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Oral history interview with Winslow Ames,
1987 April 29-June 2

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Transcript

Interview

What follows is a DRAFT TRANSCRIPT, which may contain typographical errors or inaccuracies. The content of this page is subject to change upon editorial review.

**Interview with Winslow Ames
Conducted by Robert Brown
At Saunderstown, Rhode Island
1987 Apr. 29 and May 21**

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Winslow Ames on April 29 and May 21, 1987. The interview took place in Saunderstown, Rhode Island, and was conducted by Robert Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose. This is a rough transcription that may include typographical errors.

April 29, 1987

ROBERT BROWN: This is April 29, 1987, Saunderstown, Rhode Island, interview with Winslow Ames, Robert Brown, the interviewer.

I'd like to begin discussing some of your childhood and family background. And in particular, keeping in mind your interest, your eventual interest in art and decorative arts, and your writing and collecting. Can you talk a bit about your early childhood, and what was it like? Your parents, what was family life like?

WINSLOW AMES: It was a pleasant family life. I cannot remember when I did not have at least one sister. I eventually had two. We had a good many cousins on both sides of the family, only one of whom was older than I. That was the late Winthrop Johnson, who died in California less than a year ago at the age of 90 -- I think just over 90.

MR. BROWN: You were born in Chile?

MR. AMES: I was born in Chile.

MR. BROWN: How did that happen?

MR. AMES: My father, Edward Winslow Ames, had begun his productive career in the United States diplomatic service, to which he secured an appointment through friends of his father, who was a physician, but who had by chance vaccinated the entire island of Puerto Rico after the Spanish American War, and was therefore exposed to the Spanish language and so on. I don't know that this was the sole reason. At any rate, my father went into the diplomatic corps.

MR. BROWN: Had he had special training for that?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. He had some special training. He had about a year of special training right after he graduated from Harvard in 1896. I don't know just what it was. It doesn't really much matter. It was probably in Washington, for a guess.

At any rate, after some discussion with his father as to a choice of posts, he got the post of a very minor secretary of libation in what was then the capital of Brazil, Petropolis, which was upcountry, as I remember. Petropolis obviously named for somebody named Pietro, or Pedro -- Pietro, I guess. No, Pedro, of course.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. AMES: But anyway, this was a very hot spot, incidentally, being in the tropics -- are rather high. He afterwards was transferred to Buenos Aires, which was also hot, but largely because it was close to water level. (Laughter)

MR. BROWN: Did he prefer these tropical outposts?

MR. AMES: Well, yes. He had already learned to speak Spanish as a graduate student in some sort of diplomatic academy, which did not grant degrees, but to which Harvard recommended him. And he eventually learned to speak, though not so well as Spanish -- his Spanish was excellent. But he learned to speak some Portuguese. And even he once demonstrated to me the difference between a Spanish accent and a Portuguese accent, which was full of "owls" (phonetic). How shall I put it? Well, Juan -- Juan in Spanish became "Hu-wown" (phonetic) in Portuguese.

MR. BROWN: It sounds as though he was a -- was he a fairly delightful father? Wasn't he?

MR. AMES: Yes, he was. He was. He was a very tall, handsome man, who wore clothes very well and hence did very well in the diplomatic corps. The Ames family was not rich. My mother was -- his father, who was a physician, was entirely willing to see him outfitted in morning coat, you know the long, long frock coat, in which, by the way, he's standing at his wedding --

MR. BROWN: In the photograph, yes.

MR. AMES: The photograph. He was very skillful. He knew how -- he was courtly. He acquired languages quite decently. I don't think he was ever very good at French, but he could read French very easily indeed, at any rate.

MR. BROWN: He was a good man for the diplomatic corps.

MR. AMES: He was a good man for the purpose, yes.

MR. BROWN: And how then had he met your mother?

MR. AMES: He met my mother in Staten Island, New York, because his own father had said to him once, "Ted, you're a very good baseball player. But if you are a successful baseball player, your life is going to become too expensive for me. And I want you to play cricket instead." So he went and played cricket at Harvard. So he learned to play cricket. And this led him, when he had graduated from Harvard, to Staten Island Cricket Club in Staten Island, New York, where they still played cricket, because there were a great many British living on Staten Island, on the north shore, particularly.

And it was there that he met my mother, because the Staten Island Cricket Club was not more than 200 yard from 123 Bemet (phonetic) Avenue, West New Bratton, Staten Island, where my mother's family lived. Her mother was already long since widowed. But anyway --

MR. BROWN: And your mother? What had she been brought up to do?

MR. AMES: Well, she was the older daughter -- no, she was the only daughter between a man who grew up to be a very distinguished architect, William Templeton Johnson, who died only a year and a half ago in San Diego, California, at a great age, and another brother, who turned out to be no good whatever, I think probably because he was syphiliac. And in those days, you know, it was before Salversan (phonetic), I think. It meant that he was effectively damaged in the brain. And he, the second Oliver Templeton Johnson -- Oliver, that would be his father's name, my mother's father, of course, also -- he wound up not very satisfactory working.

In fact, my father, who was, of course, his brother-in-law, once employed him simply to do up packages for him when he was doing business over the name of America South of Us, selling North American, USA, technical books to people in Latin America who needed them, and importing books about Latin America -- you know, botany, geography, everything of the sort -- for North American readers.

MR. BROWN: Your grandfather Johnson, was he a merchant? Or what had he been in New York? They lived on Staten Island?

MR. AMES: Effectively, he had no employment. At that point, the Johnsons were very well-to-do. Behind you in the corner is a silhouette of William Johnson, who married one Mariah Templeton, of whom I also have the silhouette there. And that was where the name Templeton got into the family. Their son was named William Templeton Johnson, and that was the name, again, of an uncle who died only recently, who I've mentioned a few moments ago.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: Oliver Templeton Johnson, however, which I said, was sad, bad news.

MR. BROWN: Your grandfather was a gentleman, really?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, yes. Oliver Templeton Johnson was a gentleman who played cricket at the Staten Island Cricket Club, which is where my father eventually met my mother.

MR. BROWN: Did your courtship last very long?

MR. AMES: My parents' courtship?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: Well, it was rather long because my father was already appointed to Latin American posts. And they were married in -- sorry, I don't remember the date. I can look it up very readily. If you want, I'll get up --

MR. BROWN: No, that's all right.

(Simultaneous conversation)

MR. AMES: They were married in -- they must have been married late in 1905 or early in 1906, for I was born in July of 1907 in Chile.

MR. BROWN: He came up to Staten Island for the wedding?

MR. AMES: Yes, exactly. And there's a photograph of them in their wedding garments right behind you.

MR. BROWN: Then they went back to a post in Chile, you said?

MR. AMES: Yes. But that was not a diplomatic post. There was no money in the diplomatic service then. It was an occupation for the sons of the very rich. And of course, ambassadorships still go to the very rich. Most people have political influence through contributions to party funds. At any rate, they were married in 1905, and my father joined an outfit called the Companier de Maderes del Ato Parana (phonetic).

MR. BROWN: Which was to do what?

MR. AMES: Which was a lumber company. And I have many photographs taken in southern Chile in lumber camps and so on and so on. And that's why I was born, in Chile.

MR. BROWN: What are some of your early memories?

MR. AMES: I have no memories of Chile at all.

MR. BROWN: Because you left when you were a few days old?

MR. AMES: Oh, certainly, yes. Indeed, we went back into the family, slowly growing -- went back and forth from Latin America to New York or, occasionally, the neighborhood of Boston, at least twice in my fairly early childhood.

And let me see what I should -- about what date should I pick up at?

MR. BROWN: Well, no particular date, necessarily, but you were educated, you said earlier, first at Staten Island?

MR. AMES: Yes, it was Staten Island Academy, which is one of those old things that grew up out of a dames school, but it was an excellent school just the same. It was at St. George, Staten Island, which is close to where the ferryboats from Manhattan used to come to shore. And it was effectively -- I suppose it was about a six-year school. At any rate, it went up through high school.

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible) Did you get into New York very much at that time, do you recall?

MR. AMES: Not very much. Not very much then, except that we used to be taken on Saturday mornings to the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan, which meant a long ferryboat ride and a long elevated train ride up to, what 81st Street or thereabouts, I think.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: And that was most fascinating. You know, there were models of dinosaurs as well as stuffed real animals, and so on. That was interesting. I think that may have been the beginning of my first taste for museums.

MR. BROWN: Did it give you a taste for natural history?

MR. AMES: Not very much, really.

MR. BROWN: Were you acquiring, or as you look back, do you think you were acquiring even then something of

your taste for art?

MR. AMES: Yes, because the house in Staten Island had excellent furniture, some of which you are sitting on and I am looking at. It had a few pleasant old paintings. It had a reasonable number of family portraits, most of which have gone to the Johnson family, of course. And, well, it was a nice place.

MR. BROWN: Were you very curious little boy? I mean, were you curious about these things and asking your grandmother about them and so forth?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes, by all means. Yes. Yes, indeed. I used to travel to school in a sizable car, which belonged to the neighbors over on the other side of the cricket club. They took several kids to school in a large, one of those enormous ancient limousines, you know? And I used to like, not to sit backwards in the seats in the dining club, but to sit by the chauffeur so that I could see more. And that was most agreeable.

But Staten Island Academy, which was one of the old, really -- well, you know, the word "academy" then still meant really a school for dissenters. School was still, at anything except for a public school, which I guess was already called a public school, not in the British sense, but in the tax-supported American sense. But Staten Island Academy was a private school, an excellent school, well run, although with the occasional childish prank, you know, putting something in the inkwell that made it boil over for the person in front of you or beside you or behind you, et cetera, et cetera.

But I always came back from the academy, not in the Wilcox family's car, because that was needed to take Mr. Wilcox, on the car on the ferry to his office in Manhattan. And so on and so forth. But I came back on the trolley car. And there was still a trolley car, which paralleled, as a matter of fact, a sort of rapid transit, coal-burning locomotive train that made fewer stops. At any rate, I'd come back to 40 Bemet (phonetic) Avenue and walk up to my grandmother's house.

The house -- any house on the north shore of Staten Island, however, was becoming almost uninhabitable for what we would call nice people, or fussy people, because the smoke from the oil refineries in Bayonne, New Jersey, which was soft-colored smoke, came across the Kilvan Cove (phonetic), not less than a quarter of a mile away, and eventually it became absolutely not habitable for people who were in the least fussy about cleanliness.

The smuts of dirt would come down. And the various children in the neighborhood -- well, let's see. I guess after awhile, before we left that house, the older of my two sisters and I were put into coveralls. These were a sort of boy's suit made of blue jeans stuff, but they had red ornaments on the pockets and so on. These really covered us up so thoroughly that we were allowed to climb trees, although the trees also were covered with soot.

And we would shim out -- I would shim out, at any rate, you know, straddling a limb. And already I had learned the trick of borrowing a pair of flippers and flipping off any little growth that came up on the top side of the limb that got in my way. And I still use flippers very freely to deal with undergrowth and so on. Anyway, I would shim out on this long branch and finally drop off the end. And that was wonderful.

MR. BROWN: You were reasonably athletic and trim?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: But eventually your family moved away from that, from the old house?

MR. AMES: Yes, because it became so dirty as to be non-habitable.

MR. BROWN: Did you move into another part of Staten Island?

MR. AMES: The house was sold, and I don't remember moving to a different part of Staten Island at all. I don't think we did.

MR. BROWN: Well, you then about that time went away to school, didn't you?

MR. AMES: Yeah. Not yet. Not yet, because I didn't go to Andover until 1921. We were already out of Staten Island then by at least two years. I don't remember where we were. It doesn't matter very much. It's not an absolute blank. I might resurrect it with something, but never mind that.

MR. BROWN: Did your father want you to go to Andover? Had he gone there?

MR. AMES: Oh, by all means, yes, and his father and his father before him. There were three generations.

MR. BROWN: And this was a place to prepare for --

MR. AMES: For Harvard, presumably.

MR. BROWN: For Harvard. Did you go there feeling confident, well-prepared, with certain interests?

MR. AMES: I was very well prepared indeed at Andover, and anybody who goes to Andover is still very, very well prepared, believe you me.

MR. BROWN: It was a pretty strict place, then, wasn't it?

MR. AMES: It was a very strict place. It had grown up as an appendage to a congregational theological seminary. And indeed, the seminary, I believe, has disappeared by this time. But the buildings are still there, and the buildings on the top of the hill at Andover, especially the two oldest dormitories, Phillips Hall and Bartlett Hall, and Dick, were already there. You could not live, however, in those buildings until you had already been at school two years.

So when I went to Andover, my father's old school, as I said, I lived in a schoolmaster's house. It was a three-story wooden house down Phillips Street. And I've got a drawing of my own study, which I made myself, somewhere around. It's here. I can find it. At any rate, this was a double -- a two single-bedroom -- I suppose we could call it a suite, which sounds rather grand. A two-single-bedroom arrangement with a study, for two. And it's of the study desk that I have a drawing upstairs.

I did quite well at Andover for the first two years, studied hard. And as I think I may have mentioned, although it was a congregational school, the organist, who was a German, Dr. Kathiger (phonetic) had discovered Anglican chants. And he persuaded the headmaster, Alfred Earnest Sterns -- and he didn't have the middle name Earnest for nothing -- he persuaded Al Sterns that there was nothing that woke up boys who would probably have gotten up almost too late for breakfast and even missed it, in some case -- nothing to wake them up like the Vanite (phonetic). And at exactly quarter to seven -- excuse me, quarter to eight, after breakfast -- at exactly quarter to eight, Dr. Kathiger would start up on the Vanite, which we sang in English.

O come let us sing until the Lord.

And so on and so on. Meanwhile, up in a little balcony, there were various junior members of the faculty who were proctoring. They knew exactly what each boy's assigned seat was, and if he wasn't at his seat the minute before the stroke of the Vanite struck up, he got a demerit. And if you got three demerits, you were put on probation. But the demerits were canceled at the end of each term, and there were three terms, autumn, winter, and spring there. So that was some help.

MR. BROWN: Did you ever miss? Were you ever late?

MR. AMES: Oh, I was late, sure. But I never got bounced for having three demerits. Andover was already a very well-endowed school. And already, strangely enough, it had a few school fraternities, which have now been abolished. I don't know of any schools now where anything like the fraternities are allowed. And of course, some colleges have tossed them out. Sometimes they'll come back again, as they did at Brown, for instance, after having been abolished for years for those abuses. Whatever they were, I don't know.

At any rate, I did not belong to an Andover fraternity. Possibly, they were too expensive. I think some of them were really eating clubs, where you could have dinner, which sounds frightfully grown-up and college-like. But one thing about Andover that was taken for granted was that even if you were only 14, you were going to behave moderately grown up. And it was a hard school. You had to have so-and-so many prescribed courses. And that was it. You had to have Latin. I had one year of Greek, as a matter of fact, because I got advanced standing for something, I don't know what.

At any rate, my father was very anxious that I should go to Harvard, and I said I didn't want to go to Harvard. There were too many people going to Harvard from Andover.

MR. BROWN: And you wanted to be away from them or live life out on your own?

MR. AMES: I wanted to be somewhat independent. Also, as I've said, the Staten Island had already for some years before become non-habitable. And we were elsewhere; as I said, I'm not sure where. At any rate, I fell on Columbia. And I rather think that this was because, not only the connection with New York through the Johnson family, because William Johnson, who was -- who may have belonged -- though he was not in the first class at Columbia, which was 1754. He may have been, oh, second or third after that. But at any rate, he was a lawyer and a publisher of law reports, a vestryman at Trinity Church, and so on and so on. And I went to Columbia.

MR. BROWN: And how did you find it? Was it unexpected? Or was it what you expected? What did you know about it?

MR. AMES: I had a wonderful time at Columbia.

MR. BROWN: You did.

MR. AMES: It was very, very good for me. It was like Andover, unfortunately, farther along -- took it for granted that you were going to behave yourself. (Inaudible) this, I think, is crucial for some of the rest of the story. Columbia had for some time had college fraternities. These had been abolished for a certain length of time, and they were let back in. And this meant election eventually into a fraternity, the fraternity of Delta Si, whose buildings were always around the St. Anthony Hall. And this was also crucial for me.

MR. BROWN: Crucial that you get in, or once you were in?

MR. AMES: Once I was in.

MR. BROWN: How was it important?

MR. AMES: It became extremely important to me, and it's been important to me ever since. At any rate, I was already thinking about a career as a hanger-around of the arts. I don't mean as a career as an artist. I can draw pretty well, and so on and so on. But art history was the thing I wanted to deal with. And this meant actually that, on advice of my senior advisor, I went to take an M.A. at Harvard in the days of Edward Forbes and Paul Joseph Sachs.

MR. BROWN: Now, at Columbia, had you had art history? You had had some art history?

MR. AMES: I had had some art history, yes.

MR. BROWN: Do you recall the teachers?

MR. AMES: I don't remember early. The teacher that I remember -- we had required courses, you know, with (inaudible). But I remember nothing about those. The teacher I remember particularly at Columbia was a teacher of English composition, Henry K. Dick, D-i-c-k. I think his middle name was Kissam, K-i-s-s-a-m. Henry Dick was the best teacher I ever had. He had an extraordinary method. He was fat and rather lazy physically. But he had a very sharp mind. And he had a fascinating method.

He would assign a subject for English composition. The course met three days a week. And at the second session, after we had handed in something written and he had a chance to read it, he would then hand it back to you, graded. And he would then ask certain of the class to read aloud some passage that he had marked. Well, this was his interesting method:

He would then ask the entire class to take a piece of paper, and on his arm -- tablet armchair, you know, write a quick criticism of the paper he had just heard read, to be handed in. And the class would continue. We'd do it, no matter what. At the following session, three days a week, Henry K. Dick would hand back the papers. And he would ask individual students to read aloud the part that he had marked for them to read aloud. And then the entire class, except, of course, the person who had read aloud -- even he could do it if he wanted to -- was to write on the spot a quick criticism.

And this was an endless chain, because some of the criticisms would be read at the next session when there were new papers, and so on, and it was an extraordinary, extraordinary procedure. And, boy, did you work! You would work like a dog for Henry K. Dick, although obviously he was physically lazy. But what a brain! Really, the best teacher I ever had.

MR. BROWN: Were academics, then, a large part of your time there? Or was there quite an active social life as well at Columbia?

MR. AMES: There was a reasonably active social life. And although fraternities had been knocked out there for a good many years, they were reestablished, I'm not sure just when. It doesn't matter. At any rate, I was elected to a fraternity, which has meant a great deal to me ever since.

MR. BROWN: Which one?

MR. AMES: It's the fraternity of Delta Si, whose buildings are around the St. Anthony Hall, because it happened to be found on the day of St. Anthony, who was martyred in the year A.D. 17. He was martyred on the 17th of January, very early in the Christian Era. St. Anthony Hall at Columbia was a gaunt granite building about five-and-a-half stories tall, with a kitchen and a half-basement, which stuck up. So we had good light on the shady side of Riverside Drive, 434 Riverside Drive.

At any rate, I was elected to this outfit, and in due course initiated. Although in winter I lived at St. Anthony Hall,

in the spring and autumn I came into town with my father on a commuter's train from Chocquan, New York, into the old Grand Central Station. Would I get off at 116th?

MR. BROWN: 122nd.

MR. AMES: I think I would get off at 116th Street then.

MR. BROWN: And then you'd walk over to campus?

MR. AMES: Yes, walk over to Columbia.

MR. BROWN: So you lived at home in the spring and fall?

MR. AMES: Yes, spring and fall. At any rate, this was the real growing-up place. And the discovery of rowing was really the making of me physically. I had been rather a scared child, and except for adventures climbing trees, by no means athletic. But as it happened, in the same year that I was a freshman at Columbia, the Columbia Athletic Department had persuaded the Glendon family, of Irish origin, who had been crew coaches at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, to come at, I suppose, a very tempting salary, to Columbia.

And my fraternity brother, Edward Jawell (phonetic), he and I decided to go and, in a short time, learn pulling. We went up to the first meeting of these freshman "athletes," unquote, with the Glendon family, way up on the north end of Manhattan Island, where the boathouse was, the last stop before it crossed the Harlem River ship canal, the subway became an elevated there.

And we lined up, and the Glendon family took a hard look at us. And Old Man Glendon, who still had an Irish accent -- Old Man Glendon, who was skinny as a rail, would look us all over. And then he or his son Richard, who had been head coach at the Naval Academy, would then say, "You, go get an oar." And I would line up beside the shell, which some assistants had brought up alongside the floating dock. He said, "You, you sit there. You sit there. Is any of you left-handed?" And he said, "Not that I give a damn. But if you are left-handed and would prefer to row on the left-hand side of the boat," then he would explain which was port and which was starboard. "You'se can take the port oar."

(Laughter)

MR. AMES: At any rate, Edward Jawell and I wound up both rowing starboard. And Edward Jawell was very tall and was moved into the stroke position. I was number four. At any rate, this happened to be in the year when the suspension over several years of the life of college fraternities in Columbia was over. They were allowed back again. And there was a controlled rushing season for them. And -- are you running short of time now?

MR. BROWN: No.

MR. AMES: There was a controlled rushing season for them. Before this, you were not supposed to be spoken to by any fraternity men. They could just look at you. And of course, they made their little lists, and so on and so on. And they would somehow find out names. And you would be invited to lunch somewhere, on five days of the week for, I think, a whole week. It may have been more than a week. At any rate, you were expected to go to lunch with a different fraternity, and so on and so on, to be looked over. And when it was over -- as I said, this was a period of great reform. And Edward Jawell and I were very lucky to encounter this period of reform in fraternities, as well as to discover rowing together, because these were crucial to us -- to me, as you'll find later.

At any rate, we got installed. And we rowed up into cold weather. In winter, we rowed on rowing machines in a swimming pool in the basement of one of the Columbia buildings at about 118th Street somewhere. And then in spring, as soon as practical, as soon as the ice was off, we were back again rowing outdoors.

Well, to skip a bit. After having done really very decently, if I may say so, at Columbia, I graduated in three-and-a-half years. And in the spring of junior year, that is, before my final term as a senior, the lightweight crew went to a large race at a school called River or Creek in Philadelphia at the Henley (phonetic) distance. This was on the, I think, 28th of May --

MR. BROWN: Would that be about '28?

MR. AMES: 1928, exactly. We won our race, which was the last race of the season, and while we were taking showers and getting into our street clothes, even before that, a young man named William George Gerhard -- family named spelled G-e-r-h-a-r-d -- who belonged also to St. Anthony Hall, came walking down the lower boathouses looking for fraternity brothers. And he found Edward (inaudible) and myself. And he said, "Have you got any time? Are you rushing back to New York?" We said no. He said, "Come spend the weekend at our house in Overbrook."

So we spent quite a long weekend in Overbrook with the Gerhard family, whose daughter Anna -- I won't say absolutely that I became enamored of her at once. But she was someone I wanted to see again. And to skip the courtship and so on, which was somewhat interrupted by my taking the masters degree at Harvard -- it wasn't a courtship until I was well into the masters degree period. We were married at St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia, on the 27th of June -- what year was it?

MR. BROWN: 1931?

MR. AMES: 1931, yes. And I was extraordinarily lucky to have a job all through the famous Depression.

MR. BROWN: You had mentioned a little earlier you wanted when you left Columbia, which was in '29, you wanted to be, as you called it, a hanger-on in the arts?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: What had stimulated that interest?

MR. AMES: That was primarily a family interest. My mother had gone to art school. She was quite a good draftsman. I don't know if she ever painted. But she had friends who painted, and her old friend Anna Irving continued to paint until a great old age.

MR. BROWN: Would you have gone and looked at exhibitions when you were at Columbia?

MR. AMES: Yes. I loved to go to exhibitions, and indeed we had one degrading trick. In those days, you could travel down on top of a bus, well, inside a bus. The double-decker buses were there already. You could travel down on a double-decker bus on a student's fare, you know, cheap. Or maybe it was a nickel instead of a dime, to all kinds of groups. And one group, I guess it came down the West Side of Central Park going south. But it came up Fifth Avenue going uptown. And that was where Rocky Demillan (phonetic) and I frequently, on instructions from the teachers of history of art, would go to look at exhibitions.

MR. BROWN: Rocky Demillan was a classmate of yours?

MR. AMES: (Inaudible) Demillan, yes. He's now dead.

MR. BROWN: And he became an architect?

MR. AMES: He became an architect and a Fellow with the American Institute of Architects.

MR. BROWN: He was a classmate of yours?

MR. AMES: He was a classmate of mine.

MR. BROWN: I have to turn this over.

(End of tape 1, side A)

MR. BROWN: And Rocky (inaudible)?

MR. AMES: Rocky and I enjoyed going to exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum and elsewhere. And we discovered that you could hire out a wheelchair, which you could propel yourself, you know, by just holding onto the outside of the wheels. And it was convenient to sit there because you could take notes, or even make quick drawings for the pictures that you saw. And once in awhile, somebody would look askance and say, "Oh, those poor young cripples."

(Laughter)

MR. AMES: And once in awhile, you'd tease them by suddenly getting up. This was fun. Anyway, we'd go back and forth on the bus.

MR. BROWN: But do you recall things that you particularly liked to see at the Metropolitan?

MR. AMES: I had already as a youth grown up in the Natural History Museum on Saturdays.

MR. BROWN: Yes, you mentioned that.

MR. AMES: But that lost its charm. I mean, artificial dinosaurs were not much fun.

MR. BROWN: But wasn't it at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that --

MR. AMES: Well, it was all kinds. I loved the Egyptian material first. But that began to pall. And I began to be much fonder of the paintings. And I don't know. I think it was there that I began drawing, because I simply would draw the rapid outlines of the painting to help me remember it. And that was where I got going on that. I'm nobody's best draftsman, but I've occasionally drawn since then. And I love to draw with a brush on a good piece of paper. I'll show you some later.

At any rate, where shall I go on from here?

MR. BROWN: Well, you liked the Metropolitan. Do you remember going to any particular art dealers to look at what they had? How about new things?

MR. AMES: We used to occasionally look at art dealers' exhibitions. The form of Carlotti (phonetic) I think was not yet established in New York, but it was very soon after that.

MR. BROWN: Did you ever go to look at exhibitions of contemporary work?

MR. AMES: Yes, absolutely. We went to everything. You could go to dealers' exhibitions effectively free of charge. And I think it's quite possible that a dealer in furniture, in old furniture, was somebody that I went to fairly early. I can't remember the name of the firm. It changed its name. I'll have to come back to it later. At any rate --

MR. BROWN: Even at Columbia, then, you developed interests?

MR. AMES: Yes. At any rate, I was very lucky, as I've said, to be married at the beginning of Depression and to have a job all through Depression.

MR. BROWN: But that was following your time at Harvard?

MR. AMES: That was following my taking the masters degree at Harvard.

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible)

MR. AMES: Getting a job would be the recommendation of Paul Sachs and Edward Forbes.

MR. BROWN: Was it difficult gaining admittance to Harvard to the masters program?

MR. AMES: I really don't remember. I don't think I had any difficulty whatever.

MR. BROWN: How large were the classes of graduate students? Or were they separate classes?

MR. AMES: They were separate. They were -- obviously, there were some classes in drawing. And I guess painting, although I never took any painting course. It was mostly art history. At any rate, I took the masters degree.

MR. BROWN: Were there certain teachers that you were particularly influenced by, would you say? Or were any of them --

MR. AMES: Well, obviously, Forbes and Sachs were really terrific at Harvard. They were tremendous. They were tremendous teachers. Edward Forbes was an old Yankee who still talked with an old Boston accent. And here he was teamed up with a number of the banking house of Goldman Sachs. And they got along like a house afire. But it was Paul Sachs who found people jobs and who was extremely knowing, that keen sort of Sachs banking skill, about putting somebody in the right place for him. And it was he who recommended me to the developing Lyman Allyn Museum.

MR. BROWN: In New London?

MR. AMES: In New London.

MR. BROWN: Did you know anything about it before then?

MR. AMES: I knew absolutely nothing about it, except, of course, that I had forebears in New London.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: But that had been years and years and years and years before. The building was already under construction when I was (inaudible). Oddly enough, the same architect who was designing the building was designing the Addison Gallery of American Art at Andover, which, of course, didn't exist when I was at Andover. But it does now. And the newly appointed director of the Addison Gallery and the newly appointed director of the

Lyman Allyn Museum used to consult each other because the same architect, we had a terrible time with him because the architect was fussy. And he loved to have -- he liked to have the usual good old tripartite division of the world. Wainscot wall, cove ceiling, and so on and so on, the Italian classical sort of palace style.

And both of us said to him, "Look, you know, this is not going to be a picture gallery only, because both of us were interested in things that go into glass cases. And you can't put a glass case up against the wall with a large molding sticking into the back. So for gosh sakes, take off the molding at the top and reduce the whole thing to a very shallow panel arrangement no higher than this."

MR. BROWN: No higher than a few feet high.

MR. AMES: No higher than perhaps 28 inches high. And no projection at the top. Just have it sticking out more than a thumb's width. And happily, they were able to persuade him to do that. And that's why the Lyman Allyn was in, and --

MR. BROWN: The Addison.

MR. AMES: And the Addison Gallery have almost precisely the same -- I won't say the same layout, but the same wall treatment.

MR. BROWN: What about lighting? Did you want natural lighting?

MR. AMES: Well, we wanted natural lighting as much as possible. And that meant skylights.

MR. BROWN: Was there a collection of some size already at New London?

MR. AMES: Practically nothing. Practically nothing.

MR. BROWN: Well, how did it come about? Did someone give you some things, make them available?

MR. AMES: A woman named Harriet Upson -- that was her maiden name -- Harriet Upson Allyn had suddenly -- I don't know who advised her. I think it was a lawyer and a banker at Hartford had simply said, "Well, here you are. Here's a good idea."

MR. BROWN: A museum for the city of New London.

MR. AMES: Yes. There isn't any there. It's an old city. (Inaudible) She had, of course, she had lived in New London in a granite house, which we got the house to live in, very comfortably indeed. It's practically accrued with granite, enormous. And when we moved into it, it had -- still had a row of privies, two for the family and three for the help, about 50 feet back of the house and down a slope.

MR. BROWN: (Laughter)

MR. AMES: And we had very, very unmodern plumbing. And we had a busy, wonderful time inducing the trustees of the Allyn estate to install proper plumbing. At any rate, it was a lovely house to live in.

MR. BROWN: But you came there in 1930?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Before you were married?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: And did the trustees, did they give you carte blanche? I mean, did they say, "Within the limit of the funds we have?"

MR. AMES: Exactly, yes, yes. And that was why Trolley Soller (phonetic) and I were able to diddle with the (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: Sure. Trolley being (inaudible).

MR. AMES: Yes, exactly.

MR. BROWN: So when it came to selecting works of art, were you going to borrow them or ask for gifts?

MR. AMES: There was absolutely nothing to begin with, nothing at all.

MR. BROWN: Did you begin laying out programs for exhibitions?

MR. AMES: Yes, I did. I was already interested in drawings. I was interested in old furniture. And the funds were not enormous, but they were pretty darn good. The trustee bank at Hartford managed its affairs very well, so that even during the Depression, although there was a slight lowering of the salaries, we didn't have to interrupt the gradual acquisition of good things.

And I'll never forget the first -- my purchase at auction of the first drawing that was bought, not for me, but for the museum.

MR. BROWN: Can you describe that?

MR. AMES: Yes, indeed. It was a light Angre (phonetic) (phonetic), very light. Never mind the subject, perfectly good drawing. I bought it at auction.

MR. BROWN: Was that in New York?

MR. AMES: In New York. I saw the auction was coming up, and I was told by the trustee in the Hartford, "You can have \$1000 if you want to buy that drawing." Imagine buying an Angre for \$1000. At any rate, this was Depression, remember. So the bidding went up to \$1000. And the auctioneer's hammer was about to descend, and I thought, "Gee, I could put 50 bucks into this myself." And I said, "And 50." And he said, "Sold." It's still there.

MR. BROWN: What did the trustee say?

MR. AMES: The trustee said, "Thanks very much."

(Laughter)

MR. AMES: And I think perhaps this increased their confidence in the young man.

MR. BROWN: Because after all, you were very young.

MR. AMES: I was very young indeed.

MR. BROWN: You began with drawings and with early furniture?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: I don't suppose you could persuade an old family to --

MR. AMES: Certainly, certainly. And there was a dealer up north of New London in (inaudible) City, Connecticut, with whom I won't say I did business constantly. We did -- we knew each other. We trusted each other. I never bought much from him, but I'll show you where there's something we did buy from him by extraordinary accident, years later.

MR. BROWN: Did you develop a program of making the museum better known to the public?

MR. AMES: I have no skill in this way at all. I had --

MR. BROWN: Did you give lectures or anything like that?

MR. AMES: Yes, there were lectures, certainly. And the connection with Connecticut College was extremely useful, because the students came. The students came to look and to draw and so on and so on. And eventually, I taught one course at Connecticut College, which was just up the hill.

And this reminds me, if I may interject something, of a story. The first hurricane that I remember was a terrific hurricane that struck us, you know, just like this. (Inaudible) Anyway, that's easy enough to find out.

MR. BROWN: The worst one was 1938, the worst one of that time.

MR. AMES: Yes, well, I guess this was the '38 hurricane. At any rate, I also taught one course at Connecticut College, which was opening day at the fall term. And I was just beginning to talk to the class when I saw people looking. And I turned around and looked, and here was the greenhouse, belonged to the botany department, which was simply exploding. The grass flew into the air. And I thought, "Oh, my god, what's going to happen to the glass roof on the Lyman Allyn Museum 100 yards down the hill?"

So obviously, the class was to be dismissed and get under shelter. Meanwhile, the enormous terra cotta

smokestack on the Connecticut College heating plant had fallen in pieces. And I went out downhill as fast as I could. I found I could not walk against the wind, besting the wind, it was so strong. I found if I sidestepped downhill sideways, I presented only about half as much obstacle to the wind.

MR. BROWN: (Laughter)

MR. AMES: I got down to the museum, found that the sensible, middle-aged Scotch drawing (phonetic) superintendent and the two guards had most intelligently taken everything -- taken the table pieces that had, you know, pieces of silver and so forth and so on -- out on the floor. They had put them in under shelter at the coved ceilings, which went up to the flat glass roof. And that was a fascinating time. We got -- the dress company in Hartford had had -- they had done -- the Hartford insurance company had gotten some very, very good insurance. And the glass, the broken glass was replaced in remarkably good time.

MR. BROWN: Through the 1930s, you were continuing your acquisitions. Now, you're also continuing, or beginning perhaps, as a collector on your own.

MR. AMES: Yes. I've forgotten where I began.

MR. BROWN: Had you begun even as a young man in New York at Columbia?

MR. AMES: I had gone constantly to dealers shows, as well as to museums. And I had begun drawing. I'd begun - I had not yet begun drawing with a brush. I did rather fussy, finicky little pencil, soft-pencil drawings on middle-sized sheets of paper. I'm drawing a bigger one now. I'll show you a drawing of mine later on a huge sheet of paper.

MR. BROWN: You'd have to know a few artists in New York, didn't you, from the early 1930s?

MR. AMES: A few. Not a lot.

MR. BROWN: You must have known them to put on a show at some point.

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, but that was later. That was later. I became interested (inaudible) my shows. But it was not until after I got to Columbia.

(Simultaneous conversation)

MR. AMES: Excuse me, after I got to New London, that I was interested in (inaudible) my shows. The reason for it was this. Lincoln Christine (phonetic), who had been a graduate student at Harvard, and I were friendly. And I had met, I've forgotten how, Edward Mortimer Myers Warburg (phonetic). How did I meet him? I don't remember. I guess that would have been at Harvard also. At any rate, they were already supported effectively Gaston Lachaise (phonetic).

MR. BROWN: The two of them were?

MR. AMES: Yes, the two of them were. Lincoln Christine, though, he was the grandson of the great department store --

MR. BROWN: Filene's.

MR. AMES: Filene's. And Wilburgs, of course, have great international bankers. And they both had plenty of money, but even they ran out of money once in awhile, especially because Madame Lachaise (phonetic) was very demanding, a Lachaise. And one day they telephoned me and said, "Winslow, we don't have any money today." I said, "How much?" And they said, "We've run out of money for the time being, because Madame Lachaise is so demanding. But we've got to pay a founding (phonetic) bill for a great bronze about seven-and-a-half feet tall, but Lachaise must have cash." And I said, "How much do you need?" And they named a sum. And I said, "Sold."

And that began the enthusiasm with Lachaise and with the standing woman. I'll show you later an ex-post facto watercolor of New London, with the -- taken from a house in New London, looking towards the museum, with the Lachaise statue standing on a little stone, block of stone on the corner of the stone wall.

MR. BROWN: I expect that would have caused some comment?

MR. AMES: Oh, brother! The Coast Guard Academy, a very good school, though not as big as Annapolis, but as good, I should think, was across the road, across the old Norwich Road from the museum. And occasionally, the Coast Guard Academy cadets would come over and decorate the Lachaise statue, which was nicknamed Bessie, with any (inaudible) corset or oversized brassier that they could snatch.

MR. BROWN: (Laughter)

MR. AMES: And, you know, every knock was a boost. It was just wonderful.

(Laughter)

MR. AMES: Eventually, of course, Lachaise began to be tolerable to a larger number of the public. And at least once, this great thing was demanded for a loan exhibition somewhere southwards; I've forgotten where. At any rate, I traveled there and back. And by this time, there had been so many additional casts of the standing woman that, heavens, it's even been reduced. I owned very briefly -- or we owned very briefly ourselves a reduced version, simply of the torso cut off at the neck and below the hips of the standing woman, which I gave to the museum in Springfield, Missouri, of which I was briefly director, three years.

MR. BROWN: Well, did you get to know Lachaise at all?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, yes. He was a very silent man. He didn't care whether he spoke French or English, but he was terribly silent. And he didn't like to be bothered when he was slapping clay together, but he didn't mind if you looked. And well, he was a great man, a very great man, desperately shocking, to be easily scandalized because of his exaggerations of the female physique. By this time, of course, he's completely tolerable.

MR. BROWN: But you didn't get to know him apart from going to the studio?

MR. AMES: No, very briefly. He didn't live very long. I've forgotten (inaudible) of his death.

MR. BROWN: 1935?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, exactly. Yes, that was long before the event came out.

MR. BROWN: You kept up your friendship with Lincoln Christie at that time?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes, by all means.

MR. BROWN: Did you share many of his interests like the ballet?

MR. AMES: Well, I was interested briefly in the ballet, and there was even a time when I thought, "Gee, I've got to learn this." But it wasn't for me. No, it's too demanding. I was already, in a sense, an athlete as an oarsman. But, no. Dancing was not for me.

MR. BROWN: What was Christie like at that time, as you recall?

MR. AMES: Well, you know, he was immensely tall, extremely handsome. And Eddie Warburg was a little round, fat Warburg. And they were quite a remarkable team. But they did all sorts of useful things together.

And that reminds me of something I had completely forgotten. One day -- this is aside from the day when they telephoned and said, "Have you got any money?" One day, years and years later, I was walking up Fifth Avenue, when you walk up on the way to Madison Avenue dealers and auction rooms and so on and so on. And here was the Warburgs' car, which was a Town Car, with your chauffeur outside, you know, in the rain. He had this little canvas roof over him when it rained. But, you know, it was like an old-fashioned barouche, question (phonetic) barouche.

And he said, "You're just in time, you're just in time. We're going over to Brooklyn. And come and ride with us. We'll see what we can see."

MR. BROWN: Without saying anything more?

MR. AMES: Without saying anything more. And the ride turned out -- this has nothing to do with works of art or art history. (Laughter) But I said, "Whereabouts are we going in Brooklyn?" And Eddie whispered to me, he said, "Mother is a pile driver." His mother suffered from piles.

MR. BROWN: Oh my.

(Laughter)

MR. AMES: So that was better than sitting at the doctors, the pile drivers. Eddie and I sat and talked outside. This has nothing to do with anything, but this was sort of the thing you came to get.

MR. BROWN: Those were the years when also, in Hartford, that there was a great deal happening at the (inaudible).

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, yes, of course. Chick Austin (phonetic) --

MR. BROWN: Did you get to know him?

MR. AMES: Oh, very well indeed, yes. Chick was extremely demanding. He was both severe and -- I don't know how to put it. He was more conscious of (inaudible) than anybody I ever knew in the museum profession. He had an extraordinary eye. He had an extraordinary eye in the auction room. He had, I think, a good deal of purchasing funds in Hartford. And he did extraordinarily well. He also loved to give parties. He gave parties himself. He had at least a rich mother; I don't know about the father. I think the father had already died by the time I knew her.

MR. BROWN: He built a grand --

MR. AMES: He built an extraordinary house, absolutely amazing house, the first modern house which was affected by the Baroque. And Austin had loads of money, and he bought extremely, extremely well for himself. I suppose he's been dead for a good many years, and I suppose practically everything he had went to the museum in Hartford, which was a strange, strange building. But it turned out rather well.

It had certain aspects of the Fount (phonetic) museum, the later building of the Fount Museum, about it. But there's nothing like the old Fount, and the new Fount with the huge additions, I think even though they owe something to Hartford.

MR. BROWN: You got to know him, then, quite well?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Was he hard to get along with?

MR. AMES: Immensely difficult. He was a spoiled child. He was a child of aged parents, the only child, I think, terribly spoiled, very demanding, really, really quite snotty. If he went to visit Dia's (phonetic), for instance, and they showed him anything that didn't suit him, "Take it away! Take it away!" Spoiled-child stuff.

I think it's conceivable that he was homosexual or kept some homosexual company. I don't know. It doesn't matter. It's none of my business anyway. But I've always felt reasonably sure that that was the case.

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible) premieres and exhibitions?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes. Those were marvelous parties.

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible)

MR. AMES: Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes. The four (inaudible) in three acts, which of course was, I think, quite possibly commissioned for that spot. And that was a party so exhaustingly long that my wife and I just quit it. We went -- we just went back to our hotel.

MR. BROWN: You had a growing family by then? Your daughters were born?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes. Yes.

MR. BROWN: You would have been occasionally as a lecturer to various people, other art historians, or people, museum figures?

MR. AMES: Oh yes, oh yes. Sure. I'd occasionally -- I've been on the lecture circuit myself, not very often. I'm getting a little bit --

MR. BROWN: Well, by the late 1930s, was your collection beginning to get -- at the Lyman Allyn getting to be fairly considerable?

MR. AMES: Yes. Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed. We got interested in not only New London County furniture, which Edwin Mayhew, the present director, has really built up tremendously. He's discovered what the earmarks of New London County furniture was. And that's been very successful indeed.

MR. BROWN: And you did something with that?

MR. AMES: No. I only knew a few dealers. I did know a dealer in (inaudible) City, and there was a dealer in (inaudible) City who brought us, suddenly, several years ago, these highboys in the dining room, which I'll show you. He just came and rang the doorbell one day and said, "We've got something in the trunk outside that looks

like what you like."

MR. BROWN: So various dealers even then (inaudible).

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Were you interested at all in early American paintings? Were you able to -- in the 1930s, were you able to get them for the museum?

MR. AMES: Not a great deal, not a great deal. It was like are to be bequeathed. But otherwise --

MR. BROWN: What about contemporary painting?

MR. AMES: Not very much. That was hard to -- outside of the Museum of Modern Art, to get (inaudible). It really was.

MR. BROWN: Have you ever tried (inaudible) particularly?

MR. AMES: No, no. They weren't particularly keen on it.

MR. BROWN: Your board of trustees, then, was rather conservative?

MR. AMES: Yes. Effectively, there was no board of trustees in New London. The trustee was the bank in Hartford. And it was -- our business was done by one man, and he was a very good man, (inaudible) Dufry (phonetic). Once in a long while, he would say, "You know, I don't like that very much, but I guess Ames knows what he's doing."

MR. BROWN: (Laughter)

MR. AMES: And I don't believe anything would get that collection.

MR. BROWN: What did you spend most of your time doing as director? Selecting things?

MR. AMES: Building up the library and building up lantern (phonetic) slides. That was the most important thing of all because Connecticut College didn't have any lantern slides at all.

MR. BROWN: Oh, I see. And so you were in effect --

(Simultaneous conversation)

MR. AMES: Connecticut College -- no, I was teaching a lantern course at the college most of the time (inaudible). But you would go to that lantern slides like crazy. And at that time, of course, you've got the old four-and-a-quarter by four lantern slides, these huge things, instead of the new ones like this. And they required a great deal of storage space. And we changed the (inaudible) and got an elegant library in the Lyman Allyn Museum with beautiful oak bookcases all around the walls. We took out the two lower floors, and all along the rooms we made drawers, one room, for lantern slides, the big kind.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: And I don't know whether they're being replaced with new ones or not, two by one-and-three-quarters, which are now used. But I should think it would be sensible to do so.

MR. BROWN: What about your -- they did have some connection with the college?

MR. AMES: They were practically adjoining.

MR. BROWN: But there was no formal connection?

MR. AMES: There was no formal connection, and there isn't any anyway now. But I think Edward Mayhew, the present director -- I don't know whether he teaches a course at Connecticut College; he may very well do so. Anyway, he's (inaudible) very intelligently. And as I said, he's still got the New London County furniture, and he's discovered the earmarks of New London County furniture.

MR. BROWN: Was your public largely the girls from the college?

MR. AMES: Very largely, yes. They were already -- they were old-timers in New London, you know, sort of old settled families, shipping families, merchant families, and so on.

MR. BROWN: And they would come and visit?

MR. AMES: Oh yes, certainly, certainly. They were very pleasant people. It was a nice, sort of old-fashioned social life. But there was one family in particular whom we doted on. They were old, New London people who appreciated the fact that I had some New London ancestry, Winthrops. And the Bunner (phonetic) family, particularly, were a really very diverting family.

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible)

MR. AMES: Yes. The mother of H.C. Bunner, the author who wrote short stories, was a marvelous old lady. She had an unmarried sister living with her. They had very long, very slow dinners with an old-fashioned Irish maid, of the kind that reminded me so precisely of my grandmother's Irish maids. At any rate, they were really the best friends not of our age in New London that we had. And Lawrence Minor (phonetic), old Lawrence Minor, a nice, quaint -- really a quaint old man. "Quaint" is the only word you can think of for him. Lawrence Waterman Minor lived with them in winter in New London. But in summer, he lived in his own ramshackle farmhouse on the other side of the Thames (phonetic) River in Gales Ferry (phonetic). And Larry Minor -- he never had much money. As I say, he was a bank clerk for awhile. But he came from an old Yankee family, and he saved money. And I've forgotten whether he actually bequeathed any money to the museum. But at any rate, there's a purchasing fund named the Lawrence Waterman Minor Purchasing Fund there still.

MR. BROWN: In New London, you accomplished quite a lot by way of building up, beginning a museum.

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. It really was a fascinating job.

MR. BROWN: And you'd have loan exhibitions at times.

MR. AMES: We had loan exhibitions, yes.

MR. BROWN: Where could you borrow from, from individuals or from other museums?

MR. AMES: From other museums, from anybody and everybody. There are a few remaining catalogs of loan exhibitions, and I'm not sure that I have any at all, but I may in all that paper upstairs.

MR. BROWN: The American Federation of Arts?

MR. AMES: Yes, mostly (inaudible) circulating shows.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: They are still the main support of any young museum, and God knows we now have hundreds and hundreds of young museums all over the country.

MR. BROWN: You, too, would give lectures, though? Give lectures as well?

MR. AMES: I occasionally gave exhibition lectures, you know, just gallery talks. And I believe, as I said, teach one course at Connecticut College.

MR. BROWN: Did you enjoy giving lectures or (inaudible) college lecture, going out, going on the road?

MR. AMES: I've always had a good time doing this. I've always enjoyed it hugely.

MR. BROWN: What sort of things would you talk about in the â€¢30s? Talk about the museum, the Lyman Allyn Museum?

MR. AMES: Oh, no. We talked -- no. Almost invariably, what was modern and what those audiences were expecting to be shocked by.

MR. BROWN: Oh, so you would talk about contemporary work?

MR. AMES: Exactly, yes.

MR. BROWN: Avant garde.

MR. AMES: Yes. In other words, this was a missionary job.

MR. BROWN: As a museum director at that time?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Had Sachs indicated that you people should be, in a sense, missionaries, if not for modern art, at least for high culture?

MR. AMES: He certainly did. He certainly did. And just as he and Forbes and Sachs could not have been more different, except in their interests -- took different sides of things. Sachs was always keen on, how do you get things? How do you raise money, and so forth. And Forbes, who was a moderately good painter himself, was interested primarily in facteur (phonetic), what the French call facteur -- I mean, how well is it done physically?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, um-hm. Well, you were writing and publishing a bit in the â❖❖30s, quite a bit?

MR. AMES: Yes. I was beginning to write articles. But it was not until a long time after that I became -- well, I did have an early interest in drawings, as I mentioned in connection with buying a late Angre for a museum.

MR. BROWN: I'm looking at a list of earlier articles that you wrote on Gaston Lachaise for Primasis (phonetic) in March of 1936.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Was that a heavily researched piece?

MR. AMES: You couldn't do any research except talking to Madame Lachaise and looking at the sculpture. There was effectively no publication before that. Or I don't mean there weren't articles, but --

MR. BROWN: So you had to depend on her. Was she sort of the self-proclaimed intermediary and agent?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. She was a very difficult person.

MR. BROWN: Was she?

MR. AMES: Very jealous of Lachaise's reputation, which is absolutely okay, but she was difficult herself. She was almost thorny, except for being a person of some bulk.

MR. BROWN: (Laughter) You also wrote -- well, you wrote several times on Lachaise.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: You wrote on woodcuts (inaudible) woodcuts for Primasis the following year, in '37.

MR. AMES: Yes. I got interested in (inaudible) woodcuts because they were cheap. You know, you couldn't print an awfully big edition from any woodblock. They wore out. It was technically difficult to do woodblock printing of more than one color, you know. You had to run it through the press again. And so on and so on. And new inking and everything. But I liked them. They had not become popular again. But I bought a good many. I don't think I ever spent more than \$75 for a (inaudible) woodcut in those days. And I eventually -- I have -- I think I have only two left because I shifted into drawings under Sachs' influence.

MR. BROWN: Sachs continued to influence you? I mean, directly -- you would go see him once in awhile?

MR. AMES: Oh, once in a terribly long while, yes.

MR. BROWN: But you already --

MR. AMES: I was here, or later I was in Missouri.

MR. BROWN: Yes. In the â❖❖30s, you were already writing about drawing.

MR. AMES: Yes, oh, yes. I was publishing fairly often.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: When did I -- I'm trying to remember when I began doing the translation of Joseph Mater (phonetic)? Well, it's easy enough to look in my files.

MR. BROWN: That's after the â❖❖30s?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes, that's after the â❖❖30s.

(Simultaneous conversation)

MR. BROWN: In the 1930s themselves, you're beginning to collect drawings, you've already mentioned, for the museum.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: And also, for yourself?

MR. AMES: Yes, just a few.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: Just a few. Not many.

(End of tape 1, side B)

MR. BROWN: Taping of the interviews of, covering a portion of the 1930s and Mr. Ames's service during World War II.

We talked already about some of your early writings. Among the first in 1936 was an article on Gaston Lachaise for *Primasis* in March 1936. How did that come about? Is this just a year or two after you met Lachaise? Of course, he died in 1935.

MR. AMES: Yes. Yes. The reason was this: I have taken my bachelor's degree in Columbia in seven terms instead of the usual eight, and moved on to Harvard. I lived, as a matter of fact, in Cambridge; in other words, MIT building of my Columbia College fraternity, which was a very pleasant spot on the Cambridge side of the river.

MR. BROWN: The Charles River?

MR. AMES: The Charles River, looking out over the water. I commuted, by the way, on a streetcar, which you could do in those days from the corner of the bridge (inaudible) on the trolley to Harvard Square, where I studied at the (inaudible) museum. And it was there that I fell in with two Harvard undergraduates and graduates -- in other words, Edward Mortimer Myers Warburg and Lincoln Christie, who were already extremely interested in the arts, and both belonging to extremely prosperous families.

But even they could not stand the rapacity of Madame Lachaise, who always, always, always wanted more money out of (inaudible), whether she dressed superbly or what. At any rate, Lachaise never had enough money. And as a result, once in a long while, even a Warburg and a Christie were a little bit broke.

Anyway, they telephoned me one day and said, "Winslow, have you got any money today?"

(Laughter)

MR. AMES: I said, "How much money are you talking about?" Well, they said, "If we don't pay the foundry bill for the *Standing Woman*" -- the remaining sum due was \$1000 -- "they're going to send it back to the foundry and melt it down. Have you got any money today?" So I said, "Wait a minute, and I'll consult with Anna."

MR. BROWN: Your wife.

MR. AMES: Yes. And I consulted my wife, and she said, "Well, we can manage that." So we sent him the thousand dollars, and became the complete owners, lock, stock, and barrel, of the Lachaise. It cost something to truck it up to New York. And if I'm not mistaken, I hired a truck, because I had been a truck driver in France before, when I was in the service committee. And incidentally, I still own a license, a French driving license, good for (inaudible) heavyweight vehicles.

MR. BROWN: So you trucked the Lachaise up on your -- you were then living by then in New London, weren't you?

MR. AMES: New London, yes. We trucked the thing up. And for not very much money, I had a little granite pedestal made for it, on which the oblong base would fit very neatly, and installed it on the stone wall on the house side of the little valley between the house and the museum in New London. The house (inaudible) cubicle stone house. I don't know whether it was hewn or (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes. There it is to celebrate, the object of some attention.

MR. AMES: Great attention. I mean, gracious. I mean, when you think of the extraordinary exaggerations in either direction of Lachaise's habit of work, you can see how dismayed various people would be. The cadets from the Coast Guard Academy would occasionally manufacture an oversized brassier and decorate the thing

with it. I figured every knock -- well, we both figured every knock was a boost.

MR. BROWN: (Laughter)

MR. AMES: And by the way, I have upstairs a watercolor made long after the fact, but quite correct, showing roughly from the house the Lachaise's statue in its first position on a fairly decently cut square of granite on the corner of a stone (inaudible). You'll have to look at it later.

MR. BROWN: You then -- what led you to do this article for Primasis on Gaston Lachaise?

MR. AMES: On Gaston Lachaise?

MR. BROWN: Had he not been written about very much?

MR. AMES: Oh, I think he had been written about by someone. He probably created a scandal or two with his extraordinary physiques. I'm not sure about that.

MR. BROWN: What did you attempt to set out in your article? Just generally to appoint --

MR. AMES: Simply that he was really in the great tradition of sculpture, which is not without its vagaries, but that his own interest in exaggerations of the female anatomy, which he greatly admired, had led people to think he was really rather terrible. Well, of course, that's over.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Yes. By the way, back to the time you were at Harvard, were you fairly aware of the activities of Christie and Warburg in the undergraduate society, or the cloth, or whatever, of contemporary art, the Harvard (inaudible)?

MR. AMES: Yes. Yes, of course.

MR. BROWN: Can you recall that a bit?

MR. AMES: That's where I met --

MR. BROWN: Where was that? Where did they show or exhibit their things?

MR. AMES: That I don't remember. I'm terribly sorry.

MR. BROWN: Do you recall what kinds of things they exhibited?

MR. AMES: Well, they were mostly very small, and they were (inaudible) drawings. I still have a couple of Lachaise's drawings. They should be upstairs.

MR. BROWN: But mostly avant garde at the time?

MR. AMES: Well, certainly, because I think that outfit was called the Society -- the Harvard Society for (inaudible) or something of the sort.

MR. BROWN: And were there a good many European things as well as American?

MR. AMES: By all means, yes.

MR. BROWN: Mostly drawings, though, wasn't it?

MR. AMES: Mostly drawings, yes. They were easy to ship. They were not terribly expensive to insure, even with Warburg and Christie money, et cetera, et cetera.

MR. BROWN: Did it receive a good deal of publicity, do you recall, the society?

MR. AMES: I would say so, yes, certainly.

MR. BROWN: Also, about the very same time, in Boston, Nelson Goodman and Hudson Walker had a gallery which showed contemporary modern European things. Were you acquainted with that at all?

MR. AMES: Yes. I knew Hudson Walker very well indeed for quite a long time. I assume he'd dead by this time.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. But you remember that gallery that they had?

MR. AMES: Yes, very well. Very well, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Also, back to writings of that time, you wrote on Charles Sheeler for the American Art Portfolios in 1936. How did that come about?

MR. AMES: This was by request.

MR. BROWN: You knew an editor there, or --

MR. AMES: Yes. I don't remember the editor's name, but anyway, this was by request.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Also, another rather intriguing title from the bulletin of the Worcester Art Museum, you wrote an article entitled "A Portrait of American Industry."

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Do you recall what that was?

MR. AMES: I would have to -- I'm terribly sorry. But I would really have to investigate what it was about.

MR. BROWN: Probably it had something to do with a piece or anything they have acquired?

MR. AMES: I would think probably.

(Simultaneous conversation)

MR. AMES: You know, smoking chimneys in Pittsburg or (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: Were contemporary subjects such as that of interest to you?

MR. AMES: Yes, by all means.

MR. BROWN: Industrial America?

MR. AMES: Yes. Even though I was already -- even though I was a student of Old Master drawings.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: And began collecting them as soon as I had a job.

MR. BROWN: Well, when you wrote for the Magazine of Art in 1941 on the drawings in the Fogg Art Museum, in what in that did you attempt to do? Did you try to make people more aware of the riches of the Fogg?

MR. AMES: Yes. I think this was possibly -- I think this was probably almost an assignment from Paul Sachs or someone else in the high command there. I suspect that's the case, because I think that was my first published article, other than, do a tatty formal (inaudible) forms in the mirror at Stewart's Academy, graduate magazine.

MR. BROWN: You talked a bit about some of your friends and associates in the 1930s before the war. You were in New London. You weren't far away from -- I think Henry Russell Hitchcock would have been teaching at Wellesley. Did he become something of a friend of yours at that time?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. I had already met him, I suppose, when we were both graduate students. He was a little older than I. He's dead now, isn't he?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: Anyway, it was hard for Connecticut College, which was still pretty young, to get hotshot people to do special courses. And I don't know whether I recommended Russell Hitchcock or someone else did. But at any rate, he was in at Wellesley, and he used to come over one day a week. He always spent the night with us in our large acclimage (phonetic) house, maybe 100 yards or less than that from the museum in New London. So of course, he talked until midnight or later.

MR. BROWN: On all sorts of things?

MR. AMES: Everything in the world, always beginning, "Of course."

MR. BROWN: Assuming you knew everything already.

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: "Of course." Was he part of a convivial sort? Or how did --

MR. AMES: Oh yes, oh yes.

MR. BROWN: Demanding as a friend, or not? Or merely entertaining people?

MR. AMES: He was entertaining. He sang for his supper, you might say. He had reasonable sums of money. But he was happy to sing for his supper, and he was amusing. He was very good company.

MR. BROWN: How was he as a teacher? Did you hear?

MR. AMES: He was an excellent teacher, in spite of the repetition of "Of course."

(Laughter)

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible) teaching.

MR. AMES: In his speech endlessly. He was a marvelous teacher. Or he wouldn't have had such good appointments in high places.

MR. BROWN: No. Did you ever know Phillip Johnson at that time?

MR. AMES: Only very slightly, very slightly.

MR. BROWN: Now, surely you kept up with Paul Sachs and Edward Forbes from your time at the Fogg?

MR. AMES: Yes. Yes indeed.

MR. BROWN: Did you consult with, particularly, Sachs as you were making purchases for the Lyman Allyn Museum in New London?

MR. AMES: I did a little bit, not much. I think he rather encouraged people to go their own. He, of course, recommended me for the job. And it was a curious appointment because it resulted from a request to --

MR. BROWN: Yes, you mentioned that.

MR. AMES: (Inaudible) didn't know what to do.

MR. BROWN: No, no.

MR. AMES: They went to (inaudible). They probably do.

MR. BROWN: Would you see him any time you were in Boston or Cambridge? Did you keep in regular touch with him?

MR. AMES: Paul Sachs?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. AMES: Well, certainly I was -- he was the boss man in the Fogg Museum. And interesting man from an interesting family. Sure. I think he may even have come, as a great favor, to the opening of the Lyman Allyn Museum. I wouldn't want to swear that. But I certainly saw that he was invited.

MR. BROWN: You probably got to know Agnes Mongen (phonetic).

MR. AMES: Yes. Agnes was a dear friend. The whole Mongen family were friends of mine. I loved them, one of the closest families I've ever known.

MR. BROWN: Really?

MR. AMES: They were devout Roman Catholics. They all went to Mass every morning of the week, together. Father, mother, boys, girls -- I've forgotten how many of them there were. I think Agnes was the older girl, and I think Betty -- Betty was certainly the younger, and Betty became the librarian for the museum in New London, and afterwards moved on to much higher jobs.

MR. BROWN: So was Agnes indeed precocious? Or how did she strike you, when you first knew her?

MR. AMES: She was precise. Boy, was she precise. I think this was -- I don't know that the Jesuits taught in her

Catholic school. But I would suspect, from her precision, that there had been a Jesuit somewhere in the background, because, boy, they are tough (inaudible) right down the line. And an Episcopalian has a great respect for Jesuits.

MR. BROWN: (Laughter) How did she find (inaudible)? How did she seem to work with Paul Sachs, because she was his assistant?

MR. AMES: Oh, hand and glove. Paul Sachs trusted her implicitly.

MR. BROWN: And Betty Mongen? What was her strength at that time?

MR. AMES: Betty? Betty was a little freckle-faced thing. She looked like a turkey's head, which was my wife's name for her face. And she, the younger Mongen, became the first librarian for the museum in New London. And she had the job while I was abroad during the construction of the building. She boarded somewhere in New London quite close to the site of construction. And she began forming the library.

I didn't do much book buying in Europe in the many months that I was there. But I did buy lantern slides. Connecticut College didn't own a single lantern slide then. So I bought lantern slides all across the board in the (inaudible). These were the old, huge, three by four lantern slides, you know. This is big nowadays, this side.

MR. BROWN: Thirty-five millimeter, yes.

MR. AMES: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Betty had to then catalog them all.

MR. AMES: She had to catalog. And indeed, we built into the bookcases in the library of the Lyman Allyn Museum doors for slides.

MR. BROWN: That library was to serve as the art library for Connecticut College?

MR. AMES: It did so serve for a good many years until Connecticut College, as it were, grew up, because it was terribly young.

MR. BROWN: Were there others from your time at the Fogg that you kept up with as friends in the 1930s? Were there fellow students or other teachers?

MR. AMES: Terribly few. Bob, I'm sorry, but you know, my memory is a sieve. If I've -- hm.

MR. BROWN: Would there have been a few like, was Charles Cunningham in the area at that time?

MR. AMES: Charlie Cunningham I knew very well, of course. He's now director of Andover, which was my school. And I still see him.

MR. BROWN: Cunningham? Charles Cunningham?

MR. AMES: Charles C. Cunningham, Charles Crehore, C-r-e-h-o-r-e.

MR. BROWN: He was at Worcester and at Hartford and Chicago?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. He's an excellent, most amiable person.

MR. BROWN: And also, you must have known in those days the director of the (inaudible) museum in Hartford, Everet Chick Austin?

MR. AMES: Yes. Chick Austin was one of the first (inaudible) from Forbes brilliant appointments to young museums. That was not a young museum at the time. (Inaudible) Shucks, the museum then, it was almost a nothing. And that, Chick Austin built up absolutely extraordinarily. He made it a great museum.

MR. BROWN: What was he like? What was his personality, would you say?

MR. AMES: Extraordinarily mercurial -- very likely to shift his opinions, he was sometimes secretive. He changed friendships and so on and so on.

MR. BROWN: But he did make some --

MR. AMES: He was a brilliant person professionally.

MR. BROWN: Were you there for the premiere of Gertrude Stein's (inaudible)?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes. I came to that (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: Because of what?

MR. AMES: Because of the peculiar structure of it, the illogical structure of that (inaudible). It was obviously, in general, avant garde. And the varieties of declaration, the actual talking, and if I remember rightly, there was a small ballet in it. I wouldn't want to swear to that. I don't remember it that well. But this is also all of record elsewhere.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. But you did remember that? You were there?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes. By all means. And I had, of course, the extraordinary house of Chick Austin built for himself and his wife. I believe it's still there, and I believe it still belongs to the museum.

MR. BROWN: Do you recall going there for parties and things?

MR. AMES: Yes, but they were endless. They were exhausting. They never ended until the small hours of the night. You'd just be there.

MR. BROWN: It was a fairly -- would you call it a wild crowd that he surrounded himself with?

MR. AMES: It was rather wild. It was rather wild. I think it's quite possible that Chick Austin, although quite happily married, I don't know whether he ever begot a child. But he was certainly halfway homosexual.

MR. BROWN: Did you also know people who were at the still fairly new Museum of Modern Art in New York? Were you friends with Alfred Barr or --

MR. AMES: Alfred Barr, I knew somewhat. But he was considerably older than I. And he was already a magisterial sort, enormously knowledgeable, published a lot. The Museum of Modern Art was really his creation.

MR. BROWN: Was it a very dominant force at that time, as it became later?

MR. AMES: Well, it became mighty soon.

MR. BROWN: There wasn't much else on the block, was there?

MR. AMES: No. No. No. I mean, the Metropolitan was stodgy, et cetera.

MR. BROWN: Who else in New York would you have known? What about -- were there any particular -- because you were collecting drawings by now.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Were there any particular places or people you went to deal with?

MR. AMES: Well, I used to visit all the dealers in drawings. I also visited general art dealers. And by this time, I was married, and I promised Anna that I/we would never own more than 100 drawings at a time. And this was a promise, which along with the promises of marriage, I kept.

MR. BROWN: So you would never be drained by your --

MR. AMES: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: -- collecting things.

MR. AMES: By this time we were down to 41 drawings. We gave each of our five daughters a number of years ago five extremely good drawings. And it was interesting -- is this too much of a digression? Well, you can edit this anyway. We gave each of our five daughters some years ago five excellent drawings. And it was most interesting to see what they did with them. Three of them kept all the drawings and still have them. One of them -- and this was our third daughter, Eliza. Or was this (inaudible)? Eliza and her husband did something very smart. They no sooner had the drawings delivered to them then they went straight to Rubensteins and sold them for a very handsome sum of money, which, I may add, was to my great surprise slightly more than our insurance valuation. And with the proceeds -- they've still got the other three drawings -- with the proceeds, they bought 60 acres of timberland in southern Illinois. And that will probably be more of a capital gain than the drawings or the selling of them. I don't remember what they were, but they've got three left.

MR. BROWN: Did you see people like Edgar Byle (phonetic)? Was he one of the dealers you would see?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, certainly.

MR. BROWN: And (inaudible) Goldschmidt, I suppose?

MR. AMES: (Inaudible) Goldschmidt, yes, I liked pretty well. But I found his tastes a little precious for my own. The whole (inaudible) connection, of course (inaudible) were most noticeable in that part of the world.

MR. BROWN: As we got closer to when it seemed that war was imminent, how was that going to affect you? Did you think we should be in the war? Did you think we should stay out of the conflict?

MR. AMES: This is a long story, of none of which I am in any way ashamed. As a boy, I had seen too many of the effects of war in Latin America. This was at the beginning of my becoming a (inaudible). For example, in Guatemala in 1917, my father, who had been a diplomat in his young years, found he had to quit it because diplomats were supposed to be born rich, in his time. And he couldn't afford to be a diplomat anymore. So he quit it and became -- well, never mind that. That's another story. But --

MR. BROWN: You mentioned a bit about that.

MR. AMES: But anyway, he went back into the diplomatic service briefly in 1917 and was asked to go and persuade the governments of the Central American powers, such as they were, to declare war on Germany and Austria, which was a diverting assignment. I don't remember if any troops were ever sent. Some kind of food help or something may have been sent or something. I really don't know. But my father spoke superb Spanish. He spoke some Portuguese and read Portuguese easily, as I can even manage to read Portuguese. And if I fall into Spanish-speaking company, I can get away with it, but not too well.

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible)

MR. AMES: I speak much better French and not too bad German. Anyway, those Central American republics -- is this pertinent?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: -- were really pitiful, not because they had serio-comic dictators. They always had dictators. They probably still do. Somehow the --

MR. BROWN: But because of the sheer poverty?

MR. AMES: Exactly. The North American -- the Central American Latin mind seems to fall for dictators, as no other outfit, except maybe --

MR. BROWN: When you got there --

MR. AMES: -- for certain period, the Germans, and for a certain period, the Chinese, or some of the Chinese.

MR. BROWN: But when you got to Guatemala, what did you observe that later led to your attitudes toward war?

MR. AMES: Unbelievable poverty. Oh, god, they were so poor. Beggars everywhere. Beggars who even made -- who even made a capital of having lost a leg, or being crawling with bugs. Simply desperately painful. At any rate, this is perhaps a digression.

MR. BROWN: These are things that you realized or were given to understand that they were casualties of war?

MR. AMES: They were casualties of war. It was all too obvious. I mean, the Central American governments were always in some kind of war with one another. And they all got poorer and poorer. Even the rich banana-producing regions got poorer and poorer because of the kind of dictator who salted the money away somewhere, so that it couldn't be found after he was dead. God knows where it went, into an unnumbered bank account. And the widow -- anyway, this is another digression.

MR. BROWN: But come World War II, your attitudes against war had grown?

MR. AMES: It certainly had grown. And if you want to move to that now, we'll go ahead. We were then living in New London, where I was, as you know, the director of the Lyman Allyn Museum. And we formed many friendships in New London, which, after all, many of my Winthrop forebears had lived in. And somehow we were probably distant relatives. At any rate, we fell in there with a most remarkable connection, a family of old ladies, very comfortably off in an old-fashioned house with beautiful furniture. And they had a friend, Lawrence Minor,

Lawrence Morgamum (phonetic) Minor, a funny little old man interested in the arts, who had never had a terribly good job. He owned an old house and a good deal of land in Gales Ferry, on the other side of the Thames River from New London. And he was interested in the arts.

And it occurred to me that he would be a useful person in New London. And he was absolutely in glory. He helped out -- he and Betty Mongen, who formed a curious partnership, she being perhaps a third of his age -- well, maybe a third and a half his age. They did the main work of cataloging lantern slides, and so on and so on, while I was buying library. I think I mentioned somewhere else in these interviews, I went abroad at the suggestion of the trustees in Hartford, and studied in the presence of great works of art, the ones that were still in Europe and had not been bought by American magnates. And I began buying library for the museum, as well as lantern slides, the old big ones.

And it was there that I made my first purchase on my own. And I was so lucky to have a job all through the Depression. There is the first purchase right there.

MR. BROWN: This is?

MR. AMES: This is a bronze peacock. It was probably once the handle of a lamp, you know, an open-bowl lamp for a floating wick, in olive oil or something of the sort. The auction or the (inaudible) sale, it was described very briefly as (inaudible), nothing else. And that was my first purchase. And -- well, I don't remember what I paid for it. But anyway, I was being paid. And my traveling expenses were being paid so that I had spare cash, because my salary -- my salary was, as it worked out -- anyway, I bought it. I don't remember what I paid for it, but I am sure it now is perhaps eight or ten times what I paid for it, because it's as rare as the dickens. It's my first work of art.

MR. BROWN: Now, while you were doing this, this Lawrence Minor and Betty Mongen were working on the library?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: And through Lawrence Minor, did you get in touch with pacifists or Quakers?

MR. AMES: No. No, no, not at all. No, no. That was through other New London friends.

MR. BROWN: Who were they?

MR. AMES: They were sisters. I'm sorry. I've forgotten. It will come back to me later. They were sisters with whom Lawrence Minor lodged in winter. And somebody lived across the other side of the Thames in his own house in (inaudible) I guess it was north of (inaudible). But in winter he lodged with them.

MR. BROWN: And these sisters held some strong beliefs?

MR. AMES: These sisters were very strong-minded old Yankees. And it was really from them that I began seeing that war was unproductive. And I don't know where the conversion took place, when the moment that I was perfectly sure of this belief. And it was confirmed for me in this winter that I spent in Europe buying books and lantern slides, particularly by seeing the ruins of places in northwestern France, the ruins of great German industrial cities, which of course, we'd bombed. Everybody bombed everybody else.

MR. BROWN: And so did you -- what happened when -- were you drafted then when World War II was declared by us?

MR. AMES: Yes, eventually. Eventually, I registered as a conscientious objector at the usual time. And in due course, when my number is brought up, I was called. And this was the silly part of it. I was -- my family, as it happened, were visiting our Maryland relatives on the Maryland shore, going swimming, of course, the Maryland shore. But I had to go back to wherever you first lived, in the middle of the country, to be --

MR. BROWN: Where was that?

MR. AMES: Well, just -- no matter where it was --

MR. BROWN: But you had to go all the way back to where you lived?

MR. AMES: It doesn't matter very much -- to be inducted. And then put on a van and sent back again to someplace very close to where I had been, which it happens was the mountains of Virginia.

MR. BROWN: You had no problem being registered as a conscientious objector?

MR. AMES: No. I mean, I thought the law provided for it. No doubt there were people who thought the goddamn conchies (phonetic) were no bloody good, and so on and so on.

MR. BROWN: What did it provide you would do, then, during the war?

MR. AMES: Well, the chief work of this civilian conservation corps was timber stand improvement, which meant selective cutting of timber, which is a wise procedure. And we did the improvement by felling trees. The Soil Conservation Service also worked there. And there was a certain amount of soil conservation work. The inductees were, of course, the wildest assortment that you could find in any civilization, particularly in the American, because America has been the home of freak religions, you know -- holy rollers and Lord knows what. As they were all believers, I'll say nothing more. Anybody who is a believer had no business to even be using the funny name "holy rollers." But I'll use it because most people do that.

At any rate, the varieties of reasons for being one of those terrible conchies was really fantastic. Some of the people who believed that the diet would poison them.

MR. BROWN: And they had to hold strictly to their own kind of diet?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: Would they get that in the camp?

MR. AMES: Very difficult. The family would come visit them with it. Particularly the Amish -- I don't know that the Amish were that fussy about forbidding things. I mean, they didn't forbid certain foods as the Orthodox Jews do. But they would turn out for some tidbit once in awhile. And the old-order Amish, of course, who still spoke English with a powerfully German accent -- indeed, it was commonly said, if young Amish, if they spoke with a particularly German accent in English, they were all "Dutched out." These are local people.

MR. BROWN: Did these people carry on their religion while they were in the camp?

MR. AMES: Oh, absolutely, yes. The strictest of them, and there were 17 varieties of Mennonites, you know, who were frightfully strict. And, you know, some of them didn't even speak to the others, which is not very chummy or even Christian. But anyway, they were an interesting study. I had a good time, a good time.

MR. BROWN: What was your job in the -- was it the civilian public service corps?

MR. AMES: Mostly timber stand improvement.

MR. BROWN: And were you in charge of other people for awhile?

MR. AMES: No. Of course, I didn't know a damn thing about timber stand improvement. I loved creeks, loved woods, and so on and so on. So I knew they had to be felled, both for profit and for making space, including the forest.

MR. BROWN: So you felt that the work you were doing was worthwhile?

MR. AMES: Yes. I had no complaint against that.

MR. BROWN: Well, where were you when the war, the hostilities ended, when the military ended?

MR. AMES: Well, in the meantime, I had been shifted to another camp at which I was assistant director. It was in Ohio. And for some curious reason, it had become a difficult camp. The ones where insubordinate people are real freaks and most of the time were really crazy persons. And (inaudible) really very nearly insane. (Inaudible) I don't know what's become of him, but he was a sick, sick person.

I was assistant director and soon became director (inaudible) because my senior -- I've forgotten whether it was senior in years or in service -- was being moved on. And there I made it my job to (inaudible) out the people who really were crazy or ill, didn't belong. And you know, it was a small camp. There was not very much to do. (Inaudible) It was crazy to have two people in charge there, but that was the rule of the civilian conservation corps.

MR. BROWN: You were with them until when?

MR. AMES: Oh, I think I'd have to check my diary and see that.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MR. AMES: But at any rate, I was discharged fairly early, before really the hostilities were absolutely (inaudible), simply because of my age. I was born in 1907.

MR. BROWN: Did you fairly soon thereafter enlist with the American friends (phonetic) service committee?

MR. AMES: Yes, indeed. That was -- because of the many contacts with the friends service committee, I was asked.

MR. BROWN: You had many already?

MR. AMES: Yes, already because they ran so many camps. Even though I was in one Mennonite camp -- at any rate, they said -- and this was one of the most fascinating assignments I ever had. This was wonderful. I think of it as a great period in my life. The formation of the transport corps for the American friends service committee, because so many people, particularly in Brittany, had been absolutely dislocated by the Nazi forces. They'd been dislocated away from shorelines because they were afraid of people who would discover submarine activity and report it. They were afraid of that. And for this reason, they moved away from the shore. The Nazis moved away from the shore vast numbers of people who were thought of as being potential spies who would signal, you know, dark lanterns and so forth and so on.

And there was nobody taking care of their farms, which decayed. They were furious at it and so on and so on. And boy, were they glad when the war was over to get back to their farms. That was what the transport corps of the friends service committee did. I'll never forget coming ashore somewhere in northern France with one other service committee inductee who was going to work and who, as it happened, was the younger brother of a very old friend. This was George Lugman (phonetic), the brother of my friend, Carl Lugman, who was my best man when we married. Anyway, we got together, using the secondhand jeeps, a transport corps.

MR. BROWN: And your headquarters was in Paris, was it?

MR. AMES: The headquarters was in Paris.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: It was at the Notre Dame de Chaud, which was the French headquarters. It was a wonderful crazy house, you know, the old-fashioned kind of French city house.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Now, how did the French --

(Simultaneous conversation)

MR. AMES: There were no hallways. You had to go through room after room, opening doors and closing them carefully after you, to get places.

MR. BROWN: How did the French receive you as Quakers? They were happy that -- certainly, the Britons were happy to have you getting them back home.

MR. AMES: Yes, certainly. Well, there were very few French records, but there were French records. And the head man, the French record headquarters, in the Rue de (inaudible) was named Henri Vanette. And he was Flemish and a marvelous man. And he was the man who said, in French, "Look. The place where we've got to get work done most is in Brittany."

(End of tape 2, side A)

MR. AMES: You build houses now with convenient halls to get you past things.

MR. BROWN: These are a little bit of whimsy.

MR. AMES: The plan of this house is slightly a remembrance of that building because there isn't any hall, from all the way up from the entrance here. You go through the dining room to get to this room.

At any rate, the business of getting from one room to another in 27 (inaudible) Duchamps was really a scream because there were no degashmo (phonetic). The stairs were always way out at the edge, and usually only on one side. And if you wanted to get -- there was no subsidiary hall on two or three floors. And if you wanted to go from one room to another, you always had to open the double doors in the middle of one, and look around and say, "Pardonez moi," and go on through and close the doors after you, and do another one, and so on and so on.

MR. BROWN: What kind of -- what was the kind of work that they set you to doing once you got there?

MR. AMES: Well, I became the first director of what was called the European Transport Unit, which was meant to do relief work, for transport was lacking. And I went after about two days of what you might call conditioning, indoctrination and so on and so on, immediately in a secondhand United States Army jeep, which still had its Army numbers on it, but which it had "Quaker Transport" painted across the outside of the dashboard, you know, in front under the windshield -- and told to go and look in a certain quarter where they needed transport. This turned out to be Bringlee (phonetic), from which -- from the coast of which had everybody been evacuated inland by the Germans. They didn't want anybody, any enemy on the coast -- submarines and so on and so on and so on -- away from the coast.

So the big job was to run a series of, not (inaudible), not getting out of the house, but going back to the house. (Inaudible) and so on and so on. So the great problem was to find -- sometimes it was very difficult -- where people had stowed their furniture and other household belongings, which had all been brought inland. And they were so blankety-blank happy. They were wildly happy! -- to be being not only repatriated to their own Brittany, but to get connected with their neighbors, who might have been seen astray, here or there, somewhere else, to get their furniture back, and so on.

And the big problem in this business was trucks. We had historically a good many GMC six-by-sixes, which were wonderful for moving furniture and all household goods. And you know, the family sat on the tailboard and dangled their feet over, terribly happy to get out and get back home. And of course, the great problem was to keep going and to keep the family sober, because every time they came to a village they knew which was on the way to their own village, they wished to stop and see who was there and have a crew (phonetic). So it was very slow work.

(Laughter)

MR. BROWN: Did you -- and your job was to be very patient and very kindly.

MR. AMES: Be very patient, but keep reminding them. (Inaudible) And this was fascinating. And indeed, there's a painting in the next room, which is a reminiscence of that region, and it shows the cru tier map ehere (phonetic), the swamp culture of the Brittany coast, which was very low-lying, except for the great rock, (inaudible) which you can see in the distance in the painting.

MR. BROWN: Did this work occupied you for -- was it mostly in Brittany that you did this work?

MR. AMES: No, it was not mostly in Brittany. I began in Brittany. And we were getting recruits all the time. The France service committee was sending them over.

MR. BROWN: These were things no government was providing? Or the Americans, for example --

MR. AMES: No. There was some assistance. I mean, the United States Government, in many cases, ain't stupid. They said -- they knew perfectly well -- "Look. Here are these volunteers." They were legally CO's and so on, because prison CO's were still in prison when the war was over.

MR. BROWN: Some were in prison?

MR. AMES: Some were still in prison, yes, ones who had had their claims rejected, you know. Or some who almost chose to go to prison. Anyway --

MR. BROWN: So the military command helped a great deal, then?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. The local military command were perfectly willing to help. We were there by the request of the military, in fact, a uniform cut exactly like a military uniform, but gray, with the Quaker star patch, the AFSE patch (inaudible) in the usual position on the shoulder. And in all other respects, except for the gray color and the patch, this was a military uniform. And it did make it a convenience, because it meant that you were not in expensive civilian clothes, but in uniform, which was familiar all over France.

MR. BROWN: All too familiar?

MR. AMES: All too familiar, yes, whether enemy or American or what.

MR. BROWN: But the major work of your transport group was to resettle?

MR. AMES: To resettle people. And this was absolutely fascinating work, except for the difficulties, outside of the stop for the break.

(Laughter)

MR. BROWN: Well, after Brittany, then, where were you?

MR. AMES: We discovered that there was a lot of work to do farther south, partly because the Mediterranean Coast had been occupied, and partly because the -- you know, the whole Roan River Valley was and always has been such an immensely busy route for everything. Some of it has been canalized, and there are locks with locks, and there are barges -- tremendous barge traffic on it.

And this in part played into the next shift of the French service committee's transport unit. This was (inaudible). A certain number of southern French had been removed from the coast -- again, the coast was dangerous, you see. They'd give warnings with flashlights carefully hidden, you know, to American or other Allied people coming over.

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible)

MR. AMES: And therefore, people had been moved away from the coast. And here we had a most diverting experience. One of my younger guys discovered that there was an enormous prison camp under combined French and American auspices not very far south of the coast, but farther inland -- in other words, to the east. And there was a great depth there of military vehicles, many of them trucks, which had been confiscated, but were most of them in decent running order.

And this, again, (inaudible) the hands of the European transport unit because people were wildly delighted to be connected again with their furniture, taken home, and so on and so on. And we had the same experience, we had the difficulty of not making too many stops. But it was -- this is an interesting special detail here. It was discovered that an enormous amount of confiscated clothing, some military, some civilian --

MR. BROWN: And confiscated by the Americans and French or?

MR. AMES: Lord knows. I don't remember. I don't remember, Bob.

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible)

MR. AMES: It doesn't matter. Anyway, it was confiscated. And it was all still sitting in more GMC six-by-six trucks at an internment camp somewhere on the left bank of the Roan, quite far north. And the clothing, bales of it, unbelievable, was needed way down in the deep south -- even warm, though, the deep south is a good part of the year. And for this I just had the most curious experience, that there were German and Austrian prisoners under American military guard up in the north. And they were all -- they were a transport unit, mostly.

At any rate, they had a vast supply of trucks. And there was a vast supply of confiscated clothing. And I had the most amusing quip of the whole journey, because the prisoners had to be locked up behind some kind of bars at night and picked up in the morning to drive the trucks, because I drove simply a jeep. And they, with their American military guards sitting on the tailboards, drove. And the roads -- the roads -- some of the confiscated clothing was just rags. But even rags were desirable, rags for cleaning things and so on.

Anyway, we drove for several days, gradually down the Roan Valley. At one point we had to cross the Roan or a tributary and climb a very steep climb. And the interest of this was that it was one of those military roads that had been built by Napoleon's military engineers with an absolutely regular gradient, which even though the road might twist, continued on this perfectly regular gradient.

And I don't know who discovered this. But we found the gradient was so absolutely regular that if you put the truck in the right gear and set the -- you know, the old-fashioned gas spark pedals -- I don't think pedals, but levers, on the steering wheel, adjusted it right, you could get out and walk alongside the truck and it would keep going. And this was the most fun. And you had to reach up and do a little steering when you came to a twist. But things would keep going up this perfectly regular climb.

(Laughter)

MR. AMES: And then, you know, you'd get to be five o'clock, and you're still with prison drivers in their stockade, and go and look for a bar and get a coo (phonetic) and so on and so on.

There was one diverting encounter. I'd have to go to my diary again to find where this was. It was a place that I went back to years later -- oh, heavens, when I was perhaps 50, instead of almost 80. I think it's much better to go back to a diary -- later.

MR. BROWN: What was diverting at this place?

MR. AMES: Well, what was diverting was it was the perfect engineering of Napoleon's roads, that you could walk alongside the truck once it was in the right gear, and all you had to do was steer when you got to the top, so on

and so on.

The rest of the journey was interesting because when we'd gotten to the highest point, which represents, I suppose, an eastward extension of the Alps between France and Spain -- although you were in France all the time at this point because Spain was farther over that way -- we got into that weird country where, again, this was Napoleon's military engineers who did it -- where you would rise and slowly climb. And when you began going down, you found yourself very close to the Roan again, which was in falls because this was a region of granite. As I said, I guess it's of granite. Are the Alps limestone? I guess they are.

MR. BROWN: And granite.

MR. AMES: Granite, yeah. Well, granite always is like home to me. This is granite country.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MR. AMES: Anyway, you would -- this was a wildly fascinating journey and perfectly beautiful. And it was just as beautiful when I repeated it years later with my wife and so on and so on. You'd go get to a top. And then you'd begin going down. And you'd go through a tunnel. And then you'd suddenly see, there was the river, way below you, which had gone through another -- some other passage. And then you'd go down some more, and then you come to it again, and you'd find a fall coming down higher, from higher up. Wonderful, wonderful trip.

MR. BROWN: Did you have problems sometimes figuring out where to put the German and Austrian prisoners? Or was that in your plans?

MR. AMES: No, no. This was -- after all, this was --

MR. BROWN: The military (inaudible).

MR. AMES: This was cooperation with military, who were glad to have the prisoners abused and guards abused by a trip. This was great. They enjoyed it enormously.

MR. BROWN: Where did you -- did you go right down to the Mediterranean?

MR. AMES: Yes. We got all the way down, we got all the way down to the deep south. And again, I'd have to go to my diaries to find out where we discharged the prisoners. And they got sent back up north to do the same thing again, maybe with some more of my unit; I don't remember.

MR. BROWN: And your job then was to distribute the clothing? Or you left that for others?

MR. AMES: We left that for others. And the clothing was in enormous bales, huge bales.

(End of tape 2, side B)

MR. AMES: When I was fresh out of Quaker transport after World War II, had I been in England before that? I can't remember. I don't think so. I don't think so. But being primarily of British stock, with a tiny little bit of -- tiny bit of Welsh, the latest, and some Huguenot -- my wife has more Huguenot blood than I --

MR. BROWN: This was something that intrigued you? You've always been a connoisseur, though. And did you partly look at Albert as the connoisseur?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. Because I was interested in Victorian things in general, and in him particularly because he was -- look. This was a man who was practically begotten in order to go into what he went into. He was a cousin of his own wife's. And as a matter of fact, it's a wonder that there was only one genetic mistake in their numerous children, in the short-lived, the very short-lived one. And it's amazing that this almost consanguineous -- well, this consanguineous marriage, there was such successful, brilliant, sometimes, offspring, and only one real rogue, who died pretty early. I've never been sure that he was not carefully disposed of, but that's a naughty suggestion. He was syphilitic anyway.

MR. BROWN: You say that in your discussion of your proposal, that you feel that Victoriana had been looked down on, that the Victorian period --

MR. AMES: Well, it was a joke for a long time, you know.

MR. BROWN: But you felt that by the early 1950s, it was time to look seriously at it again?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes, absolutely, certainly.

MR. BROWN: Did you get encouragement in this thinking from, say, for example, various British friends or people in this country, art historians?

MR. AMES: Art historians, yes. I had a British uncle by marriage whose son, I regret to say, has adopted dual citizenship which he was never granted, but he has two passports, a British one and an American one, and he lives mostly and goes mostly in England.

MR. BROWN: Did these people encourage you with this project?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: What about -- you had mentioned also in your proposal that you'd had a conversation in 1951 with William Hecksher.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: You felt -- you even called him a catalyst. Was Hecksher someone you had known for quite a time?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, certainly. I've known him. I'd know him from the time when I was a graduate student at Harvard.

MR. BROWN: And had he -- apparently, he had encourage you in this project?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Was he somebody you had kept in some touch with over the years?

MR. AMES: I believe he's still alive, but I haven't seen him for a long, long time.

MR. BROWN: Yes. But at that time, at least, you had talked with him?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes, certainly, yes.

MR. BROWN: Well, what did you have in mind? You talked about something that will not quite be popular, but that will, in the study of Albert and his tastes, be applicable to today. This is in your proposal for the -- perhaps for a Guggenheim fellowship, I'm not sure what.

MR. AMES: Yes, right.

MR. BROWN: But you suppose it would be -- you draw parallels between Albert's time and what he tried to do and what was needed today.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Did that -- you bear in mind, in fact, when you undertook the study?

MR. AMES: I'm thinking of, obviously, not only of the obvious, the long British and American connections, but also the fact that at this moment, in spite of -- in general, American admiration, A, for the greater flexibility of the British political system -- I mean, if a cabinet falls, by golly, there's a general election. It's infinitely more sensible than the American four-year presidential term.

MR. BROWN: So you thought about that?

MR. AMES: And unless you have an impeachment, which hasn't happened for a terribly long time -- there was one cried only a few -- well, a few -- how many? Three administrations back.

MR. BROWN: So there was -- you felt that there was a lingering admiration for things British?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, because it's so much more flexible. I mean, a government maybe can fall, and you have to hold a general election within a certain number of weeks.

MR. BROWN: Well, did you --

MR. AMES: It's an extremely, extremely sensitive arrangement, far, far better than our four-year term, and so on.

MR. BROWN: Well, your project that took you to England, did you decide it would take, what, about a year, two years to do research in England?

MR. AMES: It was just about a year, yes.

MR. BROWN: Your family went? You all went over?

MR. AMES: We all went over, yes.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. AMES: We weren't all there all the time. But at any rate, usually, our daughters -- our third and fourth daughters were with us.

MR. BROWN: Yes. They were quite young?

MR. AMES: Yes, they were young. But they went to school near Farnham in Surry where we lived. It was a sort of dame school. And I went -- I drove over to the Royal Library in Windsor every day and worked there. And I mainly --

MR. BROWN: Mainly reading correspondence and diaries?

MR. AMES: Reading correspondence and diaries. I worked in the diary room almost entirely. And I must say, I take off my hat to the administrators at the Royal Library because, once you are allowed in, you must stick absolutely to your own line. You may read anything. You may read even -- you may read all the royal diaries, of which there are hundreds covering thousands of pages. But you can't publish anything except on the line that you chose. And that is a perfectly splendid idea, because it means there's always more for somebody else. It's one of the great goldmines of remembrance of things past -- to quote the famous phrase.

MR. BROWN: Did you -- were there surprises?

MR. AMES: There were not very many, not very many surprises. But there were things that I had not seen mentioned before, and I was glad to get a chance at them.

MR. BROWN: And your attempt was to show that Albert was a key, a pivotal --

MR. AMES: Absolutely. I think so. He taught his wife in the short number of years that he lived -- of course, he died very soon after the great exposition.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: He taught her just about everything that she was intended to do. She came to the throne at age 19 or something of the sort.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes. He was a mentor.

MR. AMES: Unfortunately, she was outside the (inaudible), so it was all right for her to begin governing before she attained her majority. But Albert taught her everything.

MR. BROWN: Well, now, as you indicated at the time, what you were looking at in terms of taste was a rather eclectic taste?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Did that give you problems? Or did you feel that that would be distasteful to contemporary, your readers when you'd publish?

MR. AMES: I didn't give a hoot in hell about that. I knew the market was limited.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. AMES: And I don't believe the book Prince Albert and Victorian Taste will ever be reprinted. I mean, you know. (Inaudible) goes on from there.

MR. BROWN: Eclecticism was in fact attractive to you, wasn't it?

MR. AMES: No. Some of it, some of it, yes. I mean, here we are the product of a melting pot ourselves.

MR. BROWN: Certainly. And your own taste was, as you've explained, various things you'd ever collected or advised others to have.

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, yes. Indeed it sometimes has been quite difficult to explain why -- and to put it briefly, I liked old things, and I also like very new things. I mean, to have -- at the time when we had one, when we had an over-life-sized Lachaise bronze in the backyard, this was absolutely horrifying to the neighbors.

MR. BROWN: And at the same time, you had sixteenth and seventeenth century --

MR. AMES: Sure. Nobody can understand this. How come?

MR. BROWN: How do you explain it?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, inconsistent.

MR. BROWN: How do you explain it?

MR. AMES: Because I think the only thing that matters is quality. Not age, not country of origin, but quality. That's the only thing that matters. And if it ain't good -- out!

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. And that was something you admired in Albert, I suppose, as well.

MR. AMES: Yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: A similar.

MR. AMES: He was fussy. And besides really teaching his wife her own art, which thank God he lived long enough to get into her, he was an influence himself. He could not directly influence; that would have been absolutely wrong. You know, somebody would ask questions in Parliament if he had stepped -- if he had overstepped the bounds.

MR. BROWN: If he went beyond his -- yes.

MR. AMES: But he was extraordinarily skillful and discreet. I have a great admiration for him.

MR. BROWN: You had access that year in England to a number of British authorities as well?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: You mentioned first the librarian at Windsor, Sir Roman Morehead (phonetic).

MR. AMES: Mooreshead (phonetic), yes.

MR. BROWN: Mooreshead.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: And was he someone with whom you would discuss your project quite a lot?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes, certainly. He would decide when he wanted to speak about it. And that was fine. I mean, you know, you'd come out of the diary room and go into his office. And that was very good, that was very satisfactory. I have a high opinion of him.

MR. BROWN: He really knew his collection quite well?

MR. AMES: Oh, thoroughly. I mean, you don't get an appointment like that without A, being really equipped for it; and without, B, being sure of a knighthood before (inaudible).

(Laughter)

MR. BROWN: You also mentioned that Nicholas Cudgener (phonetic), who was then at Cambridge --

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Who had been -- at that time had written on the high Victorian style?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: Did you, during your year in Britain, meet with him occasionally?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes, he's a marvelous man. He wound up, of course, not only as a British subject, but he was knighted.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: And I remember the last time I saw him when he came over for a visit, an old man that the Forbes -- the Forbes took him, and I was along, too, in the Forbes' yacht. We completely circumnavigated Manhattan Island. And Nicholas knew most of the tall buildings of Manhattan all the way around. And if he didn't, he would ask either Kip Forbes or me, and we could help him out. Gee, that was a marvelous trip!

MR. BROWN: Well, what did you -- in the 1950s when you were in England, what did you discuss with him? Do you recall at all? In which ways was he helpful to you?

MR. AMES: That I'm not sure of. I certainly met him. And he spoke about as good English as I spoke German by that time. He now speaks Spanish. He now speaks marvelous English, or he would never have been knighted.

MR. BROWN: You also mentioned, they weren't -- I guess they weren't in England, necessarily, at that time. But John Steigman (phonetic), who is then at Montreal, an historian taste.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Was he someone with whom you had been in touch, or had corresponded?

MR. AMES: Not very much. Corresponded, but not much contact.

MR. BROWN: Now, here's a countryman that you did know and had known him for a long time, Henry Russell Hitchcock.

MR. AMES: Oh, certainly. Goodness gracious, Russell Hitchcock. Russell was teaching at Wellesleyan University when we were living in New London and I was director of the Lyman Allyn Museum.

MR. BROWN: So you saw a lot of each other?

MR. AMES: Yes. And Russell taught -- was invited to teach one course, which was given in the evening, one evening a week at Connecticut College. He always spent the night with us. And we always talked far into the morning.

MR. BROWN: Did he mainly talk of art history or any number of things?

MR. AMES: Oh, everything, everything. Of course, he always reported on what he had done for the entire week before his return on this particular day of the week. Russell was completely unrestrained in this respect. He always assumed that you were thoroughly interested in what he had done since you last saw him, due to practically the monopoly of your conversations. But anyway, he was a great architectural historian, terrific.

(Off the record)

May 21, 1987

MR. BROWN: May 21, 1987, Saunderstown, Rhode Island, Robert Brown, the interviewer.

Last time about some of your earlier writings, including writings on (inaudible) woodcuts and Gaston Lachaise, are there others before World War II that stand out? Such as, you wrote an article for American Art Portfolios on Charles Sheeler (phonetic). Was that 1936? Do you recall that, how that came about?

MR. AMES: It was simply a question of aggregation. I went to see him. And that was the result. I saw a good deal of work on the premises. He was already beginning to have material acquired by museums. I don't know that the Lyman Allyn Museum, of which I was the first director, acquired anything of his. The first thing we acquired was a late Angre drawing.

MR. BROWN: Yes, you mentioned that the last time.

MR. AMES: I mentioned that. At any rate, the interest in drawing persisted with me and was revived in New London much later, because after I resigned from there --

MR. BROWN: Oh, (inaudible) you could have consulted with him as you did this project on Prince Albert?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes, because his knowledge of Victoriana was absolutely enormous, tremendous. And indeed, he felt like a Victorian himself.

MR. BROWN: But he gave you ample encouragement to do that?

MR. AMES: Yes, by all means. Yes, yes. Only two years older than I and, heavens, he's been dead a good many years, hasn't he?

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes. Then also back in England, you've mentioned before your long friendship with Jim, James Byam Shaw (phonetic) from (inaudible).

MR. AMES: Yes, he's still a good friend.

MR. BROWN: And he was also someone that you saw a good deal of that year in England?

MR. AMES: A great deal, yes. We were very fond of his first wife, long since dead. And we've known his second wife, whom he married after he'd been widowed a good many years.

MR. BROWN: What was he like? Particularly when you knew him early in the 1950s?

MR. AMES: Well, of course, he belonged to an artistic family because the previous Byam Shaw had been an excellent painter. I've forgotten whether it was his father or an uncle. But at any rate, his name was never hyphenated, but the Byam was always insisted on. He became a dealer. And really, the mainstay of Cronagy (phonetic) as an expert, he didn't mind going into (inaudible) trade because the House of Cronagy was a principal house in the business. There are many others now. Good gracious, the back pages of -- heavens, the back pages, advertising pages in master drawings and so forth now show a dozen knowledgeable art dealing houses, especially in drawing.

MR. BROWN: But you've known him principally as someone who had purchased drawings or looked at drawings?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, certainly. As I said, I've bought a number of drawings from Cronagy. I've bought elsewhere. He came to visit us once here. He is still alive. He did me a great favor of introducing me to membership in the Royal Society of Arts during the year that we were living in England. And I was made an associate member so that I could sign chits for lunch and had lunch there almost every day when I was in London. We were living in Farnham, only a few miles right out of the northwestern suburb.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. AMES: Jim came here once. We had a very funny experience with him. He came over on a plane, I should think. At any rate, we picked him up in Boston and drove down here. And on the way down, we suddenly saw a sign pointing eastward, Taunton (phonetic). "Winslow," he said, "Taunton." "Yes," I said, I draw old England and New England, you know, many, many, many repeating names, Taunton. "I must go into Taunton and send Christina a postcard," or an air letter or something. So we went into Taunton and attended to this.

MR. BROWN: This was his wife Christina?

MR. AMES: Yes. (Laughter) And I said, "Well, some of my forebears came from this Taunton."

MR. BROWN: But this --

MR. AMES: Old England and New England and so on and so on.

MR. BROWN: This year in England, then, had you written much of the book by the time you left?

MR. AMES: I had certainly drafted it. I think it's had its life. But this means simply that the Royal Library passes onto another generation of people who use it.

MR. BROWN: Sure. But you were quite pleased with what you had accomplished?

MR. AMES: Yes, certainly. The thing -- Prince Albert and Victorian Taste had only 1000 copies for English circulation and 1000 copies with an American imprint, an American circulation. And I don't think it will ever be reprinted because the whole point of view has changed.

MR. BROWN: Did you -- what way would you say the point of view has changed?

MR. AMES: Well, partly just the passage of time. A much greater acceptance of anything Victorian. I mean, it no longer is Victorian -- the word "Victorian" is no longer a joke or a term of opprobrium. Heavens. Victoria has been dead, what --

MR. BROWN: Quite awhile.

MR. AMES: Quite awhile. Here we are. Gosh, 50 years-plus.

MR. BROWN: Were you able to go to Germany to look at Prince Albert's early --

MR. AMES: Yes. Absolutely.

MR. BROWN: Go to Coborg (phonetic)?

MR. AMES: Went to Coborg, yes, a fascinating town. Just a marvelous town. It's a valley town surrounded by greater heights, well, almost like your Budapest combination, Buda on the low side of the river and Pest on the high side of the Danube. It's not quite so geographically exaggerated thing. But just the same, it's --

MR. BROWN: But that was useful. You were able to find things that were about Albert that were little known until that time?

MR. AMES: Well, this again is subject to the same limitation as the Royal Library because there's enough lingering influence of the Saxon connection in the British royal family. So the rules tend to be implied.

MR. BROWN: So you were a bit limited as to what you could --

MR. AMES: A bit limited, but not greatly. And after all, this -- Prince Albert and Victorian Taste is not a big heavy book. It's not like the translation of (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, um-hm. When did you come to Rhode Island?

MR. AMES: I first came to Rhode Island when Anna and I were freshly married. We were married in Philadelphia on a very steamy day. Gosh, it was hot! Wow, it was hot! The sweat came dripping off the end of my nose as I was putting the ring on Anna's finger. It was the 27th of June. And we knew it would be hot. So I told my best man, "For God's sake, don't wear a morning coat and all those black things. We're going to swelter. So please wear white flannels and blue jackets." And I think I handed out blue blazers to everybody, guests.

MR. BROWN: But that was the first time you'd been here. But in the late 1950s, where were you living at that time, after you came back from England?

MR. AMES: (Inaudible)

MR. BROWN: You were working in the late 1950s for Huntington Hartford, something you've already described.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: How did you happen to find this place in Saunderstown near Whitfield?

MR. AMES: My wife's family had been coming here -- some of them had been coming here for many, many years. And some of her relatives are still coming here, and sometimes they turn up in August or thereabouts, just up the road, not very far. And one of them -- not an actual relative, but a connection of her relatives -- has just built the most extraordinary house about a half a mile up the road, a crazy house, very manor-ist, strangely manor-ist. For example, there is an immensely tall entrance to it. And at the top, there's what would normally be a keystone and an arch. But it's a wooden building, and there isn't anything there. There's just an empty keystone shaped like this. It's frightfully manor-ist in this respect.

MR. BROWN: (Laughter) But these relatives of your wife's --

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: -- had urged you to come and look around this area?

MR. AMES: Well, my wife had visited them here long before we were married. And we used to come over from New London when we were first married and see them in summer when they were here. The Coxe family, C-o-x-e.

MR. BROWN: So you did then, in the late 1950s, come here and purchase this land?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. We saw this land and liked it very much. And it was not until long afterwards that I discovered that it was part of the square mile that had been gotten hold of. It's secondhand from the Indians by three forebears.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Well, you had also a classmate, I think -- at Columbia, was it? -- who designed the house for you. Is that right?

MR. AMES: Who designed it?

MR. BROWN: The architect of this house? Who was the architect?

MR. AMES: My God, I feel stupid. I ought to know.

MR. BROWN: So this classmate, the architect was --

MR. AMES: Yes. He was a year ahead of me at Columbia and also a fraternity brother.

MR. BROWN: And his name was?

MR. AMES: Rockwell King Du Moulin, D-u M-o-u-l-i-n. He was a year ahead of me at Columbia, as I said before. He and his wife met at our wedding.

MR. BROWN: What did you tell him you wanted in your residence here? What did you have in mind?

MR. AMES: We told him that what we wanted was a reasonably flexible house. We had not yet come to the point of solar heating, or it would not have been oriented the way it is. It's exactly diagonal to the compass points. So west is there, and north is there.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. AMES: And he did a beautiful job for us, and it think the house is extraordinarily flexible. The garage was planned originally, but not built. I built the garage myself the next year after we moved in.

MR. BROWN: But were you thinking of a place, if not for retirement, at least where you could be away from a good number of people? You would write?

MR. AMES: Yes. This was already -- although the trees have grown enormously, and we've planted trees, even, it was already somewhat sheltered. We knew the quarter because of my wife's relatives up the road. And it is sufficiently removed from Providence to be both convenient and slightly remote.

MR. BROWN: Did you -- one of the early things that you did, did you complete the book on Prince Albert after you had come here?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: And you settled finally here and lived here most of the year after you were through with working for Huntington Hartford?

MR. AMES: No, because when I worked for Huntington Hartford, we were already here.

MR. BROWN: You were already here.

MR. AMES: I commuted weekly to New York, and it was a hell of a life, and thank God I left him. And also, I don't want to thank God for anybody's disgrace, but the man wasn't -- if he's still alive, he's a son of a bitch.

MR. BROWN: But you also at this time, approximately, even before you came up here, you'd been teaching. You taught first, I think, was it at Hollings College in Virginia?

MR. AMES: Well, I got the job for a year.

MR. BROWN: For one year.

MR. AMES: To replace someone else. I taught art history at Hollings College. Someone went on sabbatical, and I was urged to go there. But also, our youngest daughter went -- yes, our youngest daughter was in college there.

MR. BROWN: Had you taught before?

MR. AMES: Yes. I taught an art history course once in awhile at Connecticut College and London. And incidentally, the art department then had very few lantern slides. And we got busy building up the lantern slides. And the museum, the Lyman Allyn Museum, became the custodian of the lantern slides. They were the old-fashioned three-by-four lantern slides, which were, of course, not only (inaudible) this size.

MR. BROWN: Thirty-five millimeter.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: But anyway, the museum was the custodian of the lantern slides.

MR. BROWN: Did you enjoy teaching? When you went to Hollings, did you think you might want to stay and teach for a good while?

MR. AMES: No. It was long enough. I was invited, as I said, to replace someone who was on sabbatical. And I liked it. It's a beautiful, beautiful region.

MR. BROWN: Did you adopt the lecture format? Or was it more informal with discussions?

MR. AMES: Both.

MR. BROWN: Both?

MR. AMES: Both. But I have now -- Hollings College, as you know, is on the edge of the valley of Virginia. And I've granted it a detective story, which has to do with the Appalachian Trail. And I'm going to have a wonderful time on that. Because, you know, there are fire towers all through that great wooded mountainous area. And the fire towers can see all the way across. They have telephonic communication. They can track all (inaudible). It's a wonderful layout for a detective story, because, you know, this man was seen -- "Joe! The guy passed by here. He had a bright red knapsack, about 12 minutes ago," so and so. A wonderful detective story.

MR. BROWN: Well, after that time when you were living in Rhode Island, when you were through with Huntington Hartford, in the mid-60s, I think about 1966, you began teaching at the nearby University of Rhode Island.

MR. AMES: Yes, that's true.

MR. BROWN: And what -- were you invited to teach there?

MR. AMES: Yes. I've forgotten how it got started. But at any rate, they were very ill-supplied -- again, they were ill-supplied with lantern slides. And I busied myself building up the lantern slide collection, which is now extremely good. And again, it's now these little ones.

MR. BROWN: But what were you asked to teach?

MR. AMES: Oh, anything that nobody else wanted to do. The department was not a red-hot department then. It had greatly, greatly improved now.

MR. BROWN: Did you teach, by any chance, connoisseurship or anything in drawing? These were undergraduates, of course?

MR. AMES: Yes, sure. Well, implicitly, but not explicitly (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: But you mean you did show them, try to take them through -- show them process, show them quality?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Always stressing how you detect quality?

MR. AMES: Yes, certainly, certainly. I'm not -- I didn't sit under Paul Sachs without having quality, quality, quality dinged into me. It stays, you know.

(Laughter)

MR. BROWN: So then you were away for, I think, in '72 and '73. You and your wife took a slow trip by camper?

MR. AMES: Oh, we had a wonderful time. Gee, that was a great trip. Oh, that was glorious.

MR. BROWN: That was just sort of an unwinding, was it?

MR. AMES: I was unwinding, yes. I took a year off and went back -- I taught four years at URI before that. And I taught two years more after that, and that was the end. But that year -- that year of the camper was just marvelous.

MR. BROWN: Because when you came back, you found -- I think the illustrator of Prince Eichenburg (phonetic) had been made department chairman.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: And was this unexpected?

MR. AMES: I don't think so. I mean, he was a thoroughly competent man. He was an excellent graphic artist.

MR. BROWN: But you stayed only two more years?

MR. AMES: That was all, yes. That was the end of it.

MR. BROWN: You were a little bit tired of the bureaucracy or the departmental things?

MR. AMES: I was tired of grading papers. Honest to Pete, you know, most of them are discouraging. Haven't you found it so?

MR. BROWN: Yes. Yes.

MR. AMES: Oh, God, what's the use? And so on. But I admit, the marvelous surprise, when somebody you thought was a dope writes you a good essay or writes you a really bright examination.

MR. BROWN: It's almost worth the effort.

MR. AMES: You never can tell.

MR. BROWN: You also taught, perhaps at that time, or a bit later, occasionally at Brown? You taught, I gather, a course somewhat like that at Paul Sachs at times?

MR. AMES: Exactly. That's a brilliant bit of ground. I have a great admiration for Brown University. This was a three-semester course. In other words, part of one academic year and all of another academic year for students not below junior class -- junior and senior. And really, it's an MA course, a preparation for the MA. And I think you can get an MA from them. It's quite possible that, what with this three-term arrangement, the whole senior year and a term on the way to MA is taken. I'm not quite sure.

MR. BROWN: What was the format of that course?

MR. AMES: That was a seminar course. And that was very satisfactory because there were never -- it was never more than a decent handful of students. And Brown's rules were fairly clear in what they wanted done. It was people who were on their way to graduate degree. And they had to prepare an exhibition. And this is terrifically good training, wonderful training.

MR. BROWN: With a catalog, too, I think?

MR. AMES: With a catalog. And although there was something like the limitation on the Windsor Library use of the diary room, you could answer their questions. You could help them choose the subject. But once the subject was chosen, you don't interfere. You -- they consult you. That's fine, and they did consult, very readily, very steadily. But the result is the publication of a catalog, and although the person, such as myself in this position, may respond to questions, he or she does not originate anything except in helping to guide the original choice of subject.

MR. BROWN: But what did they do under you?

MR. AMES: I've forgotten. I'd had to look.

MR. BROWN: But that was your last teaching? And it was very satisfying, was it?

MR. AMES: That was most satisfying. Yes, I enjoyed that. I think everybody who's done that course really (inaudible) has enjoyed it. And therefore, I think it's been fairly popular with people who are older and who came back after retiring, as I did.

MR. BROWN: Did you develop some close collegial relationships from that?

MR. AMES: Not an enormous number. I have a great admiration for Brown. I think it's an excellent institution.

(Simultaneous conversation)

MR. BROWN: You've also -- I don't know how far back this goes. But you've also functioned as an advisor, I think, on drawings and on collections, and also as an appraiser, to a degree, haven't you?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Now, does that go back some years?

MR. AMES: Yes. When I retired from the second museum job, I've forgotten whether somebody suggested this to me or whether I formed it myself. I thought of being an appraiser of works of art and antique furniture. And I joined two appraisal societies, the American Society of Appraisers, and the New England Appraisers Association. And I very soon got out of the American Appraisers -- no, wait a minute -- the American Society of Appraisers, I got out of it.

MR. BROWN: Why was that?

MR. AMES: Because this outfit publishes a list of members and their specialties. And mine were mentioned, of course. But the trouble was that I would receive inquiries from 2000 miles away, saying, "Dr. Mr. Ames, I have so-and-so and so-and-so. What is it worth?" No photograph, nothing. I just got out of it. I said, I can't be bothered with this. What's the use?

MR. BROWN: Just being provided with things that were rather ridiculous.

MR. AMES: Crazy, crazy, absolutely crazy. Usually, I'd write back and say, "Send me a photograph with dimensions," and so on and so on. And usually, I didn't get any answer because it's too much trouble for them. Anyway, I got out of that and stayed with the New England Appraisers Association. And that's been satisfactory. I almost got out of it, as a matter of fact, this year, because I hadn't had any jobs for almost a year. I have only one tiny -- one line ad in the classified telephone directory. But suddenly, about two weeks ago, I got three jobs all at once. So I'm staying in for another year.

MR. BROWN: And what did you especially appraise? So you've been doing this for some years?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Early furniture, you mentioned.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: And drawings?

MR. AMES: Drawings, paintings, sculpture, and antique furniture. And that's been very satisfactory, especially as both my wife and I inherited so much antique furniture.

(Simultaneous conversation)

MR. BROWN: You've had to subscribe to a number of catalogs and auctions, as well as maintain (inaudible) with the art historical libraries.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Do you enjoy doing that work, appraising?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. It's an interesting exercise. Of course, you have to use your experience. You occasionally use published auction records. And I have a long, long file of published auction records. I find, incidentally, that the most useful of all are the commercial ones, with illustrations, with precise auction records, dates, and so forth and so on. It's published by the outfit called Babka. I don't know what B-a-b-k-a means. But anyway, that's been useful. I almost got out of it, and then suddenly got some jobs.

MR. BROWN: But isn't there in appraising an element of risk?

MR. AMES: Certainly there is. Certainly there is. And for this reason, I've always given a spread. And I always explain at the beginning of my report, after seeing things, "I'm giving you two figures, an upper and lower -- a lower and an upper figure."

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. AMES: The upper figure is the figure which I consider the retail price. The lower figure is what I consider the wholesale price; in other words, the price that would probably be paid by a dealer at auction. The vast number of valuable things get into the retail market as a result of auctions of big collections, and so on and so on. And obviously, any dealer who buys at auction expects to take a profit. That's the reason for this spread of prices.

MR. BROWN: And this has stood you in good stead, by and large?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Have there ever been times when you've had customers challenge you or great complications?

MR. AMES: I have only twice been challenged. Once was rather funny because I was accused of shockingly under-pricing something. And I said -- this is wrong. This is -- never mind. But if you try to read between the lines, you will realize that I am not absolutely sure of the authenticity of this. If I were a very experienced dealer -- this was a piece of old furniture from an extremely experienced dealer, such as, let's say, Ginsburg and Groovy (phonetic) in New York, both of whom I know -- I could be sure of this. But I'm not.

Anyway, I've always given the two prices, two figures, upper and lower. And on the whole, there have been very, very few complaints.

MR. BROWN: Talking about as a consultant to collectors or to museums?

MR. AMES: Very, very little. Very, very little. I don't go into the market enough to have any idea whatever. Goodness, the last time I went to an auction -- my gracious, it was a long time ago. I went mostly as a sightseer. I -- goodness. I think the last time I bought anything at auction for anybody else must have been 10 years ago. And once in a long while, I've got something over at Rodale's auction, only a few miles away. Rodale's auctions have been improving. His knowledge has been improving. He sells, oddly enough, in one of the halls of the Roman Catholic girl's school just down the road. That's where his auctions are.

MR. BROWN: What about yourself as a collector? Now, you've talked about the kinds of things you were collecting through the '30s into the '40s. Can you pinpoint various areas of emphasis, say, in the 1950s, from the '50s onward?

MR. AMES: I think for that we would have to go to the objects. Do you want to walk through the house? Can you bring --

(Off the record)

MR. BROWN: We are now walking through Mr. Ames' house looking at various examples from his collection. We're now going to walk through Mr. Ames' house and look at examples from his collection.

MR. AMES: This is a woodcut illustrated piece of (inaudible). And I keep it by the front door because I don't mind leaving it halfway outdoors. It's headed by the grand Duke of Arms of Iveticci (phonetic) after they became (inaudible). And it's (inaudible). Well, nobody ever made pork before or since then because the little pigs hadn't grown big enough to make pork, because they were all born in the spring. So it's sewn by the trestler (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: So you acquired this --

MR. AMES: For a joke.

MR. BROWN: For a joke?

MR. AMES: (Inaudible) The front hall of the house, which has the old hall feeling because of the interesting construction of the house with a sort of lower (inaudible). And we're standing by a pier table (inaudible).

(End of tape 3, side A)

MR. AMES: (Inaudible) right by the front door when you come in. (Inaudible) America in about 1830, and that used to be (inaudible) at my grandmother's house in Staten Island, but it looks very well there with the high ceiling. This is (inaudible) late eighteenth century figures indicative of the costumes (inaudible) feeling and Anglican figures at an enormous (inaudible) in contemporary -- late eighteenth century costumes.

MR. BROWN: Where did you acquire that?

MR. AMES: I have absolutely no remembrance. They're charming. They must have been part of this huge (inaudible). These are nineteenth century French drawings.

MR. BROWN: Plenty of heads in that.

MR. AMES: Yes, yes (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible)

MR. AMES: Here is the earliest object in the house.

MR. BROWN: Tell me about that.

MR. AMES: This is an unfinished page from the Galena (phonetic) manuscript about 1400. And it contains a lay-in of a drawing of St. John the Baptist. Part of the border is incomplete, and one of John the Baptist's legs are not visible. And (inaudible) signed it, obviously (inaudible) didn't finish this side. But on the verso, you have a series of prayers, and the initial letters have not been inserted yet. (Inaudible) never mind all that. At any rate, it's an interesting object, such as one would not catch anywhere.

MR. BROWN: No. And you're particularly interested because it did show process?

MR. AMES: It showed process, yes, and it was unfinished. Capital letters missing on one side, details missing on the front side. And here's a -- I keep it handy, I keep a translation, and so on. And that was (inaudible) one of the large series of family documents that I inherited several years ago, most fascinating. This was signed by Diveo (phonetic) Thomas.

MR. BROWN: Who was a Marshfield in --

MR. AMES: (Inaudible) yes. Up about here is a most interesting brush drawing, entirely done entirely with a brush, by a Dutch -- Franco-Dutch draftsman. They're accompanied (inaudible) patron Charles II back from exile in Holland after the death of Cromwell and the end of the inter-regnum between Charles I and Charles II.

MR. BROWN: And did you pick that up because of interest in English history or do you think because of the quality?

MR. AMES: I picked it up because of it's quality and because it's drawn entirely with a brush.

MR. BROWN: With a brush, um-hm.

MR. AMES: Wonderful. And I keep it way up there because it saves it from fading. It's a great effort in this house to keep things from fading, especially watercolors.

MR. BROWN: You keep them in this darker part here, watercolors?

MR. AMES: No direct sun can get in here, even though any number of (inaudible). St. James' palace and (inaudible) Prince Albert, and they had been married only three months. And she was (inaudible) bluecoat school and drawings of ships. (Inaudible)

MR. BROWN: The discussion we had about Albert's taste.

MR. AMES: Yes. This is all Albert in here.

MR. BROWN: These are things you mainly acquired in the 1850s when you were doing those studies?

MR. AMES: Yes, exactly, yes. There's the first (inaudible) as a very old man, on the day of the opening of the Crystal Palace.

MR. BROWN: In the 1850s?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. He didn't live much longer. There's Albert himself as a young man. There's a print of Albert as an old man with a bit of his autograph. There's another drawing of the First Duke of Wellington (inaudible). And there's the room where he died (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: Were these -- such items as these related to Albert and his time, and Wellington, fairly easy to acquire in the 1950s in England?

MR. AMES: Yes, they were. Yes, absolutely. I think I bought them at --

MR. BROWN: The one of Wellington as an old man.

MR. AMES: -- at an auction, less than the equivalent of 30 dollars. This is one of a large series of documents that I inherited, in which the name John Winslow, Esquire -- reported and commissioned to be judged in the probate from (inaudible). I've got a lot of documents of that sort. A drawing by Edward Lear.

MR. BROWN: Is he a particular favorite of yours?

MR. AMES: Well, I was brought up, of course, on his limericks, which he invented. But he was an excellent artist, as a matter of fact. And oddly enough, I bought this at auction in Newport, not very many miles away, dirt cheap. Apparently nobody recognized it. It's wonderful because it's in very, very soft pencil. It's the softest possible graphite. And it's looking north towards the Italian Alps, or somewhere perhaps 20 miles away. But Lear wrote on it himself, nobody (phonetic). He must have forgotten. He spent the entire year in Italy, you know, 1840 (inaudible) looking north towards the Italian Alps. Very soft pencil -- graphite is the softest wood.

That's a joke. Looks like watermelon, and it's a (inaudible) designed for a textile ornament (inaudible). That's another Japanese-French drawing.

MR. BROWN: That's (inaudible) a rooster.

MR. AMES: Wonderful, wonderful piece.

MR. BROWN: Marvelous.

MR. AMES: Claws planted on the ground.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: Wonderful tail. I think that's alive. I think I paid 18 dollars for that.

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible)

MR. AMES: That's one of the numerous designs, the prettiest ornament by my late Aunt Louisa Ames (inaudible) famous Boston printing house, not the Marymont Press, but somebody very like.

This is from -- I bought this for several reasons. This is a proclamation, a self-proclamation of the accession of Charles I (inaudible). And this is Charles I announcing his own accession. But I liked it because it's a whole sheet of paper of the smallest size, the type that was called pot, pot. It was watermarked with a flower pot, and it is decorated all around. Dated 1625, printers (inaudible) and so on, and "God Save the King."

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. AMES: He proclaims his own accession and then says, "God Save the King."

MR. BROWN: "God save me."

(Laughter)

MR. AMES: That's a souvenir of the time spent in England, getting ready Prince Albert and Victorian Taste. This is Piccadilly, of course. That's the Royal Society of Arts.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: That's the acronym. I don't know what is. It must be about, oh, anywhere from 1795 to 1810. St. James the Great, house of (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: An animal or (inaudible).

MR. AMES: Yes, those things.

MR. BROWN: What have we here?

MR. AMES: This I bought when I was new to the Quaker transport, as a souvenir, because this is -- this I'm pretty sure is in the northwest corner of Brittany. And that's the English Channel. And in the distance is the town of Guérambe, G-u-e -- accent -- r-a-m-b-e. And you can see over this seaside cliff -- you can see the masts of ships anchored on the other side of the ground. And here, right close to the shore, are windmills. And I don't know what they would be doing right there. But the whole foreground is occupied by the (inaudible); in other words, the farm culture and the making of salt. This is titled "Tidal Region," and you just let the saltwater in. Take a spade and close in the things, and let it evaporate, and you get great salt that way.

MR. BROWN: So you got this as a measure of a souvenir of your first duty?

MR. AMES: As a souvenir of the Quaker transport job, yes.

MR. BROWN: From the Quaker transport.

MR. AMES: I bought it the day I came away. (Inaudible) This is my living room, and this is (inaudible). On the top shelf there are three pieces of Chinese export porcelain, and two of them extremely fine, the central one and the left one, which has just been over-painted on a place reserved for it, with a (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: These are family pieces, aren't they?

MR. AMES: No. That has nothing to do with either my wife's family or mine. But we both inherited Chinese export porcelain. I don't know. The one on the right is pretty ordinary (inaudible), but these are damn good ones. And the one which was made on purpose was faced with inserting a crest or a monogram, is the very best.

What else? What else? Another family document in the most spectacular (inaudible) frame, much more important than the (inaudible).

MR. BROWN: What about this print up here, or is it a drawing?

MR. AMES: It's a drawing, as a matter of fact.

MR. BROWN: A drawing.

MR. AMES: It's a drawing for a series of illustrations to the Beatitudes. And heavens, I've forgotten the artist for the moment. It belonged to my Aunt Louise Norman. It was by Robert Emming Bell (phonetic). Anyway, for Palandor or something, of the Beatitudes. And I'm trying to put that back now.

This is a silly thing. These things would fall down. You have to keep them away from the walls. This is foam rubber.

MR. BROWN: Yes, certainly.

MR. AMES: That is just a (inaudible), tiny woodcut. I don't know where it comes from, late sixteenth century, in the most extravagant Baroque frame, specifically noted. But the frame is so crazy, it just happened to fit just right.

MR. BROWN: Are religious subjects a sub-interest of yours in your collection?

MR. AMES: No, not honestly.

MR. BROWN: Not particularly?

MR. AMES: I've been perfectly eclectic about it. Sometimes, it's a matter of whim. Sometimes, it's a matter of whether you happen to have money today.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Yes. Which I suppose you've always enjoyed the chance -- the role that chance plays in collecting?

MR. AMES: Absolutely. This is a funny mixture of my wife's family and mine.

MR. BROWN: The very silhouettes and drawings?

MR. AMES: Yes. One of these is one of those pull-out enlargements that used to be made in the beginning of photography when photography itself was not quite respectable. So you had somebody in the family photograph, you would have a pull-out enlargement made from the photograph. And that's the great uncle as a little boy, of my wife. And there's a portrait of her.

MR. BROWN: Of your wife?

MR. AMES: Yes. And this was before we were married, '27, yes. And we were married a few years later in '31. That's Leland Johnson, my great-great grandfather.

MR. BROWN: In silhouette.

MR. AMES: Yes. And he was a lawyer and a publisher of law reports in New York.

MR. BROWN: New York.

MR. AMES: And (inaudible) at Trinity Church. He lived in Wall Street. Imagine living in Wall Street. And that's his wife, Mariah Templeton. Interesting because that silhouette is on Punch paper. He'd make his name, Punch silhouette, embossed.

What else? A centenary medallion.

MR. BROWN: Oh, that is a souvenir in the sense of your time in Connecticut?

MR. AMES: Yes, exactly. This is interesting. That was a (inaudible) military that was among the silver things my father bought in Guatemala in 1917, and must originally have had saint's bones or something in it.

MR. BROWN: Part of -- in this room are also pieces of furniture I think you've point out before.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Particularly these side chairs and the day couch.

MR. AMES: Yes. The six chairs and the settee are by Duncan Fife, and they were bought by William Johnson. He lived in Wall Street. They are in very good shape. They occasionally lose a toe.

MR. BROWN: Which you replace.

MR. AMES: Which I eventually will glue on again. I've got them stowed away somewhere. The settee and six chairs.

MR. BROWN: How about over here?

MR. AMES: Over here, there's another crayon enlargement.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: In my family, that was my unmarried great-aunt Laura. There's another -- two more of the (inaudible) documents signed by various forebears. That one was Josiah Winslow. And I can't read that one. (Inaudible) was probably a receipt.

MR. BROWN: Right here is a drawing, an ink drawing by Ben Shawn (phonetic).

MR. AMES: Ben Shawn, and there's more Ben Shawn upstairs.

MR. BROWN: Did you have a particular liking for his work, say, in the --

MR. AMES: Yes, I did. I like this because, again, it's a brush drawing, entirely a brush drawing except for the signature.

MR. BROWN: You like things that are unlabored, don't you? You like the fluency.

MR. AMES: Yes, I mean, look at this. That just indicates that (inaudible) whole idea is a promotion of the line of people carrying things on their heads.

MR. BROWN: What about over the mantle, the drawings?

MR. AMES: Over the mantle?

MR. BROWN: The elaborate --

MR. AMES: The drawing is a seventeenth century (inaudible) child, obviously drawn from the painter's own family, a child (inaudible), 15 months, maybe.

MR. BROWN: Yes. In a woman's lap.

MR. AMES: Yes. The frame is a super-duper seventeenth century frame (inaudible). It's such a marvelous frame. It's the only really old frame other than the tortoise shell ones that I have.

MR. BROWN: Are frames of some importance to you?

MR. AMES: Yes. I never went out looking for one, but when I bought my -- saw a seventeenth century frame like that, there's a tiny damage in one upper corner, but it was too good to resist.

MR. BROWN: Certainly.

MR. AMES: You wait for something to put into it, instead of going out to look for the frame. This is the earliest drawing. And I wish I could find the other two (inaudible) of it. They must be somewhere. This is probably a lay-in

for a tapestry and something because it's a (inaudible) of the virgin, because here's the high priest with the virgin Mary's hand in one and St. Joseph's hand in the other.

And here is even the ritual breaking of the stick, making symbolic of the breaking of the maidenhead, which will follow the marriage. Must be about 1800. And again, this is drawn entirely with a brush. I would love to find the other two (inaudible) of it. It must be somewhere.

MR. BROWN: Are studies like this of that age very unusual?

MR. AMES: Most unusual, yes.

MR. BROWN: You think so?

MR. AMES: Most unusual because these were obviously done rapidly. And the cartoons prepared from something lacquered like this. This is the drawing that (inaudible) about -- it's dated, as a matter of fact. I think it's dated 1632, out of this series of the (inaudible) virgins. There were five of them, and this is the one symbolic of -- you know, they were symbolic over the centuries (inaudible). She has the little oil lamp.

MR. BROWN: And behind you on the bottom, what is this?

MR. AMES: Oh, this is part of the illustrations for the story of Joan of Arc (inaudible), French illustrator. Joan of Arc in her soldier's costume, man's costume, falling under the battlements of (inaudible).

This is very prized souvenir of an enthusiastic young woman who greatly admired my father. It begins "Dear Mr. Ames" and continued for four pages.

MR. BROWN: Wow.

MR. AMES: Nothing on the other side. Here she is in her cap and gown wearing (inaudible).

(Laughter)

MR. BROWN: And she sent this letter to your father, 1904?

MR. AMES: Yes. It happened to have been written, since there was a 29th of February in the year 1904, and my mother's birthday, because she was born on February 29th, which occurs only every four years, in '76.

MR. BROWN: Now we're in your study.

MR. AMES: This is all the materials.

MR. BROWN: Yes, that you've been gathering together.

MR. AMES: Yes. Books, books, books, books. I'm trying to get rid of them. There's a drawing by (inaudible), as a matter of fact, a huge bush drawing. (Inaudible)

MR. BROWN: These were done fairly recently, right?

MR. AMES: Fairly recently, yes.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: There's another one.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Have you always done a little bit of drawing?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. And I love drawing with a brush, at arm's length. (Inaudible) This is one of (inaudible) an assembly of things. I love this photograph of peppers, green peppers or red peppers, because it's so like these human anatomies.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. AMES: Let me see. Books, books, books, books, books. (Inaudible) of old (inaudible) drawing publications and (inaudible) master drawings, which is still going on. There's my friend (inaudible), the humpback.

MR. BROWN: Did you get involved with the drawing society for a long time?

MR. AMES: Oh, yes, yes, a long time.

MR. BROWN: And have you been an advisor and on their board?

MR. AMES: Yes. And I'm off now. Heavens, everything you -- anything, everything here. This is all kinds of stuff. (Inaudible) one more by me.

MR. BROWN: Another figure study.

MR. AMES: (Inaudible) There's a drawing of me by George Corbay (phonetic), German sculptor.

MR. BROWN: That was done in this country?

MR. AMES: No, not at all. That was done in Germany years ago, the first time I was in Germany. And I was just out of graduate school.

MR. BROWN: Did you have him do that? Or he asked to have you model for him?

MR. AMES: Well, he asked -- as a matter of fact, I think again this results from Eddie Warburg. Eddie Warburg and Lincoln Christie, who said, "You know, Corbay loves to have unfamiliar models. And you can make a date with his secretary, and simply go. And he'll make a number of drawings." And as a matter of fact, he made several drawings of me, and then gave me this one and inscribed it. So I'm very happy to have that.

MR. BROWN: A very nice drawing.

MR. AMES: That is absolutely a marvelous piece. I love it because it's on one whole -- another whole sheet of beautiful paper, Vasquez (phonetic).

MR. BROWN: It's a floral piece, isn't it?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. I'm crazy about that drawing. As a matter of fact, that's one drawing that I could put in the light because it's on very good paper. And again, it's all India ink. This is (inaudible) too in a quite different mood.

MR. BROWN: Yes. A peculiar bird.

MR. AMES: Yes. Gaston Lachaise.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. This is one that you acquired when you went to -- about the time you got your piece?

MR. AMES: Yes, yes. Stairs here in the summer.

MR. BROWN: You live up here in the summer?

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: And in this room we have -- in the middle there's a watercolor of the garage of the house.

MR. AMES: That's the house we lived in in New London when we were first married. And there's the Lachaise.

MR. BROWN: Oh, yes. Here's the Lachaise. It's perched on the terrace outside this older house. And as you said, it was in a rather prominent corner.

MR. AMES: It certainly was, and got decorated by the Coast Guard cadets from about 100 yards away.

MR. BROWN: And next to it is a --

MR. AMES: Another Lachaise.

MR. BROWN: Are these ones you particularly liked? There's a male nude by Lachaise in the other room, and here is a female.

MR. AMES: Yes.

MR. BROWN: These were ones that you asked for? The big (inaudible)?

MR. AMES: I must have bought that one on the spot. You know, his wife was terribly greedy. She kept him broke. If she was keeping him unusually broke, he would sell something on the spot. I think I bought it directly from him; I wouldn't want to swear to that. Many things here -- this is interesting. That's a New Hampshire chair.

MR. BROWN: A side chair.

MR. AMES: A typical New Hampshire thing with (inaudible) voids. You know, it's usually the other way around; it's flat in the middle, hollow in the middle. It's a sure sign of New Hampshire. I bought that for something like 12 dollars at auction in New London when we were first married. And years later, here, here is a real swell New Hampshire chair. Look at the rake of the back legs.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. AMES: That is a real -- that is a real high-class chair. That's just (inaudible) chair. See how they made it? Look at the carving at the intersection.

MR. BROWN: Carving with rosettes in the corners, but the same void in the middle.

MR. AMES: The same void. And on this (inaudible) New Hampshire. I was tickled to death to buy that at auction, here in Rhode Island.

MR. BROWN: Have you had at one time or another a good deal of more early furniture, which is now dispersed?

MR. AMES: No.

MR. BROWN: Because you've had a long-time interest in it, haven't you?

MR. AMES: Yes, I had a long-time interest. But not much --

MR. BROWN: More looking and more appraising and less buying for yourself?

MR. AMES: I bought that stool simply because it was straight-legged and looked nice.

MR. BROWN: It went well with these straight-legged chairs.

MR. AMES: The bed steps. The bed steps are endless now. I bought them because I inherited a very high bed.

MR. BROWN: It should suit it very well.

MR. AMES: This is a (inaudible) from Marshfield's (inaudible) bequeathed to me by an aunt.

MR. BROWN: What about the Japanese print on the far wall?

MR. AMES: Oh, that's a good luck piece. That's a good luck piece. We've kept it by -- I bought it -- I think I bought it shortly before we were married. And as it shows another suckling infant, (inaudible) good luck charm. We've had six children, five of whom survived. Wonderful.

MR. BROWN: What is this drawing?

MR. AMES: This tiny creatures by our son-in-law Gary Adamson of St. Louis. And this -- he's a gifted amateur.

MR. BROWN: And it's to --

MR. AMES: It's his two eldest children. And this is by his daughter, Helen Adamson. A cute, funny drawing of nothing but a ladder. So I put it into a sort of 1880 frame that I happened to have that fit it. This is the product of (inaudible) discovery in California years ago. We went to San Diego, for I had several cousins in San Diego. And one of them, Dorfield (phonetic) Johnson, lives -- lived -- he still does I guess. Yes, his older brother Winthrop Johnson is dead, but Dorfield is a little bit crazy. I think he's been captured by the Jehovah's Witnesses. I'm not sure.

At any rate, he acquired through a Cincinnati forebear a whole series of these drawings, which are designed for tokens and emblems of Louis XV. And I published them and bought one of them to keep because it's such a wonderful backstage view. You're looking out into the audience.

MR. BROWN: Aha. And these were found by this cousin?

MR. AMES: Well, he didn't know what they were.

MR. BROWN: He didn't know what he had?

MR. AMES: He didn't know what he has.

MR. BROWN: No.

MR. AMES: He didn't know what he had. I published them. And he sent a number of them to auction just to cash them. Some of them were sold and were right, and some of them were just (inaudible).

Alison, when she's here, has -- she's a vice president (inaudible) gramophone, and she has all kinds of extraordinary radio and -- well, reproduction equipment, some of which you see there.

MR. BROWN: What do we have here in the hallway?

MR. AMES: These pictures of a mother and daughter are little silhouettes in color, watercolor, of Ames relatives who were Loyalists in the time of the Revolution, and who left the country and went to Canada. And these little silhouettes of them were sent back years later, along with a letter dated 1809 from Canada to the remaining relatives. I don't know whether they regretted leaving, being Loyalists, or what. Anyway, came to me along with a lot of family documents, and with the miniatures.

(END OF INTERVIEW)

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