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Oral history interview with Francis W. Dolloff,
1986 September 19-November 13

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Francis W. Dolloff on September 19, 1986 and November 13, 1986. The interview took place in Waltham, Massachusetts and was conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The Archives of American Art has reviewed the transcript and has made corrections and emendations. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

ROBERT F. BROWN: You did?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, well that's—I interviewed him some time ago.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —interview with Francis Dolloff in his home in Waltham Massachusetts, September 19, 1986, Robert Brown, the interviewer.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and at the beginning, you were born in southeastern Massachusetts—Whitman, Massachusetts—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Whitman. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: —about—what—in 1908. Can you recall childhood? Was your—and what did your family do? Were they—what was Whitman like as you remember?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That I don't remember because we left there when I was quite small. Uh, we came to Everett from Whitman, and I went to grade school in Everett, and then we moved to Somerville. And I left school in the first year of high [school], had an opportunity to go—get in the museum.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Were—did you [inaudible]?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Things were rough at home because of—of, uh, conditions. It was just before the market collapsed, you know? So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Had you cared for school very much or was that—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes, I loved school. The great problem was that I found in school was that they were —our classes were too large. Nobody got individual attention, and I apparently needed individual because in one grade in the seventh grade, I had a teacher that was—did amazing things with me. Whenever she went out of the room, she left me in charge, and I did things with music and—that I've never done. So it all depends on the individual, I think. [00:02:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had you shown an interest in, uh, you said music, but in other arts as well as a pretty young person?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well, yes mother—I was the oldest in a large family, and on rainy days, mother and I always did things like rearrange furniture. She always thought that I had a feeling for that kind of thing. And she also saved magazine—pictures from magazines which, we passe-partout, and would make new exhibitions, and take them down, and put new pictures up on another rainy day, and passe-partout them. Mother and I were very friendly because of that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you had an inkling—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Apparently.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —for hanging and installation, and taking care of things from a very—fairly early on, didn't

you?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you came—you went then to the museum in about 19—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: 1924.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Twenty-four. Yeah. And how did you happen to go there? Did you—somebody suggest that might be a place?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I was—on holidays and Saturdays, I delivered for—delivered bread for Wickham's [ph] in Somerville. One of my customers was the superintendent's mother of the museum, Michael Moore by name. She arranged for me to meet Michael, go to the museum and Michael, and talk with him. He introduced me to—or hired me in the museum as a working in the superintendent's office.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the superintendent was—what—the man sort of in charge of the building and the grounds, the mechanical?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, and he had been there—he and his brother who's a photographer came up from the Copley Square when the museum was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, yeah, about 1909. So they had been there a long time by the time you got there?
[00:04:02]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he a nice fellow to work for?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Very nice, very nice. They were both very—Mrs. or Mr. Moore was—uh, the photographer was a great help to me. I love photography, and he used to supervise me. And his assistant is—his first assistant was a nephew, McQuaid [ph], John—John McQuaid, and he gave me a great deal of help with photography too and, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What kind of—photography, I guess you just did on your own time, but otherwise your job with the superintendent, would that consist of—well, you've mentioned packing things?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: When I first started, I was on errands, and I would go down to the—for instance to—with packages to the—papers to be signed to the treasurer and to cut—Peabody, and do—run errands, do errands, that kind of thing. I was 17 I think at the time. And I worked in the shipping department, packing, and we got a lot of—we were getting, at that time, a lot of things from Egypt, a lot of heavy packing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Those—uh, the things were coming from the various expeditions were beginning to come in?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: George Reisner and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What, was Dows—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Dows Dunham.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Dows Dunham?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Dows Dunham, was there. As a matter fact, I was on the switchboard. It was another one of my chores relieving on the switchboard. I was on the switchboard when a discovery was made in Egypt by Dows Dunham and his crew while George—while Reisner was here lecturing at Harvard. [00:06:00] And these coded messages came constantly, telegrams. The telephone operator couldn't handle them, so they put me on the board, and I'd have an hour of taking those, an hour or two and then I'd go down, have a cold shower, and come back [laughs] again for more of them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, my.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: They were endless.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. They were in codes so that the competitive exhibitions wouldn't know?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No, just—no, just to make the reading more easy to understand. I mean letters over ocean [ph] and that kind of thing. That was fascinating me. I loved Egypt. As a matter of fact, years later Dows

Dunham came to Rossiter who was my superior in the print department and wanted to know if he could have me in his department. So Rossiter called me in one day and asked me if I'd like to take—spend some time in the Egyptian and some time in the print department. And I loved Egyptology. I had been—I had had courses down at Northeastern and, uh—but I said no. I sort of thought they might have been trying to get rid of me you know, and so I [laughs]. Instead of saying let me think it over, I said, "No, no, I've been doing a lot of studying on my—with the prints, and I've been trying—I've been making prints and making etchings and engravings to get to know what I was working with," and I really enjoyed it, I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Although you liked the Egyptian object, still nevertheless—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: But there was a—well, it's a romantic fascination I think with Egyptology and all the mysteries and—[00:08:01]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well in the '20s, was it a pretty busy place, the museum?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes it was. For instance, to give you an idea, the treasurer's office was in one little room with four people in it. That was it. Now, there's a whole floor.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And so they were, uh, just burdened with a lot of work?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And when I—from the superintendent's office, I was detailed to the education department. Ashton Sanborn was in charge of that department, and I was on the lectures. I had to take care of the lecture rooms and run the slides and—which was—I had four years of that—they were absolutely fascinating. I—another of my chores were putting away the books in the morning. Until nine o'clock, I was in the stacks putting books away.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, Sanborn was also the librarian, wasn't he?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He was the librarian too, right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was the library—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And the secretary. He was head of education, librarian—head librarian, and secretary. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Was the library widely used or was it mainly for staff or—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, no. It was widely used. It must have been, all the books that had to be put away. [They laugh.] I think the staff used it a great deal too, of course, because there were a lot of lectures—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, lectures were quite an important feature then, weren't they? You've mentioned—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Very much, yes. As a matter of fact, they had four—every year, they had four lecturers that were brought in, worldwide, renowned lecturers on—from all the different departments, classical, Oriental, and paintings, and prints. [00:10:07]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you recall any especially, any of those lectures that stand out?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Strangely enough, the most impressive one that I remember now was Walter Lippmann.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. The political writer?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: The political writer. He gave the most beautiful talk on art that I think I had ever heard. It was beautifully done but then it's so hard to differentiate. There was—everybody was an expert in his field, but he was—that was general, where most of the other experts were in a particular field in the art.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned I think Joseph Lindon Smith gave a lecture—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Joseph Lindon Smith was a terrific lecturer. He took groups around and lectured to them. He gave large, lecture hall talks, too, but he was much better with groups, and I think enjoyed it probably a great deal more, he gets more personal—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was just—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —or one-to-one—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —had been those illustrations or murals for the, uh—of the Egyptian excavations, wasn't he?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, from the mastaba paintings. That's what—but he also did a lot in the Orient and in India so that he traveled, he was a world traveler for that reason. It was very fascinating, to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was he like as a personality?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: A lovely—you know Dows—did you know Dows Dunham?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He was another Dows Dunham.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: As a matter of fact, Mrs. Carter [ph] wanted him to be her first director of the—of the—oh, the—[00:12:05]

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: She wanted him for—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mrs. Gardner did for the Gardner Museum wanted him to be—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. He was—and I think he held a position in the museum, too, of secretary or something probably. But he wouldn't have anything to do—to be—he wanted to work with his art more, I guess, in the field. That's—he enjoyed more.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You mentioned you met—uh, occasionally doing errands and so forth with, uh—was it Mr. William Endicott, the treasurer?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was he like to work with?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: [Laughs.] He was a fascinating fellow. I found him very nice, and he was always very pleasant to me, but he used to frighten the living daylights out of the custodians around there. Like one time, they were known as the million-dollar custodian force because they were retired people from different estates and from different families, and some of them were quite wealthy. For instance, there was an old man, I think he was about 90 years old as I remember at that time, and he was—he played the market all the time. And Charles Haas [ph] who for years was the director without the title after Fairbanks died. Arthur Fairbanks was the director there when I first came to the museum and then Charles Haas ran the museum for years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And these were gentlemen who did this as an avocation, men of means at times?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: It seemed, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It seemed that way to you—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: They had—they are people that had worked for the families you know, and when they retired, the family found them a place in museum.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I mean they were—after all, that's what supported the museum in those days were the old families of course. [00:14:02]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. They—it was pretty much held by then so to speak.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: But he used to roar. He wore a huge—he had a beard like this, and he wore—he was a big man.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is Haas?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No, this was Endicott.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Endicott, yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He wore a raccoon coat, a bit, raccoon-fur coat. He'd come billowing in and he—if he didn't get his way immediately, if they didn't get a door open for him to— an elevator door, he'd say, "I'll have your job." [They laugh.] He roared. The poor, old guys would be frightened to death. [Laughs.] They'd be shivering when he left. [Laughs.] But everybody, all his friends, everybody you talked to about him said that, "Oh, he wasn't like that at all." He was a nice person.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He just had a gruff outward manner, huh? [Laughs.]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: But apparently, he had been for the custodians because he always gave them a hard time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was Fairbanks like? Did you get to—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Fairbanks, Arthur Fairbanks was very nice, very pleasant, a scholar, and a big man. He wasn't there too many years after. His daughter Mary was around there for a while too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But the directors and curators in those days weren't particularly interested or occupied with publicity and fundraising and so forth, were they?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No, it didn't seem to me but then I wasn't as knowledgeable or apt to be about that sort of thing. What's his name—uh, Holmes?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, Edward Jackson Holmes?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Edward Jackson Holmes I think was the next one. Yes, I'm sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, he was president of the museum as well, I believe.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That's right, yeah. [00:16:00] And—oh, dear me, isn't that terrible? The man who taught at Harvard architecture—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who Edgell?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Edgell.

ROBERT F. BROWN: George Harold Edgell—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: George Harold—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —was the director in the—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —mid-'30s or so.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. He was a fantastic lecturer too. Oh, golly, he used to pack the women, and they loved to hear his Italian when he'd quote poetry in Italian. That was—he was really like an—a musical instrument playing on the stage and a beautiful sound.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, it sounds as though you, too, were somewhat captivated by being at the museum fairly soon, weren't you?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, because as I say, I was on the lectures for four years, and I had all these great lecturers and then I could refer to the books in the library. We had one of the finest art collections around here and books so that I had—it was great experience. Probably—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You would have had ample time too?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I was exposed to more than a few where I had had a college course on art.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, yeah. And were the curators accessible if you had questions? Would they—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes, yes, very. You could always talk very—with all of them. This man Constable was a wonderful person and was very helpful, and Caskey was a very nice person there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In classical art, wasn't he?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: In the classical art, yeah. And Kershaw, Edward Kershaw was head of the Oriental

department before Tomita. What I remember about him is his lectures when he said, "bronze." It was just as though they struck that bronze gong in the Oriental department. You know when you go in the door and the Oriental department had a big, bronze gong and *boom!* [00:18:02]

ROBERT F. BROWN: He had a very resonant voice.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And his voice was just like that. He was tall and thin and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You remembered—I think you said the—uh, finishing up in the—you had occasion of the Sargent murals in the rotunda?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, that was interesting. You know they had an English—an Englishman came over and did the work restoration, and the lining, mounting of them in the ceiling. Durham, I think his name was, and Finlayson was a young man then too. He's just starting in the—Thompson was in charge of restoration—oil painting restoration and John Finlayson worked for him and Edward Lowell who was at the—who was the restorer, painting restorer. He was a graduate of the museum school in [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You were involved somehow in this, some of this preparation or mounting of them?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. After they were all mounted when—the unveiling.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: John McQuaid and I being the two thinnest, skinniest members of the museum were sent up into the superstructure to tie off and to release at a signal these ropes. The canvas dropped from the murals down under the stairs into the center of the rotunda, and then it was drawn up through a round window in the top of the rotunda, just disappeared. And John Sargent was standing there. John Singer Sargent was standing over on the side watching all this. [00:20:02]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, my, pretty exciting.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: One thing he would have loved though was the hole that they've cut in the floor up there. He would have loved that because you could see the murals from below. Before that, you—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had to really crane to see them?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, and the light wasn't too good—but anyway from down below there, it was a wonderful opportunity to look up and see them at the perspective that they should have, ceiling paintings.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did they have quite a lot of publicity and impact? What—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I don't remember too much about that now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you were then—you were—worked with—in the secretary's office after you've worked in the education department and—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I want to Ashton Sanborn's office.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sanborn, yes. What was he like—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And I worked in there with Mrs. Jackson who was his secretary.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was Sanborn like to work with?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He was a lovely, lovely gentleman, a really prince fellow. He couldn't be more helpful to a young fellow. He'd help any questions I had, anything. I did a little woodcut one time for his daughter for a bookplate, and he and Mrs. Sanborn had me for dinner along with the woman who was in charge of education, Abby Gallup? I don't quite remember her name. I think it was Abby Gallup. As a matter of fact, she married a Wheeler from Concord. She was a very nice, very pleasant person. She would never go out on a lecture, unless I could come as her assistant to run the slides for her. [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You made yourself pretty useful. Were you known as a hard worker and a quick learner? You must have been.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, yeah. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [00:22:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And were—you were quite manually dexterous, right?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, I was—could do things with my hands, made things. For instance, I made slides and our etchings, and lithographs, that kind of thing. That's a painting I did when I first started in the museum. That was a vase we had at home I've been trying to find for years. Nobody in my family knows [laughs] what happened to it. An oil painting, that's probably the only one I ever did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And did you—were, uh, you studying with somebody these things or which? Could you go to someone with your questions of technique?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well, I listened to all of Philip Hale's lectures, and he was one fascinating lecturer and teacher.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I don't think he was much of a painter, but he was a terrific teacher and anatomist. He taught anatomy in this—in the lecture hall there. They all came over. That's why I had them because they came to lecture hall for their—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The museum school—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —he taught. He had two classes, one on anatomy and the other one on history of art, and Professor Seibel [ph] from Harvard gave a series of lectures there each year too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: On what?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Art history?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —on the art history, and also Mrs. Seibel [ph]. When he didn't give a course, she would. That was the state university course.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. How did, uh—you spent most of your years connected one way or another with the prints and drawings department. How did that come about?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, I was working in—I started telling you that I was working in the secretary's office, and Ashton Sanborn used to go out on the digs quite often.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was an—he had been an archeologist?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Archeologist, yes. He used to before my time. [00:24:00] He was—he had spent more time out in the digs. He and Hannaford Story [ph]. Story was a registrar when I first went to the museum. While he was away, Rossiter had me come over to his office and talked with him several times telling me the problems he had, how he tried to wash prints in a tub, and he was all thumbs, and all the problems they had with prints and with matting. They used to send prints downtown to be matted at a place on Tremont Street. And when Ashton Sanborn came back, he was pretty teed off about it so he—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why? Because you had been talking with Rossiter?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No, because Rossiter was taking me away from him. Because I was under the superintendent's supervision, I guess. I must have been. How else could he have—anyway, Ashton called me and said, "Frank, what do you—Are you with—are you really—do you really want to do this? Are you interested in it?" and I said, "Yes, I like it. It's interesting. It's—it gives me more, a greater field to get into." So he said, "Well, all right, I was a little annoyed when I heard Rossiter had done this without consulting me, but—" [Laughs]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what did—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: "But if you like it and it's all right with you?" I said—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did Rossiter ask—had you do in the beginning? What did—what did you do for him?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He had me making mats to begin with, and the superintendent couldn't find straight edge for me. Nobody can find a straight edge. So I started by drawing lines and splitting the line with the shoemaker's knife. [00:26:06] When I was—when I was going to school, I worked for a framer, part time. Franklin his name was. Ben Franklin, they called him. He had a big place in Boston, and there was a great fire in Boston at one time years ago that burned out the molding business, all the factories that made molding. It was the center for molding and the center for printing in Boston. The printing went to the New York, and the molding making went to Chicago. So, he started this little place out there, but he had a problem with alcohol, and so I

was in about sixth grade at the time, and he'd leave me in charge for a month or two at a time, weeks and a month.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was up in Somerville or in—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No, this was in Everett.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Everett? Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So you'd have a good deal of experience on—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, at that age, 16, you know. But anyway, I was—I could join frames, put them together or that kind of thing, and I had seen him cutting mats. I wasn't strong enough, I don't think, at the time to cut mats, but I had seen him. I knew the kind of knife he had, and I obtained—found one of the shoemaker's knife and had the blades—and made the blades for it myself. Down—I went down to Wilkinson's [ph] and bought this strip of tempered steel that I cut up and made into blades. And then I split the line down like that and then he gave me all the literature he could find from the British Museum that Doctor Scott and Doctor Plenderleith—two scientists or chemists working with paper—and that was my bible. I used those for my restoration work. [00:28:04]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So Rossiter, himself, though had no dexterity in this? As he said, he was all thumbs?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That's right. Yeah, he knew absolutely nothing about it and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he pleased fairly soon with what you were doing?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, he was, he was really—he was delighted. He had a dealer in his office one time I remember. They called me up and questioned me about some Rembrandts that I had restored. The dealer said, "Well, when are you in London?" I was about to say, "Only on Wednesdays and I found [inaudible]." [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had an impudent streak, huh, was quite—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: But I had—he called me and—Rossiter called me and then Red [ph], a French restorer, a famous French restorer. He said, "Here's a strange thing Frank. Bernado [ph] tells of capturing chlorine gas in a test tube, putting a piece of dampened paper, and then watch it bleach," and it clicked in my head. I just read recently about a tank, a small chlorine tank that had been developed. They had large ones they were using for swimming pools, but they had just—the small one and I thought, gee. So I got a hold of one of those, and I made up a tank and told Rossiter what I was doing, so he gave me the go-ahead and set aside a thousand dollars for me to have another tank professionally made after I had made the first one myself. I made it out of light table that I had for slides. The professional one I had made was a horror. It leaked all over and then—so I made up another one myself, and I developed this before they had the one in the British Museum. [00:30:07] The next year, they had one developed in the British Museum, cleaning with gas.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did this work? Did you get desired results pretty quickly?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, but I nearly wiped myself out and half the museum one time—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —with it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I was at home having dinner, and I had a call from the museum—there was a horrible smell in my department—the night watchman. I said, "You ring the bell, call all the watchmen into the office and keep them there, and I'll be right in." And I came, rushed in from Waltham and there was a terrible storm, too, I think at that time. When I got in there, I threw my coat off and ran through the building. We were at the other end of the building. The superintendent's office over here, the print department is way over in the Fenway. And then I started—got in the print department and started down the stairs and decided if I get back up, I was going to be lucky. The gas was so heavy and then I began to panic thinking of what could happen to silver. Silver turns to tin. They're in the next department, the decorative arts department, and I didn't know what it would do with paintings. So my first concern was to get the windows open and get some air into it. And then I rushed back to the department, and had them call the chemical department or the fire department, and stayed there until they arrived and I told them how to get in through the guard. Then they took it from there over to Northeastern. They had it up on the roof.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is the tank with the chlorine?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: The tank, and nobody [laughs] knew how to shut it off. Anyway, I was out in a parking

area when the fire department arrived. [00:32:04] One of the firemen—while I was waiting for an ambulance to take me to the hospital, one of the firemen that I used—um, nobody knew what to do about chlorine. They didn't at the hospital, and so he insisted I take oxygen, put the oxygen mask on and inhale. My ambulance was a paddy wagon. I was like this going through Roxbury [laughs] sitting on the—you know whole back of it open with drunks and everything in there. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, you weren't the only occupant, huh? [They laugh.]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Got over to the hospital, and it's loaded with people, drunks cut up in all kinds of conditions. One doctor saying, "Chlorine. Jack, chlorine? Tom, chlorine?" Nobody knew what to do with me. So I said, "Well, let me get out of here." I said, "You can't do anything for me. No sense of my staying," and they said, "Oh, yeah, we want you to stay." I said, "What for?" "We want to take X-rays." I said, "I got a good hospital in Waltham where I can have x-rays done. I could see they weren't going to—I wasn't going to get anybody. I might someplace else, you know, but right there no. So, anyway, I got back to the museum. Oh, they dumped me outside, no jacket, freezing. This was in December, no jacket on, any money. My money is in—my wallet's in my jacket.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Back at the museum?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Back at the museum.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: So I got a taxi to bring me back there and then I paid him off. And went out—I came out to Waltham, and we pulled up to the hospital, and they wanted me to come back every month or so. I wasn't supposed to go out in the dampness. [00:34:01] So I sat through baseball games that were in the mist, raining [laughs] for a week.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You didn't follow through their advice?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, what was—was there a—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: So I was fortunate. Nothing happened.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you nauseous or what? Is that why—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Haven't you ever—what—had any chlorine gas or washing bleaches, that kind of thing?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That's what's accentuated it—it's like a green—it is a green fume, and they dry out all your membranes and your eyes. They—it attacks moisture. That's why using it from bleaching paper, you'd only attack the moistened parts. You moisten the paper.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, when you got—did you get back to the museum fairly soon and I mean a few days?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, a couple of hours, several hours, they had me over there in the hospital, city hospital.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, were you able to put, uh, your apparatus back together or what? You'd found there were leaks of course?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, I had all kinds. You can't imagine the advice people would give you about my gas mask that I had on hand—I had handy there. Because every once in a while if I had a leak or a bad connection or something, I'd put my gas mask on and work on it. The problem that I had at that time was not my fault. It was the valve that came with the cylinder that was at fault. But everybody said, "Well, you should have had the gas mask up at the top of the stands," you know? So I had—all kinds of advice about it, but gee, I really was scared about that silver, about pewter. [00:36:03] Pewter turns to tin, and it was all—a lot of pewter down there in those early period rooms.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you got the windows open early enough evidently?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah and then they came in through—my lab looked right out into the garden down below the level.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And they came right in through there the—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: But they came in through that window. And I don't remember. I think I probably opened it—no, I didn't go into that room. I was going to be lucky if I get back upstairs, let alone getting into my—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did Rossiter have to say after this? Was he pretty frightened by the whole thing?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, he was scared of it, frightened by the whole—told me to be very careful and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But there was no question you were harmed?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: But I didn't. I did—it didn't do me any harm because for years I—that gas, I'd open it you know, and moved something around, and close it, and hold my breath while I was doing it, but you were inhaling it. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: So I've been very fortunate not to. But I've always been very active and out of door person so that I get lots and lots of exercise and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you were—were you beginning to be fairly well-known then for your ability to restore paper?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. Yeah. Ed Noah [ph] who was the director at the—at the museum in Paris.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is back in the '20s or '30s?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. One of the big museum at the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The Louvre?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: The Louvre. Ed was there, and he told me, "We have nobody in Paris. Nobody in France that does restoration anymore." The old type of restoration, that famous old fellow Boonhead [ph] that talked about capturing gas, that was—that was an old-fashioned type of restoration where they didn't know enough about proper washings, and so on, and proper chemicals for instance. [00:38:08] Doctor Scott and Doctor Plenderleith at the British Museum using a more scientific method and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —Javelle water is what they all used and picture framers, it was made out of potash and water and siphoned off.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did that—that would help to bleach or—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That did bleaching, but it left the chemical in the paper that destroyed the paper. That's what the picture I was telling you downstairs—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That's what—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —[inaudible] whether it had been—the paper has been destroyed because it wasn't properly washed. They dry mounted it then to hold it together.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Plenderleith's researches showed that you had to neutralize or remove the chemical you used—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: It was a very important thing, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: For instance, on some of these things like that—those watercolors, I used hydrogen peroxide and, uh, once that has dried, chemical reaction ceases. Those were done about 25 years ago.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But in the early days, you were using chlorine quite a lot, is that right?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah? And that did have to be removed and washed?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, everything does for that matter. I even—I washed the peroxide, although it maybe not be necessary.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you began you said just in a—you had a very small facility, one room or something, and later got larger—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —quarters?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: What we did—I was down in the basement underneath the print department where our storage was. The superintendent had found some bricks and some glass partition, and he built up a wall and used the glass partitions for the rest of it, and made me a little room. And then I had sinks built to my specifications and then the air-conditioning duct and—[00:40:12] So, I had a—but you never have enough room with you, when you're doing work with framing or pictures.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You did all that work, not just the conservation—in that one specific—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I had a one-man department for—until within—oh, probably, well 10 years, no more than 10 years before I left. And then I had—for instance, the only help I ever had was utility men who would do the cleaning of the glass and supposedly lugging frames. Although, the Rossiter and [inaudible], they got putting up—for an exhibition, the two of us were running up and down stairs with armloads of frames, up and down those winding metal stairs and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Winding industrial stairs between your basement and the print department?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. And then—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned that you did have—you did consult on chemistry with a man here.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes, a fellow that I played chess with for years every time we met. We met probably once a month and had a chess game. I also belonged to a book club where we read, and he was a member of that too. But he was a very busy man, so I didn't see him that much. He traveled all over the—especially out West because his specialty was rubber but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: His name is Roy Snoble [ph], right?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Roy Snoble, yeah, and during these chess sessions or our reading sessions, I had questions, chemical questions. So one day, he said to me, "Frank, if you get all your questions together, once month when I have an opportunity, I'll give you a call, and I'll come in, and we'll have dinner. [00:42:08] You tell me your problems, and I'll solve them for you, and then we can go around the gallery, and you tell me about art." Because he had—I said I had absolutely no background in liberal arts. I was all—he was a doctor of chemistry. So the first time he came in, he said, "What are you doing, Frank?" I said, "I'm washing some daguerreotypes," and I said, "I'm neutralizing them with a tincture of iodine. I used cyanide or potassium, and now, I'm using a tincture of iodine." He said, "My God, you couldn't develop a more deadly gas if you were [laughs] very knowledgeable about gases." He said, "Just use hypo. Forget the tincture of iodine, use hypo." So that was an idea.

ROBERT F. BROWN: As an example?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That's an example of how he—you know? There were lots of problems with paper. Paper was such an ephemeral material versus—compared with oil paintings where you can scrape and you can replace. You can dig out and fill in too. [Laughs.] I've had oil painting restorers say they wished that when they started they had started on with paper restoration. When I started, there wasn't anybody doing it. I was the only one in this country doing this paper restoration. Now, they have schools. They have Cooperstown and down at DuPont Museum and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you were really the first in the country, yeah?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, the first one.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's not simply, however I gather, the knowledge that Doctor Noble [ph] could give you in chemistry, but it's also your dexterity, isn't it? [00:44:01]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That's—yeah, that was important.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You to have good aptitude.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Look, the fascinating is that—of it is there's no set way to restore. Each thing is a new problem. One print or—or say three prints from the same plate, from the same copperplate, lived under different conditions in different parts of the country. They'd be in—and framed—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Frame.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —differently you know?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah. Matted differently, backed differently.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And everything that framers did from the beginning of framing until about, say, 30 years ago, 25, 30 years ago, everything they did was wrong, the worst thing they could possibly do. An artist would go to great trouble to have nice, handmade paper for his print and then a picture framer would slap it down, mount it down with glue under the cheapest board he could find, which was sulfide and acids. Sometimes, he'd put it in—use a mat to keep it away from the glass, but other times, he didn't. It was just a dressing anyway. It wasn't done to have a space, air space between the glass. And so the condensation for moisture and change of atmospheric conditions would develop a fungus that the moisture would settle into the paper in the backboard, and they were perfect breeding grounds for fungus to start. So, this—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hang on just a second.

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ROBERT F. BROWN: —so that, uh, it was—the paper required great deal of care. And would you puzzle things out first before you'd even do a thing at all? You would try to find out as much about where it had been and—of course, you could see how it had been mounted and framed because I assume you often received things framed.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah—

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —the first thing to do would be to get it out. Well, the first thing for me was to photograph it. I wouldn't even take it out of the frame without photographing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was why? To—as evidence of the way you received it?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: For my own—no. I've actually had somebody, a good friend tell me that I put the wrong frame back on the wrong end. There were marks on the canvas stretcher on the back where it—linen where the nails had been. They matched the ones in the frames and everything. But she was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was almost self-protection.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —absolutely convinced that I had. So for my own protection and for other reasons, I photographed them too. For instance, somebody once saying that something wasn't there when they left it with me, and I said, "Well, before I did anything, I photographed it, so let's go downstairs and I'll put it up on the screen." And there it was, you know?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: So, it became very essential, the photograph. You just see downstairs all my photographs?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, of course.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I don't always have after photographs because then you do have the picture afterwards but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did, uh, Mr. Rossiter back you up in your—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, he was—he was very helpful—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —what you were doing?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —that way. Anything I wanted, he'd get me for my—for restoration. [00:02:01] I had trouble. I never could go places the way other restorers did when they started. They were sent all over the country but for afterwards—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —toward the end, they allowed me to have some money for travel and to get around to meetings.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, but then you simply had to rely on what you could learn there or people who happen to come by?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Exactly. There wasn't anybody else to go to anyway, but in later years, the AAIC had meetings that were helpful to meet other people in the same business—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sure. Okay.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I had a very interesting one in Mexico City I remember. And from Mexico City, we flew up to Carmel where my daughter was living, and I met with a lot of photographers there, and I made an arrange—went back again the next year, and set up arrangements to get a portfolio of *Images Continuum*, which I gave the museum last year. Were—in it were some very fine pictures, very early Ansel Adams, which was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. But then—well, now did—did Rossiter—did you primary work on the collection that either had been acquired or that Rossiter was acquiring? Was that your primary work?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. There was a—I went through box by box whenever I had time checking out conditions, putting new folders, taking out the acid folders, and using—putting in acid-free archival material as it became eventually be known. I made—most of the dealers that came to me became conscious, very conscious of having archival material, having it—what I was striving for, what we were trying to do. [00:04:14] For instance George Ivins at the Metropolitan was the first one to get the papermakers to make an acid-free board for matting, and we used to buy that. We bought a quantity every year, and we stored it in shelves, and had it turned once or twice a year. And we wouldn't use it until it was about four or five years old so that it became—it was like seasoned wood, you know? It has settled and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see what—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —thoroughly dried.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You turned it—what—because so—it would warp and then another?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well, that was the problem we had with it before. All the prints in the boxes were—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Because the mats had worn for—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —they came from Bainbridge, and all the Bainbridges were made of two-ply or three-ply. They'd have a nice paper on the top, cheap board in-between then a nice paper on the bottom. They had a tendency to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which dried at different rates?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —curl when they dried, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: So we—we tried to—we seasoned our paper, and we didn't use it. We were very fortunate with that procedure when the war came along, and you couldn't buy paper. We had a great supply of it for five years back, say, that we hadn't used.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did you find in the print department when you were there in the—when did you began with Rossiter, about 1930 was it or so or?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well, it's about '30 I guess. I was married in '33, and I was there when I was married, so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But did you find that there was a real terrible backlog of things that needed tending?
[00:06:01]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh yes. Oh absolutely, yes. Things that hadn't even been matted and—because it was quite a chore getting them measured, and then sent downtown and have them down at Cavel East [ph], and he could only do so many at a time at his leisure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was the commercial matter and framer that they used.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: But was—Rossiter thoroughly supported this effort to better care for his collection of course?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes, yeah. That—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he a pretty personable sort? What was he like in your relation with him?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He couldn't have been nicer. He—went any problem I had, well probably it was because I was the same age as his son, and he was having a lot of problems with his son, so [laughs]. He did say that, "You really should stay in school. You really should get a degree," and I was going to school all the time. I was taking courses, night courses as well as these that I had in the museum for four years. But I went to Northeastern. I went to Harvard in extension courses. And I had Hind, Arthur Hind—Do you know the famous cataloger of woodcuts and engravings—his lectures two years in a row, one year on woodcuts and the next year on engravings. And the Lowell Lectures.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So you were educating yourself, but sometimes Rossiter wanted—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And I was a great reader. I love reading, always have.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But Rossiter was pushing for you to have a degree?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: A degree.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Formal.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He said, "Even if was a veterinary's degree."

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: [Laughs.] Have it formal and this is something I never coped with was this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, he could be rather, uh, overbearing at times could he, or insistent? [00:08:03]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He was bombastic, and he was an officer in the army and had spent some time in London. And he never got over that army life, I don't think. I mean his wife told me it was [where] their problems all started and everything. The life he had in the army for four years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, he's used to being brusque and commanding and so forth? Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He was a Canadian. He had great connections in Europe, and would go over every year, and he acquired some nice things. He got a lot of things by his—for instance one time, he spent a year there trying to get the Albertina collection, he was much hated by everybody in the museum because they figured he was going to break the museum. But what a cool—I mean the Albertina collection.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, I recall that people from Harvard went over there as well, didn't they? There were some good deal of courting of the—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well, yeah. Um, Sachs.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, Paul Sachs.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Paul Sachs and Philip Hofer. Paul Sachs was a wonderful guy. I spent a week with him down in Washington. I went down with—from the museum with a car loaded with prints that Russell Allen gave to the museum when it opened down there. I hung the first exhibition in that museum too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, you mean in the new National Gallery?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: The National Gallery, so. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you went down with Sachs?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you were with him then?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I was with—I was with Russell Allen, and we'd have dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Sachs every

night in a French restaurant, and on Fridays up at Harvey's. [00:10:14] And then after our business with the—after we got our exhibition, our prints installed and the exhibitions up, I went around. Russell Allen took me all around. We went down to—we went down to George Mason's home and when it was privately owned.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And you would see—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Gunston Hall.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Gunston Hall, yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And every night, we'd get stoned in the—[they laugh]—what's the famous old hotel that just opened, just reopened?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Willard's? Willard Hotel—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Willard?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Willard, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. But what was Sachs like? Did he like to ask you questions about problems you were finding—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in conservation?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mrs. Sachs was very inquisitive and inquiring, and Paul usually sat back and listened to her probings. "Why is it I don't know you?" she'd say. [They laugh.] I wasn't in Paul Sach's class, that's why [laughs] she didn't know me. But he was a wonderful fellow, a wonderful man.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you, uh—there were also at the museum through all these years a group, painting restorers? Did you work closely with them from time to time?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned Thompson or the [ph] Thompson and John Finlayson.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: John Finlayson and this Englishman Durham. Well, Finlayson was an Englishman too. [00:12:01]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Of course—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What would you work with them on?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —Thompson. I don't know. I just spent a lot of time with them because they—I was so inquisitive, I wanted to know everything that was going on because—matter of fact, I had my first alcoholic drink there at Christmastime. They had straight alcohol, molasses, and ginger ale. And I'm telling you, that's the smoothest drink you'll ever taste.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I bet so. [Laughs.]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. But anyway, uh, Thompson did a great outdoor—outside business too. They allowed him to do outside restoration. He did the first aluminum lining. I remember, I told Gus—did you ever know Gus—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Gus Kleeman [ph]?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Kleeman.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I told him, and he said, "Oh, get out of here." He thought he did the first one I think. But anyway, I brought him a bulletin up from the museum—brought him up a bulletin from the museum one time showing him of Thompson's aluminum relining to made a believer [laughs].

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, these were men you got along with easily and well?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, yeah. I was very always—as I say very inquisitive and then wanted to know everything, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were there, uh—now Rossiter would get prints and drawings from various different dealers. Were there certain ones that themselves were more concerned with the condition of their prints or their drawings than others? Can you recall particular cases of various dealers and—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. Henry Newman.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The old print shop.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: From the old print shop, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, he came over to me one time—and he had never met me—in Utica. We were at an opening—oh, I know a friend, a fellow that started the first broadcast in the museum. [00:14:04] What was his name? He was made director at Utica.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That might have been Harris Prior, someone like that.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Hmm. I can't think of that man's name. Anyway, he came over and at that meeting and wanted to meet the fellow who did the restoration. But he had already—he had sent somebody up and wanted me to train them. And Knerdler's [ph] used to send a man in up once a year, spend a week with me every summer.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To be trained?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Their—their handyman or fancy men. I guess the framing people called the fancy man, the fellow that could French mattes and cleaning, and the more delicate kind of—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They—would he learn—did he learn his—from you pretty well?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, he just watched what was—I didn't train anyone, uh, early days until—other than that fellow that came from Knerdler's every summer. And there was—a girl came from The Print Shop that wanted to spend time with me. But I ran a one-man department, and I was too busy to—but later before I left there, I did train some.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. But in the early days, uh, would—very often would prints common they were in pretty bad condition that Rossiter would have to get them because they were important prints, but they'd require a great deal of work?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Especially during the Karolik collecting. For instance, he called me in one time and asked me. He said, "Frank this was a beautiful watercolor once, do you think you can do anything with it?" and I said, "I should think so. I think I can do something with that." [00:16:00] It was a large—anyway in the process before I started working on watercolor itself, I took off. It was on a heavy board, and that heavy board consisted of three or four prints before letters right from the printer. And that's what they made the backup out of. And I figured out how it all came about. They had an auction in the opera house in Chicago where they had a fire, and they were rebuilding, and artists sent their work as contributions to—And I thought that—figured out that this man must have told his printer because all of his prints had watercolors or all of his prints were—they were known watercolors for his prints. But this particular one, a watercolor, the printer must have built up a backing out of prints he had on hand—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see, oh.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —by the same artist. One was a print of costumes. It was known, but nobody had ever seen an actual print. They knew that it existed. And then another one was president's house.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But these—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: But—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —they just—in other words, the backing to the watercolor was just a series of prints, paper?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He backed them up with these prints and then put them in a frame and sent it off to the auction. So when in Karolik—when I told Karolik about it—I called up Charlie Childs first and told him, and he said, "If you think you can do it, Frank, go ahead." [00:18:00] So when I told Rossiter about the prints beginning to show up, he called Karolik and then Karolik was overjoyed. He was—so, he went right down to Charlie Childs, and he was going to get his. He told him incidentally that the watercolor he would buy if it came out well. So it came out beautifully Harpers Ferry and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —he went down the dealer, and the dealer wouldn't come down one penny. If he wanted all four prints, going to have to pay for them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Karolik was noted for trying to bicker and—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Right, exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —get those cheaply, wasn't he?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: So Charlie got the prints, sent them off in New York, and had them colored and— [laughs].

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see and Karolik's not only the watercolor.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He made as well as much on each one of those prints as he made on the watercolor because they were before letters. They were early.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But this—the kind of things that Karolik was getting could have been stored, could have been put together in almost any old way, right? So they were—let's say they're—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: When he first started collecting, he went up to the Berkshires, to the musical in the Berkshires and told all the dealers up there, you know, he was going to—he was interested in collecting from 1800 to 1880 I think it was. So they started coming in by the carload, trainloads, truckloads. [Laughs.] Everybody cleaned out their chicken coops there, yeah every place. So, these things that he got were mounted down with everything imaginable from pitch to cow manure or barn, everything imaginable. So everyone had to be worked on, all of them. And so I was very much involved in it. [00:20:02] I was just thinking something the other day that happened to me when I was so emotional. I got so upset and wrought over this situation. They had a big dinner, and everybody that worked on them went to this dinner but me, and I had worked on every one of them. They would come to me and ask me if they were good or what they were or whether—you know? So I was—I wouldn't go into work, and I said, "No." I said, "The director sends me a letter of apologies." So Perry Rathbone sent me a letter and came out and saw me, and he couldn't have been nicer, and then they were all very apologetic over it. But I was never—I don't think I have ever in my life been shook up as I was over that situation. I had worked on—you know what a great collection the Karolik collection is.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: [Laughs.] But Karolik was a lot of fun. I enjoyed him ever so much. I taught him a word that he [laughs]. He used to go around quoting whenever he could. Corking, I called something a corking. "Corking, corking, what mean corking?" [They laugh.] So—uh, but he was great. He had stories about everything. He had—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You remember some?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —a great sense of humor, a great sense of humor.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he was easy enough for you to work with? I mean he was—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes. He'd bring things into me and then—and ask what I thought of them and if I thought it had some possibilities, and he'd show it to HP, to Rossiter. But, yeah, he was always—I remember one time, he was having some trouble with Perry Rathbone about an exhibition and he said—he came to me and he was so down in the dumps. [00:22:11] He said, "Frank they put my exhibition off. They're not going to do it. What do you think of that?" I said, "Well, I think it's a good thing." He said, "Why?" I said, "Well, look at the more time we have to work on it." I said, "We need all the time we can get. The longer time we have, the better job we can do of it." So he began to think that maybe that was a good idea after all. [Laughs.] But he was a very interesting, very interesting guy. He went—you know, old Mechanics Hall that used to be down on Huntington Avenue? He was going in there one day for an—they were going to have a show, an antique show, but they were

just cleaning out a poultry show. He had his black coat that he wore with the Ermine Cuff that are up to here and his fedora. As he went by, these tough truck drivers who were hauling these cases of birds out, poultry, one guy looked at the other, and he said, "Who the hell is that bird?" Karolik says, "Ha, ha, who the hell is that bird?" [Laughs.] Because he looked so—but he had a great sense of humor. He could tell jokes on himself.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [Laughs.] Did you find over the years that—from print dealers and drawing dealers, did—was most of the stuff sent in from the dealers? It didn't come through collectors so much? But did you find that the quality—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mostly dealers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mostly.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Dealers, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was the condition of things, did it gradually improve over the years as they became more aware of how—[00:24:04]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —to take care of things?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: They got so much more sophisticated. You can't go in—for instance, one time up in New Hampshire, I went into a shop that was selling frames beside the road, antique stuff, you know, frames, old frames? And I said, "I like that frame." I said, "Do you know what's in it?" The fellow said, "Sure, a very nice print." I said, "How much is it?" He said, "\$25." He knew it was [inaudible] prints on. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, so yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: But now, you couldn't go to anybody, you know?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Now but from major dealers in prints like Newman or European dealers and all, did quality of—you mentioned the Knerdler's people were learning more about the chemistry and the conservation.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Over the years, did you see the way they presented things—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —did they can take better care of things?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, of course, sure. People like George Ives [ph] of the Metropolitan and then—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ivins

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, Ivins and Rossiter, dealers that are—or curators are knowledgeable—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. And that had—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —about that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —its effect on the dealers?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Sure. They wouldn't even take things from them if they were mounted down.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you get around to various print shops? You say you weren't given travel funds ever, so you couldn't get around too much. I guess you can go to New York, couldn't you?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I used to go over myself. Yeah. I used to love to.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who were some of the principal figures in Boston dealing in drawings and prints or were there many at all?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well, the two most knowledgeable men in the country probably in any place were the original George Goodspeed and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Holman.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Holman.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Louis Holman.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Louis Homan, you know, the father, and the father of George is George Goodspeed, so. [00:26:02] Those were two very extremely knowledgeable men in the print field much more so than the sons who came in. I shouldn't be saying that. [Laughs.] But they were great print men in that—in those days.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now when World War II came along, you went away and you worked with Raytheon in radar research I gather?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You just—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I went out there part-time waiting for my number to come up, you know, that I figured—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, the military draft, yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, I figured I'd be called. While I was waiting, I—I went and volunteered out there at Raytheon. They put me on a bench doing—soldering panels.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the interview. This is November 13, 1986.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —last talking about the coming of World War II. You expected to be drafted. You went from the museum to Raytheon, right?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I was working—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You wanted to do some war-related work? Was that your purpose?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. I was working evenings at the Raytheon knowing that I was going to be called in and called up at any time. I worked out there for about a year, I think, evenings and then they wanted me to—it—this kind—this work, which is entirely different from museum artwork for instance, soldering kind of thing came into me naturally. And I was teaching people on benches how to do it properly and so forth. [00:28:02] So, they asked me to take over when they had trouble with their—with the foreman, take over assistant foreman and then eventually, I was foreman of the SG department, which was a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: There were two radars that we made, SG and SO.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, Raytheon—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —was primarily doing radar research and production?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And production during the war. We were working on SOs, which were the small ones used for destroyers and PT boats, where SGs were for the big battleship type thing. And, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you enjoyed your work there?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, I really—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because you were very adept—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: It was so different. It was so different, but it was also a real problem. I had 115 to [1]25 people under me and mostly women. And I had to bench with 15 to 25 men at different times. It would usually be very few older men, mostly returning veterans probably with battle fatigue and that kind of thing. They were a problem [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, and then—so you had problems with personnel then? It was hard keeping them happy or keeping them productive or?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Keeping them happy I suppose, yeah. And, uh, I had—I had charge of the—of that department and then also superintendent of the building at night times. There were the SG department in that building and the cables.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The cables?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: The cable department where they made up cable, the cables that went into the radar. [00:30:00] It made up of many, many wires, combinations sort of thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you found the work interesting then?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, I did. You know I tried hard to get out of it. To get into the war, I had three brothers that were in the war in uniform, and I was anxious to get into it also.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, they were sort of a patriotic thing also?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. Yeah. They had—I had been called up I think four or five times, and finally the superintendent said, "I just saw that you just had—you've frozen in. You can't—no possible chance of you getting out now." He said, "You're more valuable to us here than you would be in uniform to the country."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because that's—it was essential work, of course.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. Oh, yeah. War would—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, you worked there nights?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, I had the nightshift. I worked from—I went in at 12 o'clock and my crew came in at two and I worked until 11 o'clock.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In the morning?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: At night.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At night?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. From—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then you—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —the crew went from two to 11 and then I took over another crew at Diamond Small Instruments with Joe Cronan. He came over, and Mr. Hickey [ph] owned small instrument. He and Joe Cronan who was his manager came over to see—and watched my crew at work one time, and he wanted to have me over there training his crew. So I was going over there at six o'clock in the morning and working a [inaudible] time training his crew and then come back and pick up my crew at the Raytheon.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At Raytheon? Well, obviously, you had not time by then for doing more—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Pretty hectic.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —work at the MFA.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, no. I—in the meantime—[00:32:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You took a leave of absence?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —I took a leave of absence for three years. And that was a hectic time putting in those long hours. I developed phlebitis in my leg so that I had to have it up in the air, and I was—had to do a lot of running to keeping everybody happy with all these different benches and then group leaders and so that—checking on work, you know? So I was on my feet a lot and running errands—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And so you paid for it, yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And I went down—I'd go to the doctor, and he'd put on a new bandage on my phlebitis and, uh, give me some medicine for it. And um, I did that for about a year after that developed. Finally, after the war, I had started traveling, moving around and then I had it operated on, they had it—Dr. Eugene O'Neill [ph] who just developed a new method, a technique of stripping. So they stripped out both legs from the crotch to the ankle.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Gee.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Took that main vein out. You'd never know if you saw me on the tennis court today. That was [laughs]. So, I couldn't—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So then you felt good then doing that work. Did most of the people you supervised, did they work with the will too? Did they work pretty hard?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: The women, yes, they were very—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The women worked hard?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: They were very good, very—uh, very good workers, and well, they were all—they all had somebody in the service you see, and they were doing their bit keeping them supplied. [00:34:02] For instance we'd be—we had—we'd have a message come to us that we had to have certain parts done. There was a battleship waiting in New York for—to go out, and it was stalled until we got this radar part made up and sent on to them, and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So the pace was entirely different from that of the museum?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, absolutely. We had—I was trying to think what we called these men that went off and found materials for us. They'd go down to Maryland for instance for a certain nut or bolt or something that was needed, and the whole thing was being held up because this little nut or something. These were men would take off, and keep us—keep our supply.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. Was it—was management there good? Did you have some—any contact with the owners or the people that managed Raytheon?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, as a matter of fact, I got to—I got acquainted—got to know the owner, a great deal that had sold it. Isn't that terrible? He was an art collector with the—he gave the museum some Gauguin sculptures, and I used to have some interesting talks with him. He was the first—he and his wife were the first people to go in among the Pygmies in Africa. He was a fascinating man, I'm telling you about—his son made a movie of that one time that was played around the country and life among the Pygmies.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you keep in touch at all with your former colleagues at the museum? What went on there? Did they just sort of hold the line during the war mainly?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well, before I left the museum, I had put up—most of the valuable things that were movable were sent up to Williams College, for instance, to get it away from—for instance, if there was any bombing around Boston, the museum would—with its glass-topped roof would—so, a lot of paintings and a lot of the most valuable, rarest of our prints were sent up to—[00:36:23]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you were involved in packing—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —[inaudible] and the boxes—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and them getting ready?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, they had to be—we put thymolized paper in to prevent fungus and that kind of thing, you know?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And this happened before I left.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. So it probably was kind of going on a less ambitious way during World War II, the museum?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. It, uh—wages were cut a couple of times and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, really?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —and that kind of thing, you know?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Then how—what happened when you—when the war ended?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, when the war ended, I came back to see about returning and wanting more money, for instance, having been in management these years and being—and as I told them at the museum, I was

offered a position in management with Raytheon, and it would pay much more. I said, "While this is the work that I love, my—that I want to do with art, it, uh—I have a family and responsibilities and what the museum pays would hardly be—"

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what did they say?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —palpable was what I've been—well, they went off into a huddle with the [inaudible] and they came back and they said, "Well, we can do this Frank for a year for you but then we don't know." Well I said, "I have to know. I have a family and responsibilities. And you either make this arrangement with me or I'll have to go into management. [00:38:02] I don't have any choice." So they went off in a huddle again, they came back and said, "Anything you want. It's all settled. You can have what you want," [laughs] which was about three to four times what I made when I left the museum. It was like peanut shells and [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, but the museum was probably fairly penny-pinching, wasn't it? I mean—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, it wasn't, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Weren't a good many of the people who had been on the staff—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well for instance, restorers. Who knew about the restorers in those days. I was the first one in this country to do paper restoration.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They thought of you just as a glorified helper—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, a utility man.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —or a maintenance person—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —or something until my assistant that I trained and took over for me Roy Perkinson, I told him that his position was—this was his—he should look for the same kind of money that curators got because he could leave at any time. Curators are a dime a dozen, but restorers were few and far between. Now, of course, they have schools, and they turned out more, but at that time—and he went. He left. He had a chance to go out to California to the Legion of Honor and set up a—a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. This is Roy Perkinson?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. And I advised him to do that because I said, "You'd have more bargaining power when you come back after have been there." And then they got that—that director from Texas.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, Merrill Ripple [ph]?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. Whom I've—name I dismissed from my mind intentionally. He came on, and he said, "We haven't any chance of getting Roy back at all. He's not coming back." And he went out there to a meeting, and he told the director of the museum out there that Roy wasn't coming back at the museum. So, I told them that, uh, Roy was either coming back—I was leaving anyway. [00:40:03] Whether he came back or not, I'm leaving in June, and they couldn't get back—Roy back for another year or two years I guess. They hired me part-time consultant and paying me as much as they paid me for full time, more than full time [laughs]. But to give you an idea how things changed in the meantime.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But when you—the first months of your time at the museum, people who ran it were from moneyed, old Boston families, weren't they? And a certain number of the staff were also of that sort so—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That's right. Yeah. [Inaudible.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So the idea of paying a—a good competitive wage or salary was—it didn't occur to them, huh?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: It was new at that time to even have trained curators. I mean Paul Sachs was probably one of the first people in the country to train—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —and provide courses and train curators.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And Rossiter just learned on his own, right?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. He wasn't a trained person.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But when you came back in '45, they had hired now—let's see—by then Eleanor Sayre.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: She came back the same the day that I came back. She started the same day that I came back. The day after Labor Day in 1945.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And she had come from where?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: The Rhode Island School of Design.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Was she a trained person in prints or—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well, she's—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —her exposure was—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —worked down there [inaudible]. She grad—she was at Bryn Mawr but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So did you find yourself working closely with her from the beginning or?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Not necessarily no. She—I worked mostly closely with Rossiter who of course, was the curator, and he and I used to set out exhibitions and put them up together. [00:42:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And he was wonderful with my restoration work. He got me interested in the restoration in the first place and supplied with me all, anything that Plenderleith and Scott had written from the British Museum and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he continued that after World War II? Was he was still very supportive?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Very, yes, anything I wanted. If I wanted to build a cabinet or a special gas box or something, he'd set aside a thousand dollars or so. At budget time, he'd ask me what I was—what I'd need for the coming year, what I needed, what we needed for supplies in the department like matting board and anything I needed in my restoration work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [Inaudible.]

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ROBERT F. BROWN: —tape.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was Rossiter—Henry Rossiter was a pretty congenial fellow?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, he was very nice, very, very helpful, and very pleasant.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he fairly low-key, or how would you describe him, was he?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He was very nice to me. He had a son that was my age he was having a lot of trouble with at the time, so he probably wasn't as outgoing as he might have been. For instance, when I went to Europe, he never suggested going any place, never gave me any notes of introduction, that kind of thing, which would have helped even with the taxes let alone—[Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: What—who gets—he could be ungenerous at time in some ways, huh?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I don't know whether it was—whether—I always thought—attributed to that, the fact that his son was Dave [inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he said—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: But then he was having to go to, I guess, himself. It was—it took a good deal of adjusting after World War I, the freedom that the those people, those men had for all those years in the war.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Rossiter was in the—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —what—Canadian army for years, yes.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And an officer, and he had a lot—spent a lot of time in London. His wife once told me that their problems started because of this world war. She was a lovely, lovely person, a really lovely person and —

ROBERT F. BROWN: But did he somewhat behave like an old-type officer or something?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He could hold forth when something upset him and—but then he'd come around, he'd apologize, and be, all sorry. But he was—he was very nice. He's very nice to me. [00:02:03] For instance, I was working in the secretary's office—I don't know whether I mentioned that before—when he asked me to come over and talk with him about coming to the print department. And he explained about restoration, and how he tried in this tub—to wash prints in this bathtub. He said that he was all thumbs. He never could do a thing, and this is what he wanted me interested in because he knew that I had—was rather handy with my hands. I was in the secretary's office. At the time, Ashton Sanborn was secretary, and he was away, and when he came back, he called me. And I went over and visited with him, and he said, "Frank, I don't know anything about this business with the print department." He said, "Are you happy? Do you want to do it?" He said, "You don't have to, you know." He was rather teed off to think that was it was done while he was away.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. [Laughs.]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: So why he was interested, and I said, "Yes, it's interesting. It's—" Of course, I worked in the secretary's office, all you're doing, copying papers or filing and stuff.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah. So this was—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No comparison. But then when I was with the—in the department for a while, Dows Dunham asked Rossiter if I would—he could have me part time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In the Egyptian department?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: In the Egyptian department, and I was fascinated with that. I had taken courses at Boston University. I took Egyptology. I had listened to all these lectures, and I said, "No." I was—I was making prints at the time, and I was fascinated with the print department, and I said, "No, I think I'd rather stay what I'm doing now." [00:04:09]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you never—so the thing—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And I would love to have because I was very fond of Dunham. I thought he was a wonderful man. And certainly, Egyptology is a fascinating thing, especially in reading about the pyramids and then working some in—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you—was that—Rossiter, did he have any particular areas you consider his strengths in turn as a curator, as a connoisseur?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well, yes, he knew how to get things done. He knew all the dealers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But were the particular areas that he was—that he purchased in and—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —different types of things.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —very carefully done through very knowledgeable dealers, or his good friends in London and most of that—well at the time, he was trying to get that—the Albertina collection. He and—he worked in conjunction with people at Kolonaki's. I have forgotten who the dealers are now. But anyway, Russell Allen and Philip Hofer and then, oh, Paul Sachs. They all worked together on this, and he was there for a year in Europe.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Rossiter was?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Rossiter was, right. He was the most the most disliked guy in the museum at the time because all the other departments thought he was going to strip treasury of all their money to get this in this collection. But my God, what a—cool, it would have been to get the Albertina collection, [inaudible]. [00:06:04]

ROBERT F. BROWN: But that collapsed, that effort?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: You know the prince was trying to raise money to make—to form an army, although the

thing fell through. I don't know whether it was the politics or what's the reason. Now—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But after World War II, did Rossiter concentrate in particular times of history or certain things were his specialty?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, he's—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in his later career?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —particularly interested in the jewels for instance of 15th-century prints, which is the—and the Rembrandts, that kind of thing. *The Jewish Bride* when he obtained that, it was a real cool—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm. Then when—of course, Eleanor Sayre came on, so there were two curators in the department, right, when Eleanor Sayre came in 1945?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: There were two curators?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: She wasn't a curator.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, she was an assistant.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes, sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, down in the bottom—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what—she begin developing her interest then?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: She became very, very—hmm—friendly with Rossiter so that she was with him, and, uh, let's see. It was difficult to get in to see HPR if you want to talk to him without Eleanor showing up. But, oh, Anna Hoyt was the—Anna Hoyt was without question the most brilliant and knowledgeable person the department ever had.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was she still there after World War II?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes. Yeah. She married Professor Mavor when she was in her late 60s, both of them were I guess. And I think she's still alive in a nursing home down in Florida. [00:08:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was her particular area of interest in the [inaudible] of his—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Fitz Roy Carrington brought here, and he was awfully proud of her because she was the summa cum laude of Radcliffe, and he was so proud of her and then—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who was Carrington?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Fitz Roy Carrington was the first curator—or not the first.

ROBERT F. BROWN: One of the earlier curators?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He was before Rossiter and then he went from the museum to Knerdler's.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But was Anna Hoyt nice to work with? What was she like?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Wonderful.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was her personality?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, she's lovely, lovely. Very outgoing, very helpful to me. She helped me with trying to learn German, another time, Italian. She was very helpful on mathematical problem. She was a genius and could handle almost anything, you know? I'd have the—these unusual problems with shapes in matting, and she'd—in cutting ovals, that kind of thing when I was first starting, and she was most helpful, a wonderful person. She—anybody came in looking for information, would—she'd worked—work her head off to find—to get all the information she could for them. Never brushed them off saying, you know, "Well, but this is—we don't know where this is or—"

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was she also involved in acquisitions or was that namely Rossiter's?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mostly Rossiter's, but he never did much without consulting her. He never wrote a line without having her read it first before he wrote the second line. But he was very good at writing, and she did most of the care of [ph] the catalog. [00:10:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did she and Rossiter retire about the same time? Were they—they both retired when, in the late '50s, early '60s?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I don't remember dates. But, uh, she retired. She must have retired before Rossiter because they never would have appointed Eleanor over her, so she must have gone first.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-uh [affirmative].

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: She had a terrific—a great collection of her own, which at one time, I think, she was thinking of leaving to Oberlin where her sister taught. Her sister was a professor there. Their mother and father died when they were—the two girls were young, I guess, and an uncle in Jamaica Plain brought them up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was—when Rossiter retired then was it at all clear who might be the new curator?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No. Pete was being—Peter Wick was being—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Peter Wick—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —pruned for the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Groomed?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —groomed for that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was in the department by then?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So you had several curators then by—just before Rossiter's retirement? You had Hoyt and Peter Wick?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No, they were assistants.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Assistants. And Eleanor—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And just assistants, assistant curators or something that started after Eleanor took over.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And there's a difference, huh, in their duties or just a different—there's a new title, is that all that mattered?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Title is a very important—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Inflation and all—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —to some people, you know?

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] Yes. So what happened? Were you in pins and needles until they have decided who might—who would be the new curator?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No, it didn't matter to me. [00:12:01] Looking back on it I don't remember any problem that way. I—I could have gone any place at that time, you know. But uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you expect Eleanor Sayre to be the curator? Or was that a surprise?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, well more or less, but she was very chummy with Perry Rathbone, too, so it became apparent after a while. They—oh, she, Eleanor really wanted—she was surprised to get it herself. She expect—she wanted a German fellow that was out at Chicago. Very well-known in the field, and he wouldn't give up his Social Security. At that time, you couldn't transfer, and he had so much time put in on that out there that he didn't want to leave. I can't think of his name. I can't understand how I could forget. Roman? He was the curator of the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the Art—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —Prints and Drawings.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Institute of Chicago.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —Chicago Art Institute.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So she was rather surprised, huh? By the time she became the curator, was she already fully into her interest particularly in Goya?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, she got particularly—she got interested in that before Rossiter left because Rossiter had, in his own collection, several drawings that Eleanor discovered was really Goya's, and he didn't know that. [00:14:06] And that is when she—her real interest, I think, started with Goya. Rossiter gave the museum two of them, and I think he gave Eleanor one, and then sold one from some—one or two in New York. But that was, I think, probably when her—as I remember.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well—what—did you work more closely with her—with Eleanor after she became curator than you had before?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I don't know. It's a team. It's a team effort.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So—because she had been there so long, it really wasn't a great change when—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I've been there 20 years before she was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. But she had been there since '45 when he retired.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. Oh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So I mean—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —he didn't retire until '70.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see. Yeah. So you all had worked for a long time with each other?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes, oh, yeah. Yeah. We all got along very well. Mrs. Blair [ph]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mrs. Blair.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —was another—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Another assistant?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —assistant, yeah, an older woman. And Anne Peabody—oh, Anne Peabody, yes. Anne Peabody died just a few months ago. She was a lovely, lovely person.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean Anne Blake?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No, Anne Peabody. Anne Blake also worked there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Anne Blake, yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: She was—her name then was not Blake. She had married a professor at Harvard. He finally went over to Harvard. They were divorced, and she married Singon Smith [ph].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Smith? Yeah, Anne Blake Smith. Yeah. In the print department in your later years at the museum, uh, you retired. Which year did you retire, in the '70s, wasn't it? [00:16:00]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: About 10 years ago.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, about 1975 or so?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did they have a good many exhibitions in those later years? You had regular shows, didn't you?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Always. One of the policies of the department was that no exhibition stayed up more than three months, and usually, they weren't up that long. Months [inaudible] so that we had—we had to be tied

to special galleries where there were special exhibitions. We had, uh, seven galleries of our own that were coming up and going. and then being taken down all the time. Sometimes, Rossiter might leave me a list of what he wanted—what he was going to put up. I'd make little cutouts, and cutout of the gallery, and we'd paste them up on the wall so that when he—while he was away, I can put the exhibition up with the utility men from the plans we'd made before he left. So we were—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you involved quite a lot with the departments, though you must have been consulted?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: There wasn't—yeah. I don't think there was a special exhibition in the museum that we didn't get involved in some way or other if a sign wasn't dropped and a glass broken and [laughs] or something. One time they were—they had a huge American globe, and they didn't know what to do with it because it was so discolored. I told the restorer that I had cleaned any number of them and so I instructed the man that restored the furniture what to use on it, and he cleaned this, so. But that was one of the many things, you know?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, by the '50s or so, there was a—there was a painting conservation department, too, wasn't there? [00:18:06]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: There had always been—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Always been—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —before I—before my—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right. It had become more elaborate, had it?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mmm. Not necessarily.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you work closely with them?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Herbert Thompson, the head was there when I first came there, and he has well-established restoration, and he did outside work as well as the museum's work. Alfred Lowell worked for him. He was a graduate of museum school and so was Thompson.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Then William Young came from England, didn't he?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, but he didn't do painting restoration there. He was objects.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. He wanted, you told me to, at one point, to combine all the conservation in one department.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He wanted, yes, to combine the—our department, have it up. All conservation is up there in that one area now. When they built that wing, they had that in mind, but it was ridiculous to think of taking my department away from the print department because we work so closely back and forth. Not only people bringing in things or—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you successfully resisted that?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: [They laugh.] Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I said, "Oh, over my dead body." [They laugh.] Every once in a while, I'd see Bill with an architect looking in the window. They'd be up in the garden just waiting. [They laugh.] So, we had architects, but we had planners come and play architect and divide—designing a new lab, which they kicked around for a long time and never got around to doing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm. Was Perry Rathbone—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: We had no money and everything, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Was Perry Rathbone a solid supporter of your—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —work?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: You could talk to him. You could talk to Perry and—as opposed to that—as opposed to the fellow that followed him—[00:20:03]

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see yeah, yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —from Texas.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. So Rathbone was a very accessible fellow, right?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, a very nice person, yeah, very easy to talk to, and he was very cooperative.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then when he left about 1970 or so and was there—you've mentioned the next man that came Mr. Ruppel [ph]. He wasn't there very long. But the management, the trustees were led by—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: As [inaudible] as the museum could stand him, take him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He just—they had a staff and—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: They let him go and paid his contract for two years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, but he alienated the—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —most of the staff, didn't he?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: The whole staff.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Was he—did he have an ax to grind or was he just, his personality was at fault?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He—he didn't understand art. He was more of a businessman, I guess, and he thought he could regiment the thing and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he didn't—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And then George, my good friend George did the same thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: George Seybolt.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He bought him as a matter of fact. George brought this guy. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah. Well, Seybolt tried to put everything in a business-like proposition, didn't he?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That's right. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did he have much effect during his years as trustee president?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I don't know. As far as that's concerned, I mean, he sent—he sent his men around to find —his men that would—came around and wanted to know what I bought and how much. And then he got—he was the one that brought in buying a—a man that sells—buys all the supplies. Now, what do they call that?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Procurement officer or something like that? [00:22:00] Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Purchasing agent.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Purchasing agent. Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: He would call up and say, "Oh, we can get your board much cheaper from so-and-so." And I said at one point, "I know what board is on the market and who makes it. This is what we want and nothing else regardless of what it costs." [Laughs] This was a—the kind of thing, you know the business, well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: They wanted everyone to buy the same thing from the same mill and the same kind of thing, and we had to have—we had special archival material—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They didn't—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —that the rest of the office work weren't interested in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They simply didn't think in terms of quality, for example.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, no, no, the business. They were just money. It's just money, how much could be saved buying this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you were able to prevail against this attitude?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then when—what—Jan Fontaine came on that the museum went back more as you knew it, didn't it? Because he had been curator there for some time in Asiatic art.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Not that long.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, but I mean—but still, your last years there were compatible years, weren't they?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah, well I get along all right with Jan.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did you retire because you reached a certain age or because had a lot of other things you wanted to do?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well—I think probably, I forced the retirement business because I wanted to be sure the museum got the right person for it. And I had trained Roy, and I had said when—every year every once in a while people say, "Why aren't you training somebody?" [00:24:03] And I say, "I'm a one-man department." I'm all alone. I have to do all of this myself. The only help I got was from utility men who did polishing the glass, that kind of thing and wiping the frames [laughs]. But all the restoration, the matting and everything went through my department. I did it myself, so I really didn't have time to train anybody. Because I remember one time, the girls from Fogg came over, and they wanted to know if I would like them to write up what I did, and I said, "No, not really. When I'd get around to it, I do it myself." I probably alienated my help from the Fogg Museum [laughs] but um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, they had even notable people there later, didn't they, in paper conservation?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Where?

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the Fogg?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yes, yes, Geri Cohen [ph], one of the girls who came over. Now she trains people there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you finally then did take Roy Perkinson in as an understudy, right?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yes, he came to me, and I hired him. He came to me two different times for interviews, and he had the training. He was an MIT graduate. He had chemistry, physics, and he had a course at BU [Boston University], 19th-century art printmakers, and he had worked in the studio with a sculptor in his time off when he was at school down in Texas. He seemed just the right person, just the kind of person I was looking for, somebody who had a bit of background than I did for—in chemistry especially. [00:26:00] So he seemed the ideal person, and a nice person. I liked him and we get along together and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you found you had enough time to train him? He could sort of shadow you for a while and study you as he learned more and more?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. He was very helpful. He could do—not only was he very—he was reading all the time. I'd suggest reading Matthew [inaudible], and his knowledge in chemistry, and as a good deal of imagination, fascinating—fascination of restoration is each thing that comes is a new problem to be worked out, and not everybody can do that kind, the kind of thing. I mean, you might be talking to a chemist and not have the interest in developing and working out problems with paper, which is something entirely different.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So once you had him trained then you were ready to retire?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. First—before then I decided—I, uh, suggested that he go out to California and set up this lab.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The lab where the—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And then in two years when he came back, I'd retire, but in the meantime, the Al Ruppel [ph] came.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, who didn't want to bring him back? Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: So that's when I forced the issue by saying that I—I was leaving in June regardless.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Then they had to hire you back at greater expense part time as a consultant, huh?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Right. [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: But had you been moving toward—or what were you going to do once you were retired? Had you worked out all sorts of things?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I don't remember whether—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because you were—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —I had a great interest in a number of things, of course. [00:28:01]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Including conservation, right?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You—were doing and had been doing a lot on your own?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. I always had supplemented the museum money with—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. [They laugh.] And you had a setup in your home, didn't you, a laboratory?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And you've continued to do that but—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Still do.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. But also—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Talking about, I only work about an hour or two a day, an hour or an hour and a half, and so on.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. A lot of it is very slow work, isn't it then?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Not for me. I mean I've been doing it so many years. Other restorers can't understand how I can—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You proceed pretty boldly? [Laughs.]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Quickly. Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Things that they wouldn't touch at all, you know?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. I noticed you, and I guess probably forever, have been a considerable collector yourself. Yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Pack rat, my wife calls me, I guess. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: But in the art field, what are some of the—what have been some of your principal areas of interest as a collector?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Well, I have—I have some watercolors of 19th-century ship portraits.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did you get interested in them?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Probably by restoring everything they have down in the Peabody Museum. All their watercolors.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Down in Salem? I see.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. I have a Japanese woodcut collection and—and quite a few odds and ends that I had picked up, a Rembrandt and a Goya [ph] and this—and a little of this, and a little of that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you find as a collector, it's sort of—as they—some would call it a disease.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Pardon?

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's a disease some people would say.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Oh, yeah, exactly. Exactly. Ana I'm so thrilled, and now I look back and I think, why am I collecting all this stuff. What am I going to do with it? [00:30:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is your family interested, your children?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Not particularly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh. Did your wife through these years share a lot of these interests?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: No, absolutely no. She was in the banking business and had absolutely no—and hasn't absorbed any of that. [Laughs.] Now—every time I think of that, I think of her interest and telling Eleanor, showing her a John Whorf and saying it was a Dodge Macknight. Eleanor looked at it and said, [they laugh] "No, I think that's a John Whorf [laughs]—"

ROBERT F. BROWN: But she was in—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: "—watercolor."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. That was probably maybe a good thing that your wife didn't—your interests didn't compete or weren't overlapping.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: The greatest regret in my life is that I never met her mother. Her mother died two years before I met or married Sally, but her mother was very knowledgeable in antiques and art and, oh, we would have made [claps] hit it off. We would have been a great, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: A great team there.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah, exactly. But and— isn't that strange? Neither she or her brother had any interest in art at all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I've heard about that. [Laughs.]

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: At all. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you've always kept up other interests, your athletic interest and—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, well, I always played tennis, done a lot of hunting, and horseback riding.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. As you look back, were there any things in your career you wish you could do over again, or wish you hadn't done?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I wish I had kept up more with my photography at this point. At one time—photography has always fascinated me and then and I—I've always done a certain amount with my technical—with my restoration for instance, before and after prints and slides in that time. [00:32:00] And then—and at one time for years, the photographer at the museum allowed me to take over, go into the darkroom after they left, and I'd be there until 10, nine, 10 o'clock nights just enlarging, and propping, and playing on. And I'm sorry that I ever let that lapse, that I should have had a darkroom, but I've got so—I am involved with so many things, I don't dare start a darkroom again. And I'm collecting photography now. I have a collection. I have given the museum one portfolio, and I have a portfolio that I'm collecting now of contemporary Western photographers, well-known Western men, and I shall give that to the museum. I also have a set of all Stieglitz *Camera Work*, which is a rare thing to come by, especially since it was the collection of his great friend and editor Kyle [ph] and a lot of other dedicated from—dedications in the book from Stieglitz of Kyle.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To Kyle?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And I had—I—last year I got a John Greene which is 1850, which is rather nice that I'm going to give the museum eventually.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You feel close to the museum?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Pardon?

ROBERT F. BROWN: You feel close—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —to the museum?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: That's been my life, and I do this. For instance, I think of giving something back to them for what I've got from the museum by giving these prints—to the museum. [00:34:03] Little enough, I wish I were wealthy enough to collect some of the Rembrandts of the photography field, some of the early like this John Greene, for instance. But even the contemporary men now, they have fantastic prices. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: No doubt. [Laughs.] But you've had a long work career. You mentioned in our first session that you began working as a small boy.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: To what do you attribute this? You seem to have to keep active.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes, I have a fascinated—I like to keep busy.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You like doing things with your hands, you've said?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yes. I—for instance, I worked for Gus Braun [ph] who was a photographer. And I—he left me in charge of his studio when he'd go off to his national guard meetings.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was when you were young, a boy?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: Yeah. Yes. This was before I left Everett. So we left there in the seventh grade, so this was up until this time when I worked in the market, and I delivered orders on Saturday and Sunday for our market and put up potatoes for O'Keefe markets, which was a messy, terrible, stinky job.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] So you—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: And then—this was during the war, just after the war when things were difficult, and I used to bring home—instead of money, I'd bring home loads of packing cases that I could break up and use in the—that's how I got that. I had stacked packing cases up in the ceiling—up to the ceiling. I was up there stacking them away when my pile collapsed, and I—a nail went in my face. [00:36:00] And that was a perfect letter F there for years. Now, it's a—mother nearly died when she came home. I was sitting reading, book reading, the towel here. The towel was soaking red with blood. [They laugh.] She almost fainted. Came in the door—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So what are you going to—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —so I was holding my head [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you use those packing cases for, carving or woodwork?

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: For—no, for firewood.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Firewood. Oh I see.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: It was difficult to get fuel, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: I can remember during war when in the early grades bringing—going up to Melrose to the coal yard and getting bags, getting a big, huge 100-pound bag. The man would put it on a sled for me, and I dragged it down to my grandmother's house for them and off to another aunt. And to our own house I—I'd go back and forth—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you were—

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF: —bringing these.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. [Inaudible.] [Tape stops, restarts.]

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]