nice idea.

HF: See all these little windows right here?

WV: Sure.

HF: Now you can get a razor blade that's. . . I done this with a double- edge, it's a little dangerous about cutting your hand.

WV: You can put a piece of tape over it sometimes.

HF: But you get, if you get you a razor blade to do this with, get you ones with one side rounded.

WV: Sure, yeah.

HF: You see these little things here?

WV: Right.

HF: See under here?

WV: Yeah.

HF: Well now, you can paint you a whole painting on something like that, and then go in and cut out wherever you want to cut it.

WV: Wherever you want, sure.

HF: Now if you can look right up in here, see, you can see that paint in here?

WV: Right.

HF: You see, it yonder?

WV: Uh huh.

HF: And you just keep finding it.

WV: It's everywhere, huh? Ohh.

HF: Yeah, you just keep seeing it, look right yonder.

WV: This is a great room, yeah.

HF: Now right yonder it is again, two times.

WV: I've been thinking about coming back when the light is a little better. I can photograph some more things.

HF: Yeah. Well, this has been a nice one, isn't it?

WV: It was a little cloudy today.

HF: There's a little motel just right below me here, if you. . .

WV: I think I'm going to camp. How far is the nearest campground. There's supposed to be one near. . .

HF: . . .around, look up, and everywhere. Look back in yonder, see, and. . .

WV: Right.

HF: See, what I was going to do, I was going to make a arc wheel out of this. I was painting here, and Bible verses and things, you just got it turn it and look at them and read it as you go around, see, like that.

WV: Those are neat.

HF: And then it'd be going over yonder, and somebody could be see it yonder.

WV: Right.

HF: He could read it through there, see.

WV: Oh, yeah, that'd be neat.

HF: And have it setting in here for that. You know, if I had a restroom and water in here right now, you could camp right here in the middle of this. . .

WV: Yeah.

HF: You got a tent?

WV: Yeah.

HF: You know, you could set your tent up right there on them bricks, right there.

WV: It'd be a little hard for the baby maybe.

HF: Huh?

WV: It'd be a little hard for my baby.

HF: Yeah, ain't you got no heat?

WV: No, I don't need it, though.

HF: Don't need no heat?

WV: It's not getting that cold. I think I'll probably find myself a little patch of grass somewhere, you know, and if it's nice tomorrow I'm going to think about coming back. And if I can't come back tomorrow, I'm going down to South Georgia, maybe when I come back up again I'm going to come out here.

HF: Well, what I started to say, we've got a bed, but one bed wouldn't hardly accommodate three.

WV: Yeah. No, and I wouldn't want to trouble you. So, it's no problem for us to go out and find a . . . I mean, there's all of God's country, so we'll just pitch out tent somewhere.

HF: I wished I had a place here where you just, that was suitable, where you could camp here somewhere. I mean, had a little more room where we could put your little tent up and was a little warmer. Now, as for me, I could get by in one of them things, myself.

WV: A little teepee?

HF: Yeah.

WV: Yeah, those are nice structures.

HF: And that little old thing there is just made out of this heavy duck and stuff like I'm painting them signs on. You know, I didn't know what to do with that, [noise] brought in here, and I told him, I says, "I don't see that we have any need for that," and I tried to get [out of] getting it, and he just [wound] up giving it to me cheap price. And after I got it, and got that cup yonder running over on it painted?

WV: Right.

HF: The lady even got it, in the book, you know.

WV: That's great.

HF: And I got another roll of it around here, and now I'm painting big pictures, you know, twenty feet long.

WV: Yeah, I saw the one in back there.

HF: Now come meet this gentleman here.

WV: Hi. My name is Willem Volkersz. I'm from Kansas City. How are you?

Another person: \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.

HF: He's from Kansas City.

Other person: Just fine, you all right?

WV: Yeah.

HF: Come all the way down to see the park. He seen me in the book and . . .

WV: Saw him in that catalogue from the Georgia Folk Art Exhibition.

HF: Man, I've been talking, now. I supposed to have been working on the bicycles, but I've enjoyed talking

with him more than I do on the bicycles, so I just quit fooling with the bicycles.

WV: Maybe I should let you go back to that.

HF: No, I ain't wanting to go back to it.

WV: (laughs)

HF: I just like to look at my roses. See that one right there? That's going to be a beautiful sight now in a few days.

WV: Yes, uh huh.

HF: And this one right here.

WV: Yeah, it won't be long.

HF: No. You didn't see the film that they made of this when these flowers full bloomed did you?

WV: No, they did, huh? Now about what time of year would they. . .

HF: Well, I was going to say that they made a picture movie of this, and they told me when they come they was making it for the State of Colorado.

WV: Huh!

HF: And I wondered why that my state, they wasn't making it for it, you know, and they're here in it, and I think to myself, well, if they're making it for Colorado or for any state, it don't matter to me, just so's they's making it for somebody.

WV: Uh huh.

HF: And they told me, says, "We want you to sign a contract, because we'll do this movie and give you a hundred dollars," for making a movie of it. And I said, "All right." I said, "That suits me." I said, "What I'm after is to get things over to people. People's is what I'm interested in. People ain't got much more time." Them trees yonder, it don't matter about them, and these birds here, it don't matter too much about them, because when they're gone, that's the last of them. I think. Some people thinks it ain't, and I'm not going to contradict them. And them flowers there, but when people, when this world gets to the place that we can't grow no food and we're starving to death on it, and our children's starving to death, and the water's all poisoned and we can't drink it, that concerns me. And if I draw a picture, if I do anything that'll help the general public, even to help them enjoy theirself or anything, I'd even sell a picture if it'd bring a million dollars and I couldn't get it out there, and get the million dollars out of it and another man would, before I would stay here and rot, I'd let him have it and the million dollars to get it out there where people could see it. That's the kind of a guy I am. And I've got this kind of faith, I believe, that all the pictures I sold, if any picture was to ever turn into a lot of money, that I believe they'd come back here and help me finish this park.

WV: Probably would, because your name would become better known and people would come and maybe donate money, and other things.

HF: Yeah, well, there's been people come here and, like this guy from Henry Ford's museum, there's a lady up from Atlanta that's [always] folk art, Ms. Annie Wadsworth.

WV: Um hmm.

HF: She come the other day to talk to me about these paintings. She's in touch with this fellow in Washington, and she's fixing to get married, and she's giving her job up in Atlanta, where she was, and she was over all of this this year, and I find that Mr. Bishop, from Henry Ford's foundation, he recently has, she told me that he recently had quit working for Henry Ford and went to a big foundation in New York. And the pictures he bought from me, he wrote out a check from Henry Ford's museum, so I don't know now whether all of them pictures will be in Henry Ford's museum, or whether that maybe part of them will, but now him a-writing me a check from the Henry Ford foundation, before he left, he must have turned them pictures over to them.

WV: Ohh, yeah.

HF: I had some people told me that they was going to Henry Ford's museum someday and see them pictures, and now then I don't know whether to tell them whether they're in there or not. He may be taking some of them to New York, see, to that big place up there in New York.

WV: Yeah, you don't know.

HF: Yeah, he's going to work for a big place somewhere in New York.

WV: So how many paintings have you sold, did you say?

HF: I sold. . .

WV: Do you keep a record of that, or what?

HF: Yeah. Yeah, I keep a record of everything, right here in my pocket, everything I sell, what I take in, what I pay out.

WV: Huh. Is that for tax purposes, or just for your own purposes.

HF: I even keep the names of visitors. I'm planning on someday, if I ever get into enough money to build a place, and just have people's names in [those].

WV: Oh, that'd be real nice, yeah.

HF: Pictures of them, you know.

WV: Picture "soul."

HF: Now right here, picture sold, Moses in the Wilderness, Prodigal Son. It was right yonder under that there was a woman went down here Atlanta to see that show. [moving away from microphone—Ed.]

WV: Right.

HF: Where them nails was pulled out?

WV: Yeah, that's where it was.

HF: That went from right here to right there, how big it was.

WV: You have to make another one to fill the space.

HF: There's a picture, the Prodigal Son, and she left some highway going to Texas. It must have been, a fellow told me it was around 80 miles to that road. Well, she left that road and come in here with that book and hunted me up, and then opened it up to get me to autograph her book.

WV: That's great.

HF: You know, put my original signature on it.

WV: Right. Oh, that's neat.

HF: And while she was here she wanted to look the park over, and when she looked it over she found that little picture of the Prodigal Son, and all the pictures you've seen, that's all she seemed to want.

WV: Hah! That's interesting.

HF: And it was nailed down. It was on a piece of fiberglass. This one here is on a piece of a TV.

WV: Oh yes.

HF: And she asked me would I sell that, and I told her, I said, "Well, I would sell it, and I'd draw another one back." She asked me what I'd take for it. I told her, "Well, I hadn't never sold any one for less than \$25, that I hate to sell anything less than that, so's I could always have a name that I have never sold one less than \$25, even it's just a little or no bigger than your hand, that I wanted to try to stay at least that high on any kind of painting, so's I could always say that I never sold none of my paintings less than \$25, you know." She says, "Oh, I'll give you that for it."

WV: That's great.

HF: We come down here and took it off, and she took it. She says, "I like it." Says, "It's original thing," she says. And she give me \$25 for that little old painting, and she went back to Texas. And she come all that way to get me to autograph her picture—I mean, the book.



WV: Right.

HF: And when I was down there at the show [opening of Missing Pieces exhibition, Atlanta Historical Society, December 1976—WV], they was autographing them, they just all around me, getting me to sign my name in the middle of that book. They seen my film, you know, as introduction, and come on in and hunt the artist up.

WV: Right.

HF: And they was standing all around me, and this fellow, [DeBoren]—or what his name is; it's hard for me to say his name—but he was standing behind me, down there at that show, and I couldn't get no audience. A man that announces, you know, he couldn't get no audience. That thing is covered up, and that whole big old building, top of it high as them trees, and everybody talking, you know, and they had rum and wine and all kinds of drinks and food all over that thing, you know, and the governor was there, and his wife was there, and his family. And that announcer couldn't even get them quietened down enough to get one, tell them who was going to sing next. And he come around, said, "Mr. Finster," said, "I'm afraid we won't never get, fix it where you can make a talk. You just can't quieten these people." And I says, "I know it. I know it." And I agreed with him twice that he couldn't quieten them down. And I just thought to myself, "God, I got to speak." I never have in all the forty years I've preached. I never have wanted to speak just a few words bad in my life. "And that man can't do nothing with these people. And the governor's here. I hate to do it, but I've just got to speak. I'm going to have to get out of order to even speak here. I'm going to have to break the rules."

WV: Did you do it?

HF: Yeah. Directly I just got that French harp [harmonica—WV] and pulled it out of my shirt pocket, and this old Indian [Ed Martin—WV] in here who's setting in the chair—he's old. He's got arthritis. He wears copper bands and things around his leg, you know, to keep it down. [puts chewing tobacco in his mouth, which he keeps there through the following story, which is spoken loudly—Ed.] I got my French harp out and I got down by the side of that old man on my knees, and I played them a tune on that French harp. And I come up off of my knees, and when I played that French harp, I got the attention of just about the people within twelve foot of me.

WV: (chuckles) Right.

HF: And that's all. I got up from there, and I'm telling you, you don't know how loud I can holler. I been preaching, I can holler the loudest of any man that you ever heard holler in your life.

WV: (laughs)

HF: And I turned my hand right up toward the top of that big building, and I screamed out just as loud as I could holler, like somebody with a heart attack, you know, dying. And my wife and daughter was there, and my wife told me, says, "Thelma jumped plumb off the floor when you hollered." (laughter) I hollered as loud as I could, and they all commenced looking at me, like I was dying with a heart attack, you know. And I says, "This building's not on fire!" \_\_\_\_\_ no way, you know. And every one was looking at me, over this whole thing, man, the announcer and all of them was looking at me. And I told them, I says, "I ain't," I says, "This thing ain't on fire," but I says, "I've got to say a few words. I'm fixing to leave here, people." Then I told them, I says, "This painting that you all got around here on the wall around here," I said, "That's the inside of you brought out." I said, "You brought the inside of yourself out, put it on display," I said, "And when the pilgrims come in on this country," I says, "They moved in on all of our resources, and their modern equipment, and everything, and moved right in on it." And I said, "They didn't know nothing about it because it was buried there." I said, "When it was brought out," I says, "What counted." I says, "You could fatten a hog, put a hundred dollars in him, he ain't worth a nickel till you get the inside of it." Man, I just preached a real sermon there to them. And this guy behind me was from Washington [D.C.—Ed.]. I didn't know nobody down there. That fellow from Henry Ford's, he was there that night. I knew him because he'd been by here and they had bought \$500 worth of pictures from me that evening. I knew him, but I didn't know this other guy, and this guy behind me was a tall fellow, dark headed, and he asked me after I made that talk, though, "You turn around and play the harp, and is there too much trouble for you to turn around and play the harp again and let me get a shot of you?" I said, "Oh, no." And he got another shot of me and come to find out that this fellow that took them two shots, he was over the Library of Congress in Washington [Alan Jabbour, Director, American Folklife Center]. But he never did tell me who he was. He never introduced himself to me. But when he got back to Washington and seen how that I quietened that audience down, and how I got the attention of several hundred people, when the announcer couldn't do it, that been educated for it. . .

WV: (laughs)

HF: . . .why he called me on the phone and told me, he said, "Mr. Finster," says, "Do you remember a tall guy that was behind you and asked you to play the harp and get the second shot of you?" I says, "Yeah." He says, "Well, I'm him," and says, "I want you to, I wonder if you'll consider doing a job for us down here at Washington?"

Said, "I want two signs made and a couple of folk arts." And I said, "Well," I said, "I turned away a \$50 job the other day for a local dentist of sign painting. I turned away a big old sign they wanted lettered," and I said, "I don't do public work," but I says, "For the Library of Congress," I said, "Yes. I'll do it for you." And he said. . . I told him that I didn't have a way of making much money and all. He says, "Oh, well," says, "There'll be a conversation to it," or something like that. He didn't say no price or nothing. I don't know what they call it. But they give you a donation for something, you know, when you do it.

WV: Hmm.

HF: I understood him to say that there'd be a conversation of it, or something, but isn't got no prices on it.

WV: Have they yet?

HF: Yeah, they sent me this contract.

WV: Oh.

HF: Did I show you a contract?

WV: No, huh.

HF: I got it up there.

WV: That's interesting.

HF: He sent me a contract and told me that on this contract, and he wanted me to make these two signs, said, "I want you to paint two pieces of folk art to go in the interior part of this Library of Congress," says, "We're putting a new wing, or a new. . ." Said, "The Congress has appropriated money for four years for this thing."

WV: Huh.

HF: And says, "We want two pieces of just your own ideas of folk art." And then said, "We want you to do these two signs," and says, "to agreed," he says, "as we agreed, for \$200.00." I don't remember making any agreements like that.

WV: But that was all right with you?

HF: That's what he said on the. . . He sent the contract to me. Well, I signed the two copies he told me to and sent them in. And then I kept a little old temporary contract [to the] original. Well, the other day, the original contract come back here to sign, so I got it up at the house. And the way I understand it, the contract calls for the picture, for the specifications of this just one building, that it can't be put on a commercial [put to commercial use—WV] or nothing, that it just belongs to that one place, and the way I understand it, there's a certain place it'll go and that's it.

WV: Hmm, that's interesting.

HF: [Finster's wife joins the conversation—WV] Pauline, this is a fellow that's come a long way to see our museum. Where'd you say you was from?

WV: From Kansas City.

HF: Kansas City.

WV: Hi.

Pauline: You got here at the wrong time. Ever'thing, well, in the summer, you know, the flowers bloom, and it's so much prettier.

WV: Yeah, I think I may want to come back sometime. It's just a beautiful place.

Pauline: Yeah, I know what you mean.

HF: He's going by and see this Indian, too. He seen his picture in the book. He's going by and see this Indian, and he wanted to hunt a campground where he could camp out the night.

WV: I think my wife found the campground near Calhoun, I think. How far would that be?

HF: Where's the campground at?

WV: Oh, here she is. Where is the campground? It's about halfway to Calhoun?

[Volkersz' wife Diane (DV) joins the conversation—Ed.]

DV: Yeah, it's about \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.

*[Interruption in taping]*

HF: It's on a Divided House, and this Henry Ford man begged me out of it. I didn't want to sell it. But I got two more of them. Now, I've got a big one down here and then the little one. Now, it's going to be, that Divided House is going to be a proper picture because it just touches people the minute they look at it. They just, if they having trouble in their home, they might not cry when they look at it, you know.

WV: Uh huh.

HF: Now, that Divided House is a good one to sell, and every one I've drawn is different. If I was to sell you a Divided House, it'd be different than that man got.

WV: Yeah.

HF: And this little one on the gate'd be a different, they'd all be different. But it's going to be, I think, a hit picture for a certain class of society. And right here I sold two of Noah's Ark, one to an art teacher in New York, and one to Henry Ford's museum. And Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet, I sold one of them, a small one, and I got the other one drawn back in there now, better than the one that left here. Hellfire and Brimstone, I sold that for \$30, and I got it drawn back better than it when it left here, and it's a real dream that I had. The Coming of Jesus Christ, they offered me a hundred dollars for it, the first offer, and it was nailed on the wall without a frame, and it had a cemetery on it.

WV: Hmm.

HF: And How to Get to Hell. Now, that's a picture that I hadn't drawn back, but I could draw one. If you wanted one of them pictures, I could draw one of them for you 'specially.

WV: There's one out there on the wall that I really like, I'd like to ask you about.

HF: I'm going to show about this picture, How to Get to Hell. There's a road come in here [gesturing—Ed.] and there's a preacher standing there, a Bible in hand preaching there. All right, to get to hell, you got to go by the word of God, because every creature will hear it. I don't believe a man'd even go to hell if he didn't never hear the Bible.

WV: Right.

HF: All right, you've got to go by the preacher. And up here I had a woman down praying, and said, he's got to over his mother's prayers or the concern of his best friend to get to hell. And then up here, I've got it here in order to get to hell, he's got to go over this bunch and that bunch, and there's one scripture says there, "They dig into hell." You know, people go to hell because they press into it. They don't have to go there. Nobody have to go there.

WV: Right.

HF: And they liked that, and they bought that, let's see, Way to Hell. [forgetting title—Ed.]

WV: How to Get to Hell, yeah.

HF: How to Get to Hell. Now they bought that [reading from his sales record—WV]. And I ain't never drawn that one back. Jordan's River, that's the one that's in the book right now, they begged me out of that, and I didn't want to sell none of them. I had no intentions whatsoever of selling any of these pictures when I started putting them in here, but I got to studying about God wants me to sell them. He don't want me to be concerned for the money I get out of them, but He wants me to take the money I get out of them and put it back in this work.

WV: Right.

HF: And then another thing He wants, He wants one of my pictures to speak to a million people instead of preaching to three or four thousand here.

WV: That makes a lot of sense.

HF: And right here, I thought I would draw Jordan River back like here, like it is in the book, and it just got it started. It may take me a year to finish it, but this is car lacquer. Feel of that stuff.

WV: Oh, yeah.

HF: See, it won't come off.

WV: That's going to last. Boy, that's amazing.

HF: And The Sea of Blood, that is Revelations—down here where it's up to the horse's bridle. Now, I sold it for \$50, and the Earthquake beside of it for \$50. When I got Jordan's River drawn back up yonder. Did you see it there under that picture I showed you, where that little. . .

WV: Yeah, right.

HF: All right, I got it drawn back, but I ain't got the Earthquake drawn. I drew a earthquake in here on that mirror, but it's not like this. The Sea of Blood (Revelations), and Jordan's River, and the Earthquake, The Little People Before the End Ends, that was said that there was little midgets pulling \_\_\_\_\_. That sold, and I painted it back. Now, any of these topic, that you want to note down. . . You can note down some of these titles, and draw them in your own version. The Little Town, "They had much give to them that had little, and when the end of the earth come, nobody was lacking." That's kind of a communist idea; that's about the biggest thing about communist that I like. You know, that all people were equal, you know.

WV: Right.

HF: But of course the way it is in our country, if there wasn't a few rich people, we wouldn't have no jobs. In the setup we've got, we couldn't, it'd be hard for us to get on the equality right now.

WV: Right.

HF: Because you see, the rich man, I need him, and he needs me.

WV: Right.

HF: I can work for him and make him richer. . .

WV: And he pays you.

HF: Yeah, and I can live off of him, and so I ain't got too much against our government. I think our government's pretty good, but communist is pretty well good, and some of it's taught in the Bible, you know. Now, right here [speaking of another painting—Ed.] it says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," they bought that one.

WV: Right.

HF: "The Millstone Around the Neck," that is, you've seen that one around yonder.

WV: Um hmm, sure.

HF: Well, I sold that and I got two of them drawn back. I could sell either one of them if I wanted to, and then could draw another one. Looking for the Lost Sheep, I got that drawn back—better than it was the one I sold. In My Father's House Are Many Mansions, I got that drawn back—as good, if not better than the one that I had. [Reading:] "Sold to Wayne S. Judy, and [man] Picture of Life Is Up and Down." That's that one I showed you in yonder. A Circle Lane in the Sky. I drew that back. He give me \$75 for it, and he owned a manufacturing plant. And I drew this one right here, A Fig Tree Afar Off. When Near, No Figs, Saint Mark, Eleven Thirteen, "And seeing a fig afar off having leaves, Jesus talked to a fig tree." That's what I. . .

WV: That's it, yeah.

HF: Peter saith unto him, "Master, behold the fig tree which thou cursest has weathered away," and Jesus answered, saying unto them, "Heaven, have faith in God." Now, here's one thing I want you to notice about that, if you ever draw a picture. If you're doing a Bible picture, that's the wonderfulest place in the world to go to get your titles for a picture. Even if it's not too religious, why you can go to the Bible to get it. Now, the thing about the fig tree, see, there's one right there, and that died last fall [one] time with the figs on it. And I sprayed it one time with the figs. See these right here?

WV: Right.

HF: That's the example of [untimingly] the figs. That's what happens to them, see.

WV: Ahh, yeah.

HF: They was out of season. They were too late. Because we eat the ones that first come on it, but these are too late. And I take this fig tree, real fig tree here, and I take it and this Bible verse and put them together, see, to explain this. That tells what the Bible says about fig leaves.

WV: Right, yeah, I looked at it.

HF: Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs," and they took it and laid it on the boil, like a sore, and he recovered. They used fig leaves for medicine.

WV: Right.

HF: I believe it'd still work. If you got a boil on you, or carbuncle, you take these green fig leaves, like he done, and make a poultice out of them and put them on it. And, but the curiosity of this was, it wasn't time for that tree to have figs. Now, why did Jesus curse the tree and kill it when it wasn't the tree's fault and it wasn't time for it to have figs? See, that's why it troubled me. I thought to myself, "Now, Jesus, I know if a fig tree is supposed, it's time for it to have figs, that you should kill it if it doesn't have figs on it, for not having figs, but, why, Jesus, did you kill the tree when it wasn't time for it to have figs?" See, that's where my problem was to study up.

WV: Right.

HF: And when I get in a tight [spot] like that, several times I'd of made an infidel if God hadn't a-showed me. You see, that's what develops infidels. They go to the Bible and they find contradictory, and they can't get out of it. And that's what I'm trying to do is to get the infidel out of the contradictory.

WV: Right.

HF: All right, what Jesus was saying there, it come to me what he was saying was, he was saying, "This tree only has fruit once a year, but you fellows are going to have to bear fruit every day in the year." Now that's the difference in it. And he killed this fig tree to show them that temporary work for God wasn't enough, that His work, when He called a man for a job, He'd always do it some way form or fashion. And I thought I'd tell you that so you could always remember it if somebody ever got in, mashed up into that, couldn't understand it, see, you could take what I'm telling you about it and then get them straightened out.

WV: Good, yeah.

HF: Now there's another place in the Bible where that it looked like it contradicts itself. And it says there one place, he says, "God cannot be tempted of evil." It says that. And right on down in another place, it says, "Tempt not the Lord, thy God."

WV: Huh, hah.

HF: Now, that looks kind of contradictory, don't it?

WV: Offhand, it does.

HF: Yeah. Well, let me show you that so's you'll always know. I've worked with infidels, you know, and all that, and been around them. I've run up on them. They're very rough. You can't do much with them. All right, "He cannot be tempted with evil." All right, now what evil is is what we make evil out of. There isn't anything evil, really, unless we make it evil.

WV: Right.

HF: Whiskey, marijuana, morphine? Anything you can name is not evil unless we make it evil. It's every bit for a purpose. This chew of tobacco I've got in my mouth might not be the right thing for you. But it takes this fluid off of my system. I use it like he used them fig leaves. I wouldn't advise nobody to take up the habit of chewing, nobody. But for me. . .

WV: Right, it works.

HF: . . . I think it's doing me good.

WV: I understand.

HF: All right, you can't tempt God by offering Him a pretty woman. You can't tempt God by offering Him a little smidgen of marijuana. You can't tempt Him by offering him anything. He says that He cannot be tempted "of evil." But it doesn't mean that he couldn't be tempted at all.

WV: Ahh.

HF: But it says here about tempting God is like, "If I have to prove to you, God. . ." You say, for an instant, I come here and there's a snake down there, and no one, God put him in between me and that snake, and you knowing that God meant for that snake to kill me if it got a chance, and you knowing it meant, God meant for me to kill that snake if I got a chance. And when I meet a rattlesnake, it's me or him, one, see. Well, that's the way God put in between this snake, and what caused that was, is because a snake was the smartest thing there was. He was even smarter than a human was. Then he was cursed to crawl in the dust and man was cursed to cultivate the land when he wouldn't a never had to done it. The grass started growing and woman was cursed from her womb of giving pain to childbirth. When there, there was three involved in us getting away from God, and there's three involved in us getting back to God, see. There's Adam and Eve and the Serpent was involved in getting us away. All right, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, all had to finally be involved to get us back. All right, I heard a story of an old man one time, who said it was actually true. He had fine team of horses. He drove them up in the yard, and it come up a thunderstorm and run him out of the field. He walked in on the porch, and he was a baldheaded man, and the thunder just come down and the lightning struck one of his best horses and killed it, just fell dead in the yard. And it made him mad. And he jumped out in the yard, pulled his hat off and cussed, and said, "Try old baldy a pop." And they said that lightning come right down and killed him beside of his horse. You ever hear of that?

WV: No, but I believe it.

HF: Don't you think that's tempting God?

WV: Sure was.

HF: But it wasn't tempting Him by offering him nothing, wasn't it?

WV: Right.

HF: And you see, Jesus was offered all the glories of the world, and there wasn't none of them took him over.

WV: Right, he turned them away.

HF: But he, it tempt them for him, for them to worship idols, didn't it? You see, a idol's not an evil thing to tempt you with. A evil thing to tempt you with is something that you have a desire for and you're overcoming it.

WV: Um hmm.

HF: But you can't tempt God like that. See, that's the way I divide that. That keeps me from being a infidel.

WV: That's interesting. I think I'm going to have to maybe find that campground.

HF: I tell you what, I've got some secrets on drawing original pictures I wouldn't mind giving you a tip on it. If you ever start to want to drawing original pictures, this all come to me; it's through the wisdom of God. I don't want no patent on it, and any man that believes in God and is an artist I'd like to give him my idea. Of course, these artists that's not painting the right thing, I wouldn't want you to let them have it.

WV: Of course.

HF: And as long as you used it for some good purpose, whether it was the Bible, just so's it's something good, it'd take me about 30 minutes to show you how to draw original picture of a person, with the dimensions and the pattern of the [out] bulk of it.

WV: Hmm.

HF: It'll save you half your time. You can paint twice as fast.

WV: That's interesting.

HF: And I can take a picture of you—you got any pictures of you?

WV: Not with me.

HF: If you had one with you, I'd cut you out of that picture and make a pattern of yourself, where you could get all the outside measurements and bulks of yourself, and then all you have to do is fill it in. There's no such thing as taking a book and then copying a picture.

WV: Huh.

HF: But I can take Abraham Lincoln's picture, or anybody's picture, and you take and cut the outside of this picture out of yourself, just like it is. Get a plain picture of yourself, like the picture you took of me.

WV: Yeah.

HF: Get the outside bulk of me and cut it out of that picture, right up to the very line of every outside line of my body.

WV: I understand.

HF: All right, you glue that down on a thin piece of plywood. You know, this here paneling that's real thin?

WV: Right.

HF: You glue it down on the, the outside bulk of me, on that thin piece of plywood. All right, when you get it on there, you can buy a little old vibrating saw—they don't cost much, you know. They cut thin.

WV: Right. I've got one. Like a jigsaw?

HF: Yeah. All right, you can cut me out on that wood, glued down there.

WV: Sure.

HF: You can cut me out all the way, and you got the outside line of my body.

WV: Right.

HF: All right, then you go back here, and you come down right here with the head, you take that one that you cut out. You lay it down on another piece of plywood, and you come down right here, and you get my chin, right there. See the chin?

WV: Right.

HF: All right, when you get the chin on that headpiece, you take a piece of thin paper that you can see through, and put down on your picture, and mark where the eyes is, and then you run right under here and get your chin, from right here up.

WV: Right, right.

HF: Don't get nothing else. You get the chin there, and you get the two eyes, and then you get the mouth on that one piece. You saw in right here to mouth and saw the mouth out and go back out that same hole.

WV: Right.

HF: You saw in here and you get this eye and go across by the nose, and get this eye and come back out that same hole.

WV: Right.

HF: And then this outside head picture's all the same size as the first one you cut out.

WV: Right.

HF: All right, the first one you cut out, you lay it down on a white piece of paper, whatever you're going to paint it on. And you can't mark around it with a pencil, so you take a fine brush and mark around that outside on your piece of art.

WV: Right.

HF: Then you set this head right in on top of that, and you come around it and mark the chin and the two eyes and the mouth.

WV: Oh, of course. It's like a template.

HF: Yeah, you've got the perfect measurement between the eyes and the [mouth].

WV: Oh, that's very nice.

HF: You don't, now, you don't have no, it's not tracing.

WV: Right.

HF: It's the dimensions.

WV: Right.

HF: All right, now, you keep this head part with the chin on it. You put it in a little cellophane bag with the bulk of the whole body, and you number both of them, same number, then you come back and draw this head again, and this chin, right here, you draw it on there, but you don't cut it out, and then you get a pattern from right here to right there where the collar is.

WV: Right.

HF: All right, you got a whole head here, go up from your chin to there, see.

WV: Got it.

HF: You put that piece right in with them two pieces, see. All right, then, when you get that done, then you come back here and make another one, then you get the collar of Abraham Lincoln, right here, you get the collar on there, and mark on that piece "collar."

WV: Right.

HF: You take it and put it right in with them and you got every bit of them things, you got a full dimension of that picture. Now, God showed me every bit of that. Did you ever hear of that before?

WV: No. He showed you the way.

HF: Don't you think a man can get, if a man can get a full dimensions of the measurement, how far apart the eyes is, and how far apart, where the chin is and everything, don't you think that'll double his, the length of time of drawing a picture? [means halve the time—Ed.]

WV: Oh, at least, yeah. That's marvelous.

HF: All right, now I'm telling you some things that some people could get a lot of money out of if they wanted to, but we're not going none of us be here long enough to do much about it.

WV: Right.

HF: And I'm trying to help you because you're an artist and I'm not an artist.

WV: Yeah, that's. . .

HF: I'm not an artist.

WV: You're not?

HF: No.

WV: What are you?

HF: Oh, I'm just a bicycle mechanic and a minister.

WV: Huh.

HF: I've never claimed to be an artist. See, God showed me all these things. You see, I couldn't draw one, I couldn't draw nothing! And you seen George Washington in there?

WV: Uh huh.

HF: Well, now, George Washington. . . You can't print George Washington—I mean, you can't copy George



Washington. You can't copy nothing, not an artist. But you can get the dimensions of it.

WV: Yeah, right.

HF: Now, I took this dollar bill, and just laid it up, like that right there. And I had a little old piece of wood with the space of his eyes and his mouth, all on one block, and I just laid it down on his face and just reach in there and touch where both eyes and where the mouth was. And then, when you get that made there, you take that one you cut out of your picture, and just leave your picture pasted on it, for the pattern.

WV: Right.

HF: And you just set yourself right up there on that block. And then you put these pieces, and put your dimensions of your eyes and everything on it, then you set yourself up there and look at yourself and set there and draw it. You know exactly where the eyes go.

WV: That's beautiful.

HF: You put your two little white spots right there where the . . .

*[End of interview]*