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Oral history interview with Anne Gerber,  
1983 Feb. 24-Apr. 21

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Anne Gerber on February 24, March 4, & April 21, 1983. The interview took place in Seattle, Washington, and was conducted by Anne Focke for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Interview

DATE: FEBRUARY 24, 1983

[Tape 1, Side 1]

ANNE FOCKE: Now, you were just about to talk about.. You were at the University [University of Washington--Ed.]. When was that?

ANNE GERBER: '29.

ANNE FOCKE: 1929?

ANNE GERBER: Class of '32. I started as an art major and didn't know who the head of the department was until I was a sophomore. The end of my sophomore year, I thought that little man with the mild blue eyes and steel-rimmed glasses was a janitor! And my teacher then was Ambrose Patterson and Hill, Raymond Hill; I liked them both a lot, but [Walter] Isaacs was the greatest influence. His idea was that students should not be told. They had to find out for themselves; they had to go more than half way. And so for two or three years, more than two years, I was in utter confusion! Nobody would tell me! (laughter) And then it began to come with spending a lot of time with magazines and books and listening. There wasn't too much looking to do because everything was in 3 by 7 reproductions or 5 x 8 reproductions. You have to go more than half way to have anything reach, under those circumstances. Isaacs, of course, had become a disciple of Cezanne and that's where his colors came from, his organization. I really loved him, especially when I got to sit next to him at dinner at someone's house, and with a few drinks under his belt he was probably the funniest man I ever knew! I just loved him. My sad thing was that he asked everybody else to sit for his portrait and never asked me. And that isn't very important.

ANNE FOCKE: Well...

ANNE GERBER: But that's the way it was!

ANNE FOCKE: Were you studying painting?

ANNE GERBER: Oh sure. I ended with a sculpture and painting major.

ANNE FOCKE: Ah ha! Who was teaching sculpture?

ANNE GERBER: Their only teacher was Dudley Carter, the white man carver of Indian motifs and... [Dudley Carver was, indeed, the "white man carver" but he didn't teach at the University of Washington. Dudley Pratt was the sculpture teacher--Ed.] Oh oh. I'm sorry. I've got to go down and turn...

ANNE FOCKE: No trouble.

ANNE GERBER: I'm sorry, I've got to...

ANNE FOCKE: You were talking about Dudley Pratt being the only sculpture teacher.

ANNE GERBER: Um hmm. I started sculpture in the beginning of my junior year and I liked it so much I just kind of forgot about painting.

ANNE FOCKE: Was that wood or...

ANNE GERBER: Never. Didn't do any wood; it was clay.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh. Anything else?

ANNE GERBER: No, I think we were just modeling from clay.

ANNE FOCKE: Did you continue to keep up? I mean after graduating?

ANNE GERBER: No. I was married then and life was too interesting. I was never meant-- I'm sure I was never

meant to be a practicing artist. Never an artist; always an artnik!

ANNE FOCKE: Ho.

ANNE GERBER: Sidney wanted me to be an artist, but he didn't understand that, probably because it was so hard for me to do, I never... It was easier for me just to lay off and besides that, life was so interesting as a satellite, and as his satellite, that I didn't feel any need to go be an artist!

ANNE FOCKE: Did you stay in touch with Walter Isaacs and some of the people...?

ANNE GERBER: Oh! After I was married...

ANNE FOCKE: You got married right out of school?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, about two years after I was out of school. I knew Sidney from the last year, as soon as the ski business got big enough... He started his own, and as soon as it got enough business, we had to start to go to New York. That was the difference between my life in Seattle under the aegis of the University of Washington School of Art and knowing what was happening in the world. I mean all the difference, 'cause the School of Art didn't believe that anyone, anywhere, was doing anything of importance, and that the world was just giving the School of Art a bad time. Nothing more or nothing less. They just insulate their students, and still do, I think, to a majority extent. So we went to New York for a few years.

ANNE FOCKE: You spent time there or you went back and...?

ANNE GERBER: Never more than two weeks. That was around 1945, 1946. You know, as soon after the war as we could and that was when we began to buy the Stieglitz group, one of each. Marsden Hartley, John Marin, Max Weber-- those are the main ones. And then an American or two like Jack Levine. Then we got the Max Beckmann.. That was a couple years later-- we're getting more money, you see.

ANNE FOCKE: Had you started collecting before, around here?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, here! Here! We didn't have enough money! We lived in a houseboat on Lake Union and we had our houseboat filled with a Matisse reproduction, the de Chirico reproductions, and [Georges] Braque. You couldn't do without a Braque.

ANNE FOCKE: These were reproductions?

ANNE GERBER: Picasso. All reproductions. And then once we got a Paul Immel [Seattle--Ed.] watercolor. Nobody every hears about him any more but it was a beautiful free wash, always a flower. And that was about the time we got out. And I never had any of the locals! We didn't have enough money to buy an Isaacs, or a Ambrose Patterson, for another six or eight years.

ANNE FOCKE: Were there places in Seattle at that point to see things? I mean, were there galleries?

ANNE GERBER: I didn't have to. They were my teachers. There weren't many places where you could go and see things, except in museums. Fuller always showed some of them, in support of them, pretty much.

ANNE FOCKE: When did that start? That was 1933 or '34, right around then?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Well I was the class of '32, so I was aware of a lot of them before that. From 1929 on. Then, we got to go to Paris! We got to go to Europe.

ANNE FOCKE: When was that?

ANNE GERBER: That was in 1948. And in '48, I hadn't... When we went to New York, we didn't know about Tenth Street; we didn't know about Dick Bellamy. So in Paris, we did everything we could, in between Sidney working, to find out what was coming. And I knew that Picasso had been there long enough and that there had to be something percolating in opposition to Picasso, but I didn't see anything. It wasn't until I got back to the United States that I found it was all happening in New York! (laughs) That's when we began to see the abstract expressionists. And we didn't have enough money to buy one! 'Cause by that time, you see, they were going about five years, by 1950, and we couldn't even adjust to them. You have to be able to go half way before you're willing to put your money out. And by the time we got to love 'em we couldn't afford 'em. (laughs) So, we were buying... Every time we bought something. Then finally we came back with that Max Beckmann and the little Kandinski and the little Klee, and a Hartley.

ANNE FOCKE: This was on that trip?

ANNE GERBER: Well, that was in the years in New York before. The stuff was filtering over to New York from Europe and then when we found Tenth Avenue... Oh God, the first time we went to Dick Bellamy's it was nothing but garbage. Everything was tied together with safety pins. Things were hanging from the ceiling, and it was just jury-rigged. (laughs) We didn't understand it. We didn't know it was... It didn't occur to us that it was that way only because of poverty, just strictly poverty. Because shortly after that it got very crafted, very well crafted, and...because it was beginning to get recognized.

So, we bought. The first time we saw DeKooning was at the Janis Gallery and we were both just repelled. It was the best of DeKooning's Woman series, just the best. And that dissonance, that extreme dissonance was repelling to us. Then by God, Anne, all year, all the following year, we never even mentioned DeKooning, but we both thought about those paintings. And when we went back to New York, the first place we went to was Janis Gallery, and you know, they were out of sight! One year later!

ANNE FOCKE: Just that long?

ANNE GERBER: And we got one, we got one of the Woman series, but it's truncated so it doesn't have that beautiful expression.

ANNE FOCKE: Is that in the museum now?

ANNE GERBER: Um hmm.

ANNE FOCKE: So that was what?

ANNE GERBER: That was probably getting into '50, somewhere around there. Because it wasn't until then that the business was having enough profit to... Oh, it wasn't the business even. The stock market was very good. You know Bobby Block?

ANNE FOCKE: I know who he is, yes.

ANNE GERBER: Well his father was a very sharp man. He was in the... You want to turn it off?

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah, you want me to turn it off?

[Tape stopped at ANNE GERBER's request]

ANNE GERBER: So, where are we going? So that's how we could accumulate that very modest collection of paintings for really hardly any money. I would like to remember the name of some of those galleries, 'cause they were...

ANNE FOCKE: The galleries in New York?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, besides the Janis. Edith Halperin Gallery was one of them? Well, I can't, so...

ANNE FOCKE: Where did Sidney get his interest in art? You know, did he start...?

ANNE GERBER: Well, he was a graduate of MIT. He was an engineer, and he never had any formal training, but he had a natural feeling and, immodestly, I helped him a lot!

ANNE FOCKE: I imagine.

ANNE GERBER: He loved it. He was like a sponge. The first time we went to New York-- 'course, he always-- I think he married me because I was interested in art.

ANNE FOCKE: There might have been a couple of other reasons.

ANNE GERBER: And we said goodbye in the hotel; we were both ready to go, and he gave me a pad of paper and a pencil and he said, "Now, you go to as many galleries as you can and what you remember-- what you're interested in-- you write down, and at the weekend we'll go together and see them." And that's just what I did. Well, I would have gone anyway, but I wouldn't have put them down on a piece of paper. (laughs)

Just before we left here, the museum [Seattle Art Museum--Ed.] had a pretty, for me it was a pretty marvelous ceramic show coming out of a school in New York that had the best ceramic department in the country. And, bi-yearly they send a show around the country. And that's how I got that, the dancers, the two sort of pre-Columbian dancers?

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: I just fell for them when I saw them.

ANNE FOCKE: So you got them here?

ANNE GERBER: Got them here. But the two weeks [in New York--Ed.] was almost up, and I was looking frantically for something, but I didn't like anything! I didn't see anything I liked for the amount of money we could spend. So Sidney said, "What have you found?" And I said, "I haven't seen anything that I really like. I keep remembering that sculpture in Seattle." And he said, "Well, why don't you call 'em up and tell them to keep it, so they don't send it back?" So that's how we got that one.

ANNE FOCKE: And that was your first trip to New York?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah!

ANNE FOCKE: And the thing you bought was something in Seattle?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And that was the first sculpture we bought. And I never, I've always liked it, enough not to deaccession it. By deaccession, I mean giving it away.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. And it's Pre-Columbian?

ANNE GERBER: No, it was sculpted by an Austrian immigrant by the name of Adolf Odorfer, who had escaped Nazi Germany. I didn't know that when I bought it, but he's influenced by pre-Columbian.

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: You know it's clear when you see it. And then later on we were on a buying trip-- a selling trip, I mean-- to do the mountain resorts in California. And Sid said "Let's go visit him in Fresno." So we went way out of our way to visit Adolf Odorfer. He taught ceramics at one of the community colleges down there. Oh, he was such a nice man; we just loved him. Then what happened?

ANNE FOCKE: Your trips to New York were in-- the first ones were in the late forties, right after the War, and fifties.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, well that went on until about '55 or '60. We'd go back to New York and always bring home a couple of things. Then, in the meantime, sailing, we accidentally found the Indian villages.

ANNE FOCKE: You were sailing.

ANNE GERBER: Sailing north in the Inside Passage. Every summer we took off around July 4, to go up north.

ANNE FOCKE: How large a boat did you have?

ANNE GERBER: We started out with a 32-foot double ender. Sailed that boat, the [Mon Reve] for 12, 13 years and we were, one weekend, we were at Alert Bay and we had to wait over the weekend for [Perry and] Jean Johanson to meet us up there. We didn't want to stay and be pounded against the wharfs or against a purse seiner, so we pulled up anchor and went in toward the mainland to find a harbor to spend the night in. And while Sidney was throwing the lead line for the deck, I was at the tiller, and I looked up. We were on the shore-- it was a beautiful place-- and he was trying to find the depth so he could let the anchor down. I happened to look up and there was a forest of totem poles. When I showed them to him, he stopped, and we went around the corner and there was a village in front of us. And there was a float, and three-- it was a smaller fish boat and then a purse seiner and I can't remember the name of it. There were three tied up, so we knew there were people there. So we tied up to the float and took a walk ashore along the path, about two blocks long, that was lined on both sides with totems that we had seen from the other side of the bay, or around the corner. And, oh my God, it was gorgeous! It was just spine tingling to see those totems out there and most of them had lines that were, you know, laundry lines attached from the house out to the pole, in back. They were pulleys.

ANNE FOCKE: It was a lived-in...?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yeah, it was a live village. And nobody came out. We didn't see a soul. And then I, I felt unwelcome. And I knew the reason why, so I said to Sidney, "Let's go. They just don't want us around here. And he looked down at me and said, "Annie! When we leave here, we're going to have friends!"

So, we went back to the boat- it was a lovely sunny day for a change. You know, it's very wet up there, gray all the time, and the water is always falling. So we went on the deck and got comfortable with some cushions. Pretty soon the little kids came until the whole place was filled with little twerps. And we passed out Kleenex and then cookies and we asked them to invite their families on the boat in the afternoon for coffee or tea and some

cookies, and they came! All afternoon they came. That's how we got acquainted. And that was a village where they had a new long-house, and the long-house was complete with posts at each end. That pole out there is one of them. We were able to buy it because an American yacht had come up the summer, two summers before, and ordered it. The Indian carver had stayed away from fishing the season to carve it, and the man never came back, so it was for sale. And he had another one to take its place, so...

ANNE FOCKE: Ah ha. When was that? All of this.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, that happened between '49, '50, on for about 12 years. And then after that...

ANNE FOCKE: The poles were recent at that point?

ANNE GERBER: Well, they were new! And then, every year we went up there. And then, gradually we got into Blundin Harbor and met Willie Seaweed. Willie Seaweed's going to have a retrospective, a major retrospective in the Science Center next summer!

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, how nice.

ANNE GERBER: In John Hauberg's Long House post.

ANNE FOCKE: Uh huh!

ANNE GERBER: Oh God! I would sometime like you to see those pictures, those slides of that whole period. Sidney's slides are just gorgeous!

ANNE FOCKE: That would be wonderful. Have you done that talk?

ANNE GERBER: I do it all the time. I did it last Friday for a group of 15. One woman. I put it on for the ACLU auction, and I furnished wine and cheese and crackers. They paid, I don't know what they paid ACLU, but you know, it was the best thing I could do. And these people came last, last..

Then we'd ask people and generally find the villages; they're not on the chart. And the Indian agent, like all Indian agents, are absolutely noncommunicative. We got into Blundin Harbor where Willie Seaweed lived, and we went ashore and found out where he lives and then every year after that he would come and have dinner with us.. And, he was the master mast carver, and at the same time..

ANNE FOCKE: Mast carver?

ANNE GERBER: Totem mast carver, and at the same time, Mungo Martin was the master pole carver. UBC [University of British Columbia--Ed.] hired Mungo to reproduce a lot of poles that were on the way out. They were decaying a lot; mainly from the Haidas, from the Queen Charlottes.

ANNE FOCKE: All of these?

ANNE GERBER: Those were all..

ANNE FOCKE: Willie Seaweed?

ANNE GERBER: No, no. Willie Seaweed's Kwakiutl. Queen Charlottes is just north of the tip of Vancouver Island, out about 50miles.

ANNE FOCKE: That's out in the bay?

ANNE GERBER: That's out in the ocean. But Port Rupert and Blundin Harbor and all of the three or four villages that we got acquainted with were all Kwakiutls or a mixture of Tsimsian and Kwakiutls. Never mixed with Haidas! Haidas used to come down and enslave all these tribes. They're really tough! They're, of all the West Coast Indians [implication: the toughest of all--Ed.]. Mungo was a Kwakiutl. Willie was a Kwakiutl. (You know, you have to take my pronunciation with a grain of salt.) We found our way in to Blundin Harbor, we went in with a south wind and with our sails wing and wing, spread, you know, like a butterfly. We hardly got through that little tiny opening. Oh, it was a thrill! The village was lined. We could see the village three-quarters of a mile away on a crescent, and just over on one side was a little tiny island which we knew was a burial ground because all everybody there had their totems or food bowls-- they were visible. They're either out of there and reproduced or rotted away, 'cause they didn't ever put preservative on their wood. By the way, I just spent \$300 bucks to have this one..

ANNE FOCKE: Preserved?

ANNE GERBER: Preserved. (laughs) It's going to last a long time now. And then we met-- oh that little Willie, he was just such a marvelous man!

ANNE FOCKE: He's not alive?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, no. He's been dead now. How long, I can't..

ANNE FOCKE: He was the master carver at that point; he was no young..?

ANNE GERBER: No, he was an old man.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, it's nice that he's having a retrospective.

ANNE GERBER: We were acquainted quite a few years before that with Mungo, 'cause he was already working in...

ANNE FOCKE: In Victoria?

ANNE GERBER: In Victoria! Reproducing. And he got all his young relatives carving to try to train them, but I don't think they have it. I heard Lawney Reyes at the City Club, day before yesterday, and I was interested to know that he thought that the Indian carvers now are just not up to what the old fellows were. I think Bill Holm, who is a Scandinavian Eskimo, is the best.

ANNE FOCKE: Now how did you get to know Bill?

ANNE GERBER: Well, Bill.. Let's see. When did he enter our lives? ..or we enter his? Oh, we got acquainted with him, I think even before we found the villages, because he was-- and Roger Ernesti and Michael Johnson and what's her name?

ANNE FOCKE: Sherry?

ANNE GERBER: Michael and Sherry and Bill Holm were the same generation, and they were dancing with Roger Ernesti. Bill was really the leader of the whole thing, but it was Roger who was the Indian. And of course he left here and went over somewhere east of the mountains.

ANNE FOCKE: Roger?

ANNE GERBER: Roger Ernesti had a trading company there, he sold a lot of Indian things from all over, but I haven't heard his name lately. So I don't know if he's still living.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, when was that?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, that must have been around.. I can't say.. You know when you live this long, it's kind of hard to get back into it. I don't have any frame of references; they're all mixed up!

ANNE FOCKE: Had you collected things by then?

ANNE GERBER: We didn't start collecting until we found the villages and bought that pole, the first thing.

ANNE FOCKE: And so you knew Bill.?

ANNE GERBER: We knew him way before that. It was Ruth Penington that was really responsible for knowing something about the Indian form, because that old building of the Alaska Yukon Exhibition. Was it still up in there [on the University of Washington campus--Ed.]?

ANNE FOCKE: It wasn't when I was in...

ANNE GERBER: It was around where the Hub is. Is that what they call that Student?

ANNE FOCKE: The Student Union.

ANNE GERBER: The Student Union. She used to send us over there with a big pad and just draw and...

[Tape 1, Side 2]

ANNE GERBER: So, I had that little bit of background of having drawn, copied a lot of different forms and I thought they had an enormous amount of material.

ANNE FOCKE: They being?

ANNE GERBER: At the university. See, the whole anthropology department was based in that building, under Erna Gunther. Oh, they had classrooms there, and then they had the museum part on the first floor. We knew Erna Gunther, too. And, gee, Mel [Melville--Ed.] Jacobs' in that department. So we all had interests, we all had political interests together.

ANNE FOCKE: You and Erna and Bill and...?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, yeah. And all the rest of the liberals. It was a very interesting group. From all departments of the university.

So that was my equipment. I started looking for Indian things after we started sailing, but it wasn't until the time we got to Alert Bay when I saw poles in the garden of the B.C. [British Columbia--Ed.] Packers-- that's the big packing company that Mr. MacMillan practically owns; I'm sure he owns most of it, if not all. He also owns all the forest land, too, the majority of it.

ANNE FOCKE: Up in that area?

ANNE GERBER: MacMillan, you know MacMillan that..

[Tape stopped and started again at ANNE GERBER's request]

ANNE GERBER: (laughs) So then we went across the channel on Vancouver Island.. Near the tip of Vancouver Island there's a marvelous village called Fort Rupert, and Fort Rupert was first established by a combination Indian/English-- an Englishman, a factor. All tradespeople, the trading companies, were called factors. And the head of that company had married an Indian princess from a village close to Ketchikan; that family's name was Wilson.

ANNE FOCKE: The Indian family?

ANNE GERBER: The Indian family. It was an Indian/English family. See, the father was English; the mother was Indian. We had come from Alert Bay at another time of the season, in the year. [Loud bang in the background; apparently a bird flew against the window--Ed.] Oh... [Disappointed sounding] They're just migrating now, and they hit against the window; there'll be a little dead or near dead bird down there. (sighs)

ANNE FOCKE: Does that happen often?

ANNE GERBER: Well, they're just migrating both ways. Now, it'll happen for about a week, and then going down they will, too.

We pulled out in a big wind. Sidney and I were alone 'cause we were waiting for our next batch of guests. And we were headed for Fort Rupert; we'd never been there before, but Sidney thought it would be a good place, out of the wind. And we went out-- there happened to be a good seven or eight fishermen in smaller boats. All Finns. We knew they were all Finns, because there is something about the Finnish character, that tough strength that we could just see. And we could hear 'em talk, too. We knew that it was Finn..

ANNE FOCKE: Oh yeah.

ANNE GERBER: The wind got stronger and stronger and it was almost too much for our boat, so the Finns.. The Finns go into a storm; they don't go out of a storm! We felt fairly safe 'cause we were with them, and we were going to do whatever they did! We went toward a little island (with them), and when we got around to the lee side, there were too many boats already there, so we couldn't stay there. So we kept going. It was 10 o'clock by that time. We kept going with them, and they started going around in circles, just because the wind was so, there was no way that they could find a place to drop their anchors. See, with a situation like that, you can't drop an anchor too close to the person, because when you swing, you get all messed, and...

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: So about 2 a.m. the wind changed, and we followed them until they went to a shore. We just followed them! We knew where they were going. And we dropped the hook. It got more placid, and we went to bed and we were just so excited we didn't get to sleep until about 4 a.m. And then we slept until about 7 or 8, and then we woke up to an absolute flat sea, with blue sky, and sun. And we didn't have any time for breakfast; we had to go ashore. As we rode in the dinghy ashore, this marvelous looking woman (we could see her come down to this beach) -- it was low tide and they have a very low tide there, so we pulled up our pants and took off our shoes and waded ashore. We went as far as we could, and she came down to greet us. It was Marie Wilson, one of the daughters of the factor and the Indian princess. So that's how we met her. She invited us to her house for tea. She had absolutely marvelous artifacts that she inherited, and after that we went to visit her every year, and that's where we got this pole over here, and the two big ladles, and an eagle that was made to look up at



under a stark two-story house with a, this kind of..

ANNE FOCKE: Gable?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, gable. And we used to look... Before that, we never went... We got that later, 'cause after that first time we got acquainted with it and for the next four or five years we always took our friends up to see that eagle. Then, one year the owner sent his little son, down to the shore, to ask if we wanted to buy it. And at first we were elated! But then we thought, we'll never see it again here, in this place where we should see it. All the time we felt that none of that stuff should have been taken out of British Columbia. None of it! But nobody else was preserving it, and so that's how we insulated our feelings.

ANNE FOCKE: Conscience.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And so we went home with that on our stays. And then.. At the end of the summer we always used to go up to River's Inlet. From Fort Rupert we crossed Queen Charlotte Straits, and that's open ocean. I'm getting.. Pardon me. I'm getting cold.

ANNE FOCKE: Okay.

[Tape is stopped]

ANNE GERBER: We were up at River's Inlet, and that brought on the MacMillan story which we won't put in here, and... (laughs) God, it's.. That would just about end the Indian part, except that once a big truck came up to our house in Medina; it had eight or ten artifacts and they had not been able to get in touch with us. They had just sent them down! They had a price on each thing, and Sidney just sent 'em a check.

ANNE FOCKE: Who is they?

ANNE GERBER: People from, you see, they are on reservations, and they are in no control of their own lives... But these artifacts belong to them, and that's something that they can realize some money from, and maybe if they'd gone through the agent he wouldn't have allowed them to. I don't know. I have a very low opinion of Indian agents. In the United States and Canada, they're just the low people on the totem.

ANNE FOCKE: So how long did you do that? You had said something like 10 or 12 years?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Yeah. No more. But it was so marvelous when, see that little 32-foot had a very small engine. And it went chug, ca-chug, ca-chug, and they'd hear it, and by the time we'd come around the point-- there are all these points up there to come around-- there'd always be a few people down to say "Hello."

ANNE FOCKE: How nice. You had a lot of friends, then?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. We had a lot of friends. And, you know, a couple of years ago, I was invited to an occasion out there at the Star?

ANNE FOCKE: Daybreak Star?

ANNE GERBER: Daybreak Star. I didn't even know it. They were having a banquet of some kind out there, and I'd just delivered to them a marvelous book by Franz Boas. Oh, I forgot to say that Marie Wilson's brother was George Wilson, and he gave the definitive information to Franz Boas.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh. Huh!

ANNE GERBER: Right there at Fort Rupert, in the house that we visited her! Where we had tea! Oh, it was wonderful. God, I lose my track.

ANNE FOCKE: You were at Daybreak Star.

ANNE GERBER: And at least a dozen of the people that I knew up there were dancing at Daybreak Star.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, how nice. Only a couple of years ago?

ANNE GERBER: Only two years ago, so they made a special point of continuing their culture.

I was invited, through Bill Holm, to the dedication of the Longhouse then, it was 17 or 18 years ago, and Sophie Krauss and I went up. Do you remember Sophie?

ANNE FOCKE: I don't think I ever met her.

ANNE GERBER: We went up there to the potlatch. They had a number of potlatches up there. And, you know how the longhouse is built with a ragged hole in the ceiling. Well, when a beam came to the end it just stopped; they weren't regular, but it made a marvelous effect, and the bonfire in the middle of the longhouse was right in the middle so the smoke would go right up. And all this dancing took place, and sound effects took place around the bonfire. And I heard a young woman say, a young mother say, "Isn't it wonderful, we've discovered our culture before it's gone." And, you know, their little kids were standing there in line, waiting for their chance to dance, and they were dancing in line; they couldn't even wait to dance!

ANNE FOCKE: That's nice.

ANNE GERBER: I think that's the end of the Indian section. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: And now, most of it....

ANNE GERBER: Oh it's lively up there.

ANNE FOCKE: The stuff that you bought, though, that you owned, it's..

ANNE GERBER: It's all at the Burke Museum, except, the only things that I kept were the two poles.

ANNE FOCKE: Now the Burke, you had mentioned the Alaska Yukon Building at the University of Washington. Is that right that that was the anthropology division before?

ANNE GERBER: Um hmm. 'Course when they had to tear down that old building, it was rotten-- it just couldn't have stood. They were worried about the artifacts in there. Then the stuff was stowed away for a long time, until the Burke Museum was built.

ANNE FOCKE: The Burke is really the current home of the..

ANNE GERBER: Um hmm. All the anthropological and Pacific Rim studies are there..

ANNE FOCKE: Ah hah. Was Erna Gunther around for the move?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, but see, her standing in the anthropological world wasn't that high. You know, as much prestige as she had around here, it didn't extend very far. And when we were down in Tucson, on those three years that Sidney worked as a volunteer advisor for the Papagos, we found that they just didn't consider her standing at all. So it wasn't such a shock when the university replaced her with [George--Ed.] Quimby. It was a tough shock for her and all her supporters. She just died not too long ago, didn't she?

ANNE FOCKE: I guess I had heard that. What was this, you were in Tucson for three years?

ANNE GERBER: We were there for three winters. Sidney had just retired from the ski business-- he always wanted to retire when he was 50, so he could do what he wanted to do, because business is a terrible drag. And he was interested in being successful enough to do what he wanted to after he was 50. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: \_\_\_\_\_ it worked?

ANNE GERBER: It did! He couldn't retire until he was 51, because he always had a cooperative system with his employees-- that was how come we could get away on July 4th [for the summer--Ed.]. Everybody owned a part of the business! When they were good years, they got a good bonus. And when they were bad years, you know, we all went down in scale and retreated. We never had any union, any labor problems at all. And they were unionized, too. Sidney didn't believe in discouraging unions-- he believed in unions, and so he was a self-enlightened capitalist.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. But clearly his relationship with the people that worked for him was such that..

ANNE GERBER: Very good! Yeah! In fact, it was so good when he retired that one man just fell apart, he didn't see how he could.. He was unstable enough that so that he didn't understand how his life could go on without Sidney, 'cause he said Sidney just knew how to make things tick.

ANNE FOCKE: It sounds like that was true.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, you said he couldn't retire when he was 50?

ANNE GERBER: Well, he couldn't, because he couldn't find somebody to buy his 49percent, his 51percent share

out. And then he finally did.

ANNE FOCKE: So it was a year later?

ANNE GERBER: It was a year later, in his program. Then we went to Tucson, for three winters where he'd signed up for a volunteer request through the Friends Service Committee; he saw a sign on their bulletin requesting a man with engineering background and a business background to come on the reservation to make a system of rules for their underground mining. Because two years before they had just received their underground mining rights. Big companies would come in and dig without a penny, and in many reservations they're still doing it. Anyway, it took him a lot of work to work with the tribal council to set up a set of rules. And when he finished, it was the year that the Civil Rights Commission was established here. Rossellini was the governor, and I know that Sidney supported him very well, just expecting to be appointed to that commission, and he did! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: He was.

ANNE GERBER: That's how it goes! So, in three years he was through in Tucson, and they had received considerable money from their subsoil mineral rights. Then we came back.. It was not something for me. I left my roots, and I didn't have anything really to do.

ANNE FOCKE: I was wondering how Tucson was as a cultural center?

ANNE GERBER: I hated it. I loved Tucson, but I liked participating in the community, and I was not part of it there. I was just the subsatellite. I did take my jewelry stuff down each year, but still I was cut off. But that wasn't important. Then we came back and Sidney was on the Board Against Discrimination. That's what it was called, the Board Against Discrimination... It has a much better name now, more like Human Rights.

ANNE FOCKE: Human Rights. So that he was what, the first, he was \_\_\_\_\_?

ANNE GERBER: He was the second chairman. And boy, he... That's another story. (laughs) And then, while he was doing that, he was working on... He always had to be busy; he always had to live two-and-a-half days in every day! So then, he thought that... Oh, we lived over in Medina. And that's a strictly WASP neighborhood, not only WASP, but prejudiced WASP. And they hated what he-- they hated because we always had blacks coming over, and then they heard about his fair housing listing service. He developed that through the churches in the whole metropolitan area, and that was done by social action committees.

ANNE FOCKE: Was that fifties maybe?

ANNE GERBER: Sixties.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, sixties. Right.

ANNE GERBER: It was probably from '60 on. He died in '65, so there was only that number of years. He'd get people living in blocks, neighborhood people, knocking on doors of houses with "for sale" signs on them to see if they'd sell to any qualified buyer. Are you interested in that?

ANNE FOCKE: Well, ultimately I think that possibly there's a relationship between one's art interests and one's social interests.

ANNE GERBER: I think so, too, but I didn't want to waste any of your time.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, it's not a waste.. No. We [meaning Gerber and Focke--Ed.] will decide that it's important.

ANNE GERBER: Well, it made it easier for me, because Sidney was always revolutionary in one way or another and so...

ANNE FOCKE: The fair housing...

ANNE GERBER: He had all these families. When we moved, oh God, it's so interesting. (laughs) This recapitulation. I'm getting ahead of myself. When they knew what he was doing...

ANNE FOCKE: They in Medina?

ANNE GERBER: In Medina. There was a letter circulated by a lady realtor. And the letter was addressed to his dead mother and father by their first names, and said...

ANNE FOCKE: Sidney's?

ANNE GERBER: Sidney's mother and father. "You would turn over in your grave if you knew what your husband, your son is doing." And only one neighbor of ours thought enough of us to tell us about that letter. And when we saw that letter we were through over there. We would have sold that house to a black, because we thought that was the right thing to do! We just never found a black who could, who could use that small a house. It only had two bedrooms, and the families had more bedrooms who could afford to pay for it. Sidney never asked houses to be reduced in price for blacks, he just wanted... [Bell rings]

ANNE FOCKE: I guess that's going too?

[Break in tape]

ANNE GERBER: Oh. Well that's how we happened to find this place. We just, the very next Saturday we just took off to see if there wasn't.. Sidney was born and reared right across..

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, really! He was born here?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yeah! He loved this neighborhood. So, we just came over and we went up and down the streets looking for houses. And found this.

ANNE FOCKE: The house was already built, or you found this?

ANNE GERBER: We found this lot.

ANNE FOCKE: The lot, right. I guess I didn't know that you both were born in Seattle?

ANNE GERBER: Um hmm. Now that's sort of an end of the chapter, then, or is it the beginning?

ANNE FOCKE: Well, it's a pause, 'cause I am interested in-- you had mentioned in talking about the anthropology department at the university those of you that shared a like mind politically, and how that seemed, at one place the interest in \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNE GERBER: Oh, at school. I would think that every department had people. That was an easy time to be conscious of what was going on. You know, that was the time of the Spanish anti-Fascist refugee committees that we were on, all of us; that's how we got acquainted with everybody, with that...Also.. This is off? (indicates tape recorder) I don't know about.. Can you edit this when you?

ANNE FOCKE: I don't know, but I can ask that it be..

ANNE GERBER: Well. I don't know. I don't care. Anyway, that's why the other night, at your, at 9-1-1, it brought back that whole time..

ANNE FOCKE: Oh yeah. I could tell. That was real interesting to me. It seemed like that; you were talking before, there were a lot of arts people and so forth involved as well.

ANNE GERBER: Spencer Moseley was interested and active, and he was on the younger side, though. Sophie Rosenstein [and Art].

ANNE FOCKE: I don't know about Sophie Rosenstein.

ANNE GERBER: Well, Sophie.. I just saw the TV edition of the story of Francis Farmer.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh right.

ANNE GERBER: I haven't seen the other one, but the TV one was on, and it was after her autobiography. Of course when she was out of high school, the only way she got to Moscow was to win a prize. I don't know what the prize was for, but she.. Oh, it was for an essay. It was an essay, sponsored by the Russians. And she won it, and she got to Moscow.

ANNE FOCKE: This was, who was this again?

ANNE GERBER: Frances Farmer, remember Francis Farmer! We were good friends of Sophie, and she got exposed to the whole.. You know, we were all Russian sympathizers until the German-Russian pact.

ANNE FOCKE: Just like Doug mentioned in the..

ANNE GERBER: Yes! It was palpable! Oh! We were just in shock at that pact!

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah.

ANNE GERBER: I'm sure that every department in that school except maybe there was one very.. There were a couple of reactionary heads of the school where there weren't, but even under those two men there were dissonance. [Says dissonance, but probably means dissidents--Ed.] That was some time, and this is coming up again. Well that's.. Can you turn it off?

ANNE FOCKE: Sure!

DATE: MARCH 4, 1983  
[Tape 2; Side 1]

ANNE FOCKE: Last time we talked a little bit about your life in college and so forth and just briefly about your father, but I thought, maybe, we could know, a little bit more about your parents-- what they were up to before you came along and how they..

ANNE GERBER: It seems to me the main thing is that father's, my mother's parents came to the United States as immigrants from Russia Poland.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, good. I didn't..

ANNE GERBER: That's when that section went back and forth between Russia and Poland, and then went back again, over and over again; things were very tough. They came, my mother and father came separately. Oh, my mother's family came first. Anti-Semitism in Russia was very terrible, with people getting killed right and left, and there were pogroms. So the Jews were leaving the sinking ship. (laughs) And then my father came as a child of six years old, and his family went to Chicago.

ANNE FOCKE: And your mother's..

ANNE GERBER: And my mother's parents went to Chicago, too. There was an organization, a national organization that determined where the immigrants would go. That's an interesting thing! Instead of letting everybody just stay in one place and become a little ghetto (bell rings), they dispersed them over the whole country.

ANNE FOCKE: Uh huh.

[Break in tape]

ANNE GERBER: So Jewish immigrants were.. They made a big attempt to put them in all communities-- both in cities, if they were city people, and sometimes they were farmers and then they were established on the farm. And there was some money through the United Jewish Appeal to do

GERBER

that with. Anyway, my father's family were penniless. And my mother's family didn't have very much money, but my grandfather dealt in horses, showing them, and trading them.. He was a horse trader! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Now that's a good solid background.

ANNE GERBER: And then I don't really know.. I was never told how my mother and father met, but it happened before my Dad finished his apprenticeship and also, at the same time going to Chicago Art Institute.

ANNE FOCKE: So he was an apprentice where?

ANNE GERBER: A printer's apprentice. During the day, he was a printer's apprentice in the printing industry, where he set.. He always had an aesthetic point of view. So he found his way then into the very high caliber design of type on the page. The various type fonts were a matter of conversation in our house. 'Cause he just loved 'em, he just loved those different types and made us aware of 'em. And then Bert went to Seattle in \_\_\_\_.

ANNE FOCKE: He was a student at the Chicago Art Institute?

ANNE GERBER: He had a graduate. He had a B, B from Chicago, whatever they have at the Chicago Art Institute. Graduated in sculpture!

ANNE FOCKE: That's great. And then came here..?

ANNE GERBER: The last week before graduation he saw that notice on the bulletin board.

ANNE FOCKE: About the competition at the Alaska Yukon Exposition?

ANNE GERBER: Um him. And so he made a proposal and came.

ANNE FOCKE: Was it a sculpture or..?

ANNE GERBER: Sculptures. It was to make 12 to 15 temporary animals, for outdoors. They didn't last after the.. They melted.

ANNE FOCKE: They melted?

ANNE GERBER: They were plaster of Paris.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, really.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. He molded them and made casts, and..

ANNE FOCKE: They liked Seattle and they..?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, he loved Seattle. And then he went and got my mother and..

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, after the commission was finished. And you were born, you said, shortly after that?

ANNE GERBER: I would say nine months. (laughs) \_\_\_\_\_

ANNE FOCKE: That's sort of like me.

ANNE GERBER: There wasn't much leeway.

ANNE FOCKE: No. You could sort of count it right down. And you lived-- where in Seattle did you grow up?

ANNE GERBER: In the north end. It was between Green Lake and the University District. Not much farther north than that.

ANNE FOCKE: So your father during that time was a printer?

ANNE GERBER: He was a printer, yes. He worked in a couple of print shops that I can't remember, and then the last years he worked at the Herald (that's University Press).

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really. I don't \_\_\_\_\_ paper?

ANNE GERBER: I don't know what it's called now. It prints the paper, the University District paper. I don't know if it's still called the Herald or not.

ANNE FOCKE: I know it was, even when I was at the U it was called, I think, the University District Herald. Did he continue to sculpt?

ANNE GERBER: Oh no. He couldn't do that. He took to painting watercolors. And he could only do it once in a while on Sundays, so he was a Sunday painter. But he, I remember when-- I don't know how old I was when the museum had its first little establishment up there close to where the Bullitt's house is, if I'm right.

ANNE FOCKE: On Capitol Hill?

ANNE GERBER: I might be all wrong, but that's where I remember it. We went to shows whenever they changed.

ANNE FOCKE: That's interesting to know, because that's where I live.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Somewhere around there. I do not recall whose house it was a contribution from, but I think it was. I remember going to a show by Ambrose Patterson.

ANNE FOCKE: Was that right.. Before you went to college?

ANNE GERBER: Yes, a long time. And my dad introduced me to Ambrose, and Ambrose looked down and says, "And which painting do you like the best?" (laughs) And I picked out the worst painting there. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Now are you sure?

ANNE GERBER: I think so. I always, you know, I didn't.. My dad was reared in the "cow-in-the-pasture" period, and he thought the cows in the pasture was.. That's where he came into animals.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I see. Well, I mean, there's lots of painters and sculptors in the cow-in-the-pasture period.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, but in the last years, and, oh, it was possible for him to retire, because of Sid, and.. He used to go out with his little watercolor box, and he had certain trees that he called his own.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really. Certain specific trees?

ANNE GERBER: He used to do 'em in all parts and all seasons, and it was always close by, because he could never get to them easily. (laughs) And I remember the big wind-- a willow in the Arboretum was blown over, and he mourned that tree. That was his tree! And how could that happen! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: What was your last name?

ANNE GERBER: Convisar. C-o-n-v-i-s-a-r. And that was changed at immigration. Did you know that when immigrants came over, the immigration officers would change their name a little bit, because they were essentially kind people, and they thought they'd have trouble at school, or it was easier to be accepted, or to integrate or..whatever their idea was. That's what I always thought it was.

ANNE FOCKE: Was that the changed name?

ANNE GERBER: Yes. My father's family was Conviser with an e-r instead of a-r.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I see.

ANNE GERBER: And they, and they put the accent in a different place, on a different syllable [emphasizes lab in syllable].

ANNE FOCKE: Right. Did you get interested in painting or whatever yourself, then? You must have, from him, maybe?

ANNE GERBER: Not to speak, not to talk about.

ANNE FOCKE: How did you end up in art?

ANNE GERBER: In school! In school, all through grade school and high school, there was sort of a little bit of art here and there, and I just had the most satisfaction and the most acceptance [there in art]. But since I graduated, I'm a nonartist! I enjoyed it while I was doing it, but I never had any compulsion to do it. But it felt good. Naturally my teachers along the way would say something nice about something accidental. That's all it was. And when I got to go to the university, I didn't know what to major in. I thought, "Well, why not go to the school of art?" And that's what I did. And if there was an art history class, I probably would have gotten in to that.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh yeah. There certainly wasn't at that point. They were only beginning it when I was there. Something else that you had mentioned in your notes from that lecture [a lecture ANNE GERBER gave at City Club a few months before this interview--Ed.], was the depression and its impact on life in general and at the university. I'm not sure what their..

ANNE GERBER: Didn't we go into that a little bit? That attraction to a liberal..?

ANNE FOCKE: Oh right. And that happened during..?

ANNE GERBER: Oh sure. If I'd been affluent I think I would have had an altogether different slant. At least it wouldn't have been so conscious. Because Sidney was affluent; for me he was affluent, and he was a great liberal.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, how did you meet him?

ANNE GERBER: On a blind date. (laughs) Do you want all this junk? (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: There was a point to that because I never could figure out for myself what good blind dates were, but I guess on occasion..

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. It isn't always a disaster. Um, let's see. Sidney graduated from MIT and I was still at school and didn't know him. His parents would give him anything he wanted, but he had a great independence. He made his proposal, 'cause he graduated from MIT and he couldn't find an engineering [job--Ed.] He was used to that because none of his Jewish friends could be accepted in engineering firms. It just never happened. There weren't many doctors either then. So he came back to Seattle, and he asked his parents if they would loan him some money to take a trip around the world. And they would. It wasn't hard. He had his pockets and his little suit, satchel just loaded up with little samples from the Northwest.

ANNE FOCKE: Little ones?

ANNE GERBER: Little, little sardines. I don't think he had anything bigger than about this big. And so he took 'em to Japan, the first place, and he found in Japan there are agents (I don't know what you call 'em) that sell such small things in Japan and then exchange Japanese merchandise that he could sell here. So that man.. Let's see, I'm getting ahead of myself. So he made his way and paid his family back for that trip, but my gosh he lived in hostels, had a sleeping bag and he just lived on little, for very low, and things cost very little then, too. So when he got to Germany, on that trip, he began to write.. I have some information in the scrapbook that his mother kept. He began to write about the horrendous situation under Hitler. Hitler was just getting into power.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I see.

ANNE GERBER: And he described things that were very black to him. And it had hardly started; it was just the beginning. My mother was always active in Hadassah, from the time I can remember, and so.. On that trip he went to Israel; that was before it was a state, and he got enthused with the idea of a place for Jews.

ANNE FOCKE: He must have been in his twenties?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yeah. That was after he graduated. He must have been 23, 24. Sometime around there.

ANNE FOCKE: Did you know him when he was traveling?

ANNE GERBER: No. When he came back his girlfriend had gone to California. And he needed a-- I guess he didn't know anybody, and I knew Max Weinstein pretty well, I don't know how. I went out with him maybe twice. Max called me and asked me if I'd like to go on a walk one Sunday. And we all went up to Mount Index. There's beautiful trails around there. Oh, we were on the trail about two hours, up and down, and that was my meat. I just loved to do that. You warm enough?

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, I'm fine.

ANNE GERBER: Then I didn't hear from him for a few weeks and I thought "Well, that's that!" (laughs) And I thought he was great! You know, six foot two, gorgeous figure, as well as head, with an enormous schnoz! I often thought that one of the reasons that he liked me was that I had a fairly small nose, as well as being interested in art. Those were the two! (laughs) I'd catch him looking at my nose! (laughs) And then he started calling me a little more often, and it got to be intimate, and..

ANNE FOCKE: And then, how did you get into the ski business?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, the agent in Japan sent him a whole lot of stuff. He'd sent an adult bicycle and a child's bicycle in little parts, and Sidney just put them together, and some cruddy skis and bindings, and the only thing that worked were the skis. That got him into the ski business.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really. How interesting. Well, that was what he did was the ski business.

ANNE GERBER: But, oh yes, he worked... A lot of our.. We started to ski, every Sunday by that time. Because it was interesting to him, he had to know what he was going to do.

ANNE FOCKE: If you're going to sell you might as well.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. He had a feeling he'd be developing that business, so we started going skiing, but just on Sundays, and then eventually we went on weekends; we always had a little room up in the lodge. And go up on Sunday [probably means Friday--Ed.] night, pack our own food, and then come back on Sunday afternoon. Friday night up, we climbed up the [Nerada]? with our skis. Nerada Falls was the end of the road.

ANNE FOCKE: That was before ski lifts?

ANNE GERBER: Oh shoot. A long time before ski lifts. That was why we climbed up. We'd climb up in the moonlight, and, oh, I loved it. I was much less sure coming down hill. Skiing trails, oh my God! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: I've done just about this much skiing, so...

ANNE GERBER: And then he used to give me ski lessons. Not himself, 'cause he wanted to learn how to ski better, but there was always somebody teaching beginners up there. Then the Germans, the German ski instructors, the Austrians came over, [Hans Schroh] and.. Gradually the skiing, in a remarkably short time, took on all around here.

And there was a man, an old man, who had been developing bindings; he had a little factory in Ballard, so



Sidney answered an ad and eventually bought that and began to develop, 'cause Sidney was very good at patents, making patents, developing little gadgets from his engineering. Before many years went by, he didn't use any of the stuff that he bought from the guy. He just never bothered about it, but he began to develop new products. He was still buying skis from Japan. And then [Skinner Eddy] had a pair of Proteges that they got when they graduated from the university somewhere. They made their own design for laminated skis, and they were superior skis. Sidney bought them. [apparently referring to the company--Ed.] Before that, his firm was called Gerber Brothers, but after he bought Anderson-Thompson, it became Anderson-Thompson, because that was a well-established trademark all over the United States.

ANNE FOCKE: No sense changing it?

ANNE GERBER: Uh uh (negative). Gerber Brothers meant absolutely zilch! (laughs) And then, all that while, oh! This was before we were married. One beautiful spring day, in corn snow, we decided to take a cross-country, an up-country tour, and we went up to Camp Muir; on the way down, the snow was beginning to melt, and I didn't know about a little river. And we never had very good equipment, then, that was before, and my skis, my goggles steamed up, and I couldn't see ahead of me! I thought it was all snowfield, corn snow that I could go very fast in. So I just let her fly, and when I woke up in a hospital they told me that I just had just missed the bridge and had fallen 17 feet into the Nerada River. And I had a concavity and I broke a whole bunch of ribs, and narrowly escaped my eye. I had a big scar for a long time, over here. But, you know, ski accidents are very high morale; I just felt good, because I had Sidney. He was paying more attention, and all that sort of stuff, and I was recuperating from that. Fast, too!

Then one day he came over to our house and said he had to go on a ski selling trip to California and we'd go down and meet.. (his parents stayed in Palm Springs every winter), and we stopped with them before we went on. God, I didn't know what to tell my mother and father. I was, you know, their only gem! But, you know, they knew, and they didn't say no. They didn't say yes, either. (laughs) So, we went down and stayed with them for three or four nights. We rested up 'cause he was a bugger. He had a schedule and if we had to drive 'til 2 a.m. to catch the appointment the next morning, we did it! And I was, you know, I was recuperated, but I didn't have that much energy. I felt like a piece of gum the whole trip! So I recuperated a little more in Palm Springs and when.. His mother and Dad were just darling. When we said goodbye, his mother looked at him and said, "Well, Sid and Anne. You better stop at Las Vegas, or the other place." (laughs) Wasn't that wonderful? We did!

ANNE FOCKE: All right!

ANNE GERBER: We married in.. What's the other one, the older one? Las Vegas..

ANNE FOCKE: Reno? In Reno.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. We took right off and drove 'til 1:30 the next night (laughs) All kinds of dealers through that country.

ANNE FOCKE: Can't miss any, even when you..?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, and then, we were in the middle of.. Our life was skiing then. Then Sun Valley started. I had the fun that first season of seeing.. What was the man who was head of the Union Pacific and then he was an ambassador to England? Was a very great liberal. Oh his name will come. At the top lift of Dollar Mountain I saw this gorgeous tall man-- he must have been 60 years old by then-- go around and pick the cigarette butts off the floor. I just loved that.

ANNE FOCKE: Sure.

ANNE GERBER: Sure, he's very powerful in the United States in his way. Anyway, we had the fun of going to Sun Valley every single winter. Then one winter, the last winter we went, I was up on a higher mountain and I didn't understand ice skiing at all; coming down about 12:30, going under the trees, I thought it was all softened away from where it was sunny. The snow was broken down and I just scooted across in the shade and my tips got caught in the ice. I don't know why I'm telling you all this stuff! You can always leave it out.

ANNE FOCKE: We can always... Yeah. Don't worry about it.

ANNE GERBER: My tips got caught... I don't think we had cable bindings then which released. And I just... That's the reason that I wear slacks, because I had a multiple fracture of both legs, and the circulation never got proper. I can't stand my legs. When I take my slacks off I avert my head! And that was my second accident.

ANNE FOCKE: Both pretty dramatic.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah! First one I got Sidney, really, 'cause he wouldn't probably have taken me down on that

trip. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Well. Somehow.

ANNE GERBER: No, he never wanted to get married. He never did. He told me that! I had every reason to believe him.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh dear. Where did you live in Seattle? You and he? You said something about a houseboat?. Anyway, my father's family were penniless. And my mother's family didn't have very much money, but my grandfather dealt in horses, showing them, and trading them... He was a horse trader! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Now that's a good solid background.

ANNE GERBER: And then I don't really know... I was never told how my mother and father met, but it happened before my Dad finished his apprenticeship and also, at the same time going to Chicago Art Institute.

ANNE FOCKE: So he was an apprentice where?

ANNE GERBER: A printer's apprentice. During the day, he was a printer's apprentice in the printing industry, where he set... He always had an aesthetic point of view. So he found his way then into the very high caliber design of type on the page. The various type fonts were a matter of conversation in our house. 'Cause he just loved 'em, he just loved those different types and made us aware of 'em. And then Bert went to Seattle in \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNE FOCKE: He was a student at the Chicago Art Institute?

ANNE GERBER: He had a graduate. He had a B, B from Chicago, whatever they have at the Chicago Art Institute. Graduated in sculpture!

ANNE FOCKE: That's great. And then came here...?

ANNE GERBER: The last week before graduation he saw that notice on the bulletin board.

ANNE FOCKE: About the competition at the Alaska Yukon Exposition?

ANNE GERBER: Um hm. And so he made a proposal and came.

ANNE FOCKE: Was it a sculpture or...?

ANNE GERBER: Sculptures. It was to make 12 to 15 temporary animals, for outdoors. They didn't last after the... They melted.

ANNE FOCKE: They melted?

ANNE GERBER: They were plaster of Paris.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, really.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. He molded them and made casts, and...

ANNE FOCKE: They liked Seattle and they...?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, he loved Seattle. And then he went and got my mother and...

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, after the commission was finished. And you were born, you said, shortly after that?

ANNE GERBER: I would say nine months. (laughs) \_\_\_\_\_

ANNE FOCKE: That's sort of like me.

ANNE GERBER: There wasn't much leeway.

ANNE FOCKE: No. You could sort of count it right down. And you lived-- where in Seattle did you grow up?

ANNE GERBER: In the north end. It was between Green Lake and the University District. Not much farther north than that.

ANNE FOCKE: So your father during that time was a printer?

ANNE GERBER: He was a printer, yes. He worked in a couple of print shops that I can't remember, and then the

last years he worked at the Herald (that's University Press).

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really. I don't \_\_\_\_ paper?

ANNE GERBER: I don't know what it's called now. It prints the paper, the University District paper. I don't know if it's still called the Herald or not.

ANNE FOCKE: I know it was, even when I was at the U it was called, I think, the University District Herald. Did he continue to sculpt?

ANNE GERBER: Oh no. He couldn't do that. He took to painting watercolors. And he could only do it once in a while on Sundays, so he was a Sunday painter. But he, I remember when-- I don't know how old I was when the museum had its first little establishment up there close to where the Bullitt's house is, if I'm right.

ANNE FOCKE: On Capitol Hill?

ANNE GERBER: I might be all wrong, but that's where I remember it. We went to shows whenever they changed.

ANNE FOCKE: That's interesting to know, because that's where I live.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Somewhere around there. I do not recall whose house it was a contribution from, but I think it was. I remember going to a show by Ambrose Patterson.

ANNE FOCKE: Was that right... Before you went to college?

ANNE GERBER: Yes, a long time. And my dad introduced me to Ambrose, and Ambrose looked down and says, "And which painting do you like the best?" (laughs) And I picked out the worst painting there. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Now are you sure?

ANNE GERBER: I think so. I always, you know, I didn't... My dad was reared in the "cow-in-the-pasture" period, and he thought the cows in the pasture was... That's where he came into animals.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I see. Well, I mean, there's lots of painters and sculptors in the cow-in-the-pasture period.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, but in the last years, and, oh, it was possible for him to retire, because of Sid, and... He used to go out with his little watercolor box, and he had certain trees that he called his own.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really. Certain specific trees?

ANNE GERBER: He used to do 'em in all parts and all seasons, and it was always close by, because he could never get to them easily. (laughs) And I remember the big wind-- a willow in the Arboretum was blown over, and he mourned that tree. That was his tree! And how could that happen! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: What was your last name?

ANNE GERBER: Convisar. C-o-n-v-i-s-a-r. And that was changed at immigration. Did you know that when immigrants came over, the immigration officers would change their name a little bit, because they were essentially kind people, and they thought they'd have trouble at school, or it was easier to be accepted, or to integrate or...whatever their idea was. That's what I always thought it was.

ANNE FOCKE: Was that the changed name?

ANNE GERBER: Yes. My father's family was Conviser with an e-r instead of a-r.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I see.

ANNE GERBER: And they, and they put the accent in a different place, on a different syllable [emphasizes lab in syllable].

ANNE FOCKE: Right. Did you get interested in painting or whatever yourself, then? You must have, from him, maybe?

ANNE GERBER: Not to speak, not to talk about.

ANNE FOCKE: How did you end up in art?

ANNE GERBER: In school! In school, all through grade school and high school, there was sort of a little bit of art

here and there, and I just had the most satisfaction and the most acceptance [there in art]. But since I graduated, I'm a nonartist! I enjoyed it while I was doing it, but I never had any compulsion to do it. But it felt good. Naturally my teachers along the way would say something nice about something accidental. That's all it was. And when I got to go to the university, I didn't know what to major in. I thought, "Well, why not go to the school of art?" And that's what I did. And if there was an art history class, I probably would have gotten in to that.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh yeah. There certainly wasn't at that point. They were only beginning it when I was there. Something else that you had mentioned in your notes from that lecture [a lecture ANNE GERBER gave at City Club a few months before this interview--Ed.], was the depression and its impact on life in general and at the university. I'm not sure what their...

ANNE GERBER: Didn't we go into that a little bit? That attraction to a liberal...?

ANNE FOCKE: Oh right. And that happened during...?

ANNE GERBER: Oh sure. If I'd been affluent I think I would have had an altogether different slant. At least it wouldn't have been so conscious. Because Sidney was affluent; for me he was affluent, and he was a great liberal.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, how did you meet him?

ANNE GERBER: On a blind date. (laughs) Do you want all this junk? (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: There was a point to that because I never could figure out for myself what good blind dates were, but I guess on occasion...

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. It isn't always a disaster. Um, let's see. Sidney graduated from MIT and I was still at school and didn't know him. His parents would give him anything he wanted, but he had a great independence. He made his proposal, 'cause he graduated from MIT and he couldn't find an engineering [job--Ed.] He was used to that because none of his Jewish friends could be accepted in engineering firms. It just never happened. There weren't many doctors either then. So he came back to Seattle, and he asked his parents if they would loan him some money to take a trip around the world. And they would. It wasn't hard. He had his pockets and his little suit, satchel just loaded up with little samples from the Northwest.

ANNE FOCKE: Little ones?

ANNE GERBER: Little, little sardines. I don't think he had anything bigger than about this big. And so he took 'em to Japan, the first place, and he found in Japan there are agents (I don't know what you call 'em) that sell such small things in Japan and then exchange Japanese merchandise that he could sell here. So that man... Let's see, I'm getting ahead of myself. So he made his way and paid his family back for that trip, but my gosh he lived in hostels, had a sleeping bag and he just lived on little, for very low, and things cost very little then, too. So when he got to Germany, on that trip, he began to write... I have some information in the scrapbook that his mother kept. He began to write about the horrendous situation under Hitler. Hitler was just getting into power.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I see.

ANNE GERBER: And he described things that were very black to him. And it had hardly started; it was just the beginning. My mother was always active in Hadassah, from the time I can remember, and so... On that trip he went to Israel; that was before it was a state, and he got enthused with the idea of a place for Jews.

ANNE FOCKE: He must have been in his twenties?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yeah. That was after he graduated. He must have been 23, 24. Sometime around there.

ANNE FOCKE: Did you know him when he was traveling?

ANNE GERBER: No. When he came back his girlfriend had gone to California. And he needed a-- I guess he didn't know anybody, and I knew Max Weinstein pretty well, I don't know how. I went out with him maybe twice. Max called me and asked me if I'd like to go on a walk one Sunday. And we all went up to Mount Index. There's beautiful trails around there. Oh, we were on the trail about two hours, up and down, and that was my meat. I just loved to do that. You warm enough?

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, I'm fine.

ANNE GERBER: Then I didn't hear from him for a few weeks and I thought "Well, that's that!" (laughs) And I thought he was great! You know, six foot two, gorgeous figure, as well as head, with an enormous schnoz! I

often thought that one of the reasons that he liked me was that I had a fairly small nose, as well as being interested in art. Those were the two! (laughs) I'd catch him looking at my nose! (laughs) And then he started calling me a little more often, and it got to be intimate, and...

ANNE FOCKE: And then, how did you get into the ski business?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, the agent in Japan sent him a whole lot of stuff. He'd sent an adult bicycle and a child's bicycle in little parts, and Sidney just put them together, and some cruddy skis and bindings, and the only thing that worked were the skis. That got him into the ski business.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really. How interesting. Well, that was what he did was the ski business.

ANNE GERBER: But, oh yes, he worked... A lot of our... We started to ski, every Sunday by that time. Because it was interesting to him, he had to know what he was going to do.

ANNE FOCKE: If you're going to sell you might as well.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. He had a feeling he'd be developing that business, so we started going skiing, but just on Sundays, and then eventually we went on weekends; we always had a little room up in the lodge. And go up on Sunday [probably means Friday--Ed.] night, pack our own food, and then come back on Sunday afternoon. Friday night up, we climbed up the [Nerada]? with our skis. Nerada Falls was the end of the road.

ANNE FOCKE: That was before ski lifts?

ANNE GERBER: Oh shoot. A long time before ski lifts. That was why we climbed up. We'd climb up in the moonlight, and, oh, I loved it. I was much less sure coming down hill. Skiing trails, oh my God! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: I've done just about this much skiing, so...

ANNE GERBER: And then he used to give me ski lessons. Not himself, 'cause he wanted to learn how to ski better, but there was always somebody teaching beginners up there. Then the Germans, the German ski instructors, the Austrians came over, [Hans Schroh] and... Gradually the skiing, in a remarkably short time, took on all around here.

And there was a man, an old man, who had been developing bindings; he had a little factory in Ballard, so Sidney answered an ad and eventually bought that and began to develop, 'cause Sidney was very good at patents, making patents, developing little gadgets from his engineering. Before many years went by, he didn't use any of the stuff that he bought from the guy. He just never bothered about it, but he began to develop new products. He was still buying skis from Japan. And then [Skinner Eddy] had a pair of Proteges that they got when they graduated from the university somewhere. They made their own design for laminated skis, and they were superior skis. Sidney bought them. [apparently referring to the company--Ed.] Before that, his firm was called Gerber Brothers, but after he bought Anderson-Thompson, it became Anderson-Thompson, because that was a well-established trademark all over the United States.

ANNE FOCKE: No sense changing it?

ANNE GERBER: Uh uh (negative). Gerber Brothers meant absolutely zilch! (laughs) And then, all that while, oh! This was before we were married. One beautiful spring day, in corn snow, we decided to take a cross-country, an up-country tour, and we went up to Camp Muir; on the way down, the snow was beginning to melt, and I didn't know about a little river. And we never had very good equipment, then, that was before, and my skis, my goggles steamed up, and I couldn't see ahead of me! I thought it was all snowfield, corn snow that I could go very fast in. So I just let her fly, and when I woke up in a hospital they told me that I just had just missed the bridge and had fallen 17 feet into the Nerada River. And I had a concavity and I broke a whole bunch of ribs, and narrowly escaped my eye. I had a big scar for a long time, over here. But, you know, ski accidents are very high morale; I just felt good, because I had Sidney. He was paying more attention, and all that sort of stuff, and I was recuperating from that. Fast, too!

Then one day he came over to our house and said he had to go on a ski selling trip to California and we'd go down and meet... (his parents stayed in Palm Springs every winter), and we stopped with them before we went on. God, I didn't know what to tell my mother and father. I was, you know, their only gem! But, you know, they knew, and they didn't say no. They didn't say yes, either. (laughs) So, we went down and stayed with them for three or four nights. We rested up 'cause he was a bugger. He had a schedule and if we had to drive 'til 2 a.m. to catch the appointment the next morning, we did it! And I was, you know, I was recuperated, but I didn't have that much energy. I felt like a piece of gum the whole trip! So I recuperated a little more in Palm Springs and when... His mother and Dad were just darling. When we said goodbye, his mother looked at him and said, "Well, Sid and Anne. You better stop at Las Vegas, or the other place." (laughs) Wasn't that wonderful? We did!

ANNE FOCKE: All right!

ANNE GERBER: We married in... What's the other one, the older one? Las Vegas...

ANNE FOCKE: Reno? In Reno.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. We took right off and drove 'til 1:30 the next night (laughs) All kinds of dealers through that country.

ANNE FOCKE: Can't miss any, even when you...?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, and then, we were in the middle of... Our life was skiing then. Then Sun Valley started. I had the fun that first season of seeing... What was the man who was head of the Union Pacific and then he was an ambassador to England? Was a very great liberal. Oh his name will come. At the top lift of Dollar Mountain I saw this gorgeous tall man-- he must have been 60 years old by then-- go around and pick the cigarette butts off the floor. I just loved that.

ANNE FOCKE: Sure.

ANNE GERBER: Sure, he's very powerful in the United States in his way. Anyway, we had the fun of going to Sun Valley every single winter. Then one winter, the last winter we went, I was up on a higher mountain and I didn't understand ice skiing at all; coming down about 12:30, going under the trees, I thought it was all softened away from where it was sunny. The snow was broken down and I just scooted across in the shade and my tips got caught in the ice. I don't know why I'm telling you all this stuff! You can always leave it out.

ANNE FOCKE: We can always... Yeah. Don't worry about it.

ANNE GERBER: My tips got caught... I don't think we had cable bindings then which released. And I just... That's the reason that I wear slacks, because I had a multiple fracture of both legs, and the circulation never got proper. I can't stand my legs. When I take my slacks off I avert my head! And that was my second accident.

ANNE FOCKE: Both pretty dramatic.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah! First one I got Sidney, really, 'cause he wouldn't probably have taken me down on that trip. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Well. Somehow.

ANNE GERBER: No, he never wanted to get married. He never did. He told me that! I had every reason to believe him.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh dear. Where did you live in Seattle? You and he? You said something about a houseboat?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yeah. Essentially the first six years, we... You know business was very tough in starting and we didn't have very much money. We wouldn't ask, he wouldn't depend on his father, so we found a houseboat down in Portage Bay. We stayed in it for six years, and that meant that every time the wind blew, the water connection broke. It was fun, you know, you hear bullfrogs underneath and big carp were in the tullies there. It's fun.

ANNE FOCKE: That's where you had your prints?

ANNE GERBER: Yes. And then business began to get better. Sidney happened to be out in Bellevue and saw a "for sale" sign and we moved over to... He bought this old, old rambling cruddy house. It looked the ants were in the basement. That's how we got along. And then, we stayed there... We built a new house. Later, after the war, we built a new house and we heard... All this while Sidney had enough time to go into human rights.

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: And he figured out that one of the terrible problems was going to be segregation in schools, and the only way that could be avoided was to have an integrated housing pattern. That was at the basis of the organization called Fair Housing Listing Service, done all over the metropolitan area out of churches.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, you mentioned it last time, but not nearly the...

ANNE GERBER: As a result of having a lot of assorted people over, during the summers, and the neighbors... We didn't even think about them! They were just terrified that we would sell to a black or an Asian. So there was a, did I tell you about the letter that was sent?

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. You did.

ANNE GERBER: Well, we were through there. That did it. Next Saturday we came over and circulated all through here, and he said, "I don't know if that is public or private property. So you go down and find out on Monday." He was a great one to say. "Here's a pencil and paper. You go do this!" (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Here's your job.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And you know that, it was all right with me, cause I didn't have...

[Tape 2; Side 2]

ANNE FOCKE: Did he have a sort of a... Who were the friends and people that you associated with? Were there any sort of artists?

ANNE GERBER: Well, it was a liberal group including American Civil Liberties Union. Got interested in Group Health, but we were never members until I joined just in the last years. There were no conservatives there, I can tell you that! (laughs) We were members of the Yacht Club because we had a boat, but we never had anything socially to do with it. Sidney used to take business friends, dealers, to the Yacht Club for lunch; it was a nice thing to do then.

ANNE FOCKE: Was that the Seattle Yacht Club?

ANNE GERBER: Seattle Yacht Club. We had our boat; we were members then. We had a boat moored there, 'cause we found it was a lot easier for them to watch it in a storm than for us to worry about it wherever it was. He came home and he says, "My God, I'm going to tell you about what I heard today." He was sitting at a counter there, and one man turned to his friend and said "I don't think Nixon is very bright, but I think he's going to appoint good advisors!" (laughs) Oh, there was just one thing after another. But we liked to know artists and people connected with the art world. And so our best friends were probably Jean and Perry Johanson before they got too rich, [and] the students that I had kept in touch with.

ANNE FOCKE: Were some of the people that were in school at the same time you were people who are active now as artists?

ANNE GERBER: No. Remember Lambda Rho was just... Even when it was lively it might as well be defunct. No. But I got acquainted with Alden Mason, you know all those people that are still operating.

ANNE FOCKE: And were at that point, too?

ANNE GERBER: They're kind of buried in my memory now.

ANNE FOCKE: You mentioned the early days of the Museum before they built the building at Volunteer Park and all. Were you at all familiar with what was...?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: I mean, were you either involved or familiar with what was going on, in terms of...

ANNE GERBER: I knew that Dr. Fuller was the benefactor, but he hadn't... Before he built the museum in the park, he wasn't throwing his weight around that much, 'cause there was no weight to throw around. And I can't, aside from that Ambrose Patterson show, remember what they brought, they bought. The Henry Gallery was more... You know, there was the wife of... Halley Savery [Directory of Henry Gallery--Ed.] was the wife of the favorite philosophy teacher Bill, William Savery, I think his name was.

ANNE FOCKE: [Founder, father] of Savery Hall.

ANNE GERBER: And you know, she brought...

ANNE FOCKE: To the Henry Gallery?

ANNE GERBER: A Kandinsky show to the Henry Gallery way back then! And she brought the bright lights. They were few and far between, but she did it. If you wanted to know about that I'm sure it would be in the archives of the Henry Gallery or in the university library where they have the main archives.

ANNE FOCKE: But the Henry Gallery was there like when you were at the U, then, and was active?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yes. That family had given that Henry Gallery to the school a long time... I don't even

remember it being built; it just seems like it was there. I could be wrong, too, you know. Because things slip so easily, change, epochs. (laughs) I don't take responsibility for a word I say!

ANNE FOCKE: Well, you were involved with the Henry Gallery?

ANNE GERBER: That was when I was in school.

ANNE FOCKE: You were talking about that before?

ANNE GERBER: The Henry Gallery, yeah. The Museum was a foreign place, because I remember strong resentments of the faculty against the museum but that's... I learned that that was a normal thing between universities and the community and it was called town and gown... I remember Ray Hill. He was a beautiful watercolorist. And he was a delightful man. Just loved him. Ambrose and Isaacs are the people I remember the most. I had others, but they've left me.

ANNE FOCKE: These people you've maintained some kind of communication or friendship with?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Until Ambrose died and until Isaacs... Yeah. Little Ray Hill was kind of a solitary... Our paths would cross and we'd have a good time for 12 minutes, and then I wouldn't see him for another long time. You know.

ANNE FOCKE: Uh huh. When did there start being something like galleries in Seattle?

ANNE GERBER: Zoe Dusanne, Zoe Dusanne and the German, whose...

ANNE FOCKE: It began with a z.

ANNE GERBER: Seders used to work for him and...

ANNE FOCKE: Seligman

ANNE GERBER: Otto Seligman. Yeah. They were the two galleries. And I don't know, if there were any others, they were just not very important.

ANNE FOCKE: Did you know either of them?

ANNE GERBER: Oh sure. Otto and Zoe. You know Zoe has a daughter who is electrolysis down in the building where I have my Monday appointments, and I see her every now and then.

ANNE FOCKE: Ah hah. As I understand it, her gallery was where the freeway is?

ANNE GERBER: Yes. At first it was up on Broadway. Maybe it wasn't at first. I think she moved to an apartment, her own apartment. It was large and she... I can't remember where it was. I just remember that it was shifted there. And then, she built herself a nice little, lovely little house, with a gallery space integrated into her living room. She was there until they bought it up for the freeway.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh. I see. That's when it was there. Did either of them at that point show anybody that wasn't in Seattle?

ANNE GERBER: Yes. Zoe spent years in Europe. And she had, she had paintings, a lot of famous stuff. French painters! I don't mean impressionists or cubists, but a little bit later. If you wanted, if you ever wanted to know, I could find out the name of the daughter.

ANNE FOCKE: You know, I have met her, years ago.

ANNE GERBER: And through her, I think Peggy Guggenheim... When Peggy Guggenheim came to Seattle she always spent time with Zoe Dusanne, because Dick Fuller couldn't care less about contemporary art; he just was not willing to have his stacks filled with it. He wanted his stacks free for what he wanted.

ANNE FOCKE: Which was?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, knees and noses. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Well, he's a geologist, so...

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. He loved Chinese...

ANNE FOCKE: Stone objects?



ANNE GERBER: Yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: But he did buy works by Northwest...?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Well, he had a moral sense that he had to support local artists, and he did and that was fine! Once he had a Hans Hofmann show. But he just hated that \_\_\_\_\_, he just hated it. And the artists were just thirsty to see new things.

ANNE FOCKE: I walked in, I mean, I was at the museum just at the very end of his life. I got to know him a little bit.

ANNE GERBER: Gene Maxson [She may mean Neil Meitzler--Ed.] was there. Kenneth Callahan worked before that.

ANNE FOCKE: Did you know either Kenneth or any of those?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yeah. Then, you know... Gene was such a nice fellow. When I say know them, I mean I didn't know them very well, but they were more than chance acquaintances. Kenneth and Margaret, his first wife, lived across from my family up there on Tenth [Avenue on Capitol Hill--Ed.] and so...

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, is that where your family lived?

ANNE GERBER: Well, we lived a lot of places! 'Cause Pop wanted to earn us a little more money than he could earn by being a printer, so we'd buy little old houses and then have a couple of years of tearing them away and rehabilitating 'em, which we lived in them! And so we did that all over, and all that profit was demolished at the Depression when he'd built a little building, a little apartment house building for six apartments on Twelfth Avenue. After four or five years, he couldn't keep up the payments because they were mostly empty, and the bank took the building.

ANNE FOCKE: That's too bad. So you were saying that the Callahans lived across from...

ANNE GERBER: Yes. They lived in a little attic. Margaret was a writer! She used to do a lot of copy, assorted copy; I don't know if sometimes she wrote fiction or nonfiction, but she wrote copy of some kind. She was lovely. And they were such a devoted couple. I never went into their apartment, and they never came to my house, but we waited for the bus together, and you can get pretty friendly that way!

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: Of course Margaret lived \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. And then she got cancer; she was ill for a long time.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I didn't know that.

ANNE GERBER: Her father had died and was pretty affluent, so she inherited his money and by that... I don't think that Kenneth was selling too well then, so it helped a lot for them. She died after a long cruel sickness and then he, after quite a while, he found this little lady he's married to now, a Danish woman, who takes good care of him. She's a nurse! She tells him he's wonderful ten times a day.

ANNE FOCKE: It helps.

ANNE GERBER: It sure does. They lived down on Long Beach.

ANNE FOCKE: Right. I haven't been there or met them, but... You mentioned, I remember, you've done some jewelry stuff, was that right?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. I went into the jewelry making class at the University. Oh, I do a lot of these things, nothing...

Paul Bonifas came to the University; it was Isaacs that brought him. He came here and he didn't know how to throw! I didn't know that, 'cause by the time I went and got into the class he learned to throw. But, you know, he has a whole enormous shelf in the Museum of Modern Art of Paris.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really.

ANNE GERBER: Uh huh. And he did everything by making templates and having apprentices do them; he's a specialist in glazes. They were all very set things. But that was before... Well he had to learn to throw and I don't think he ever liked it too much. But he had people who did know how to throw, like [Robert--Ed.] Sperry was under him; Sperry was suffering no end because Bonifas had the recognition, international recognition, and was

the head of the department. (laughs) Life is so weird. (laughs) Finally, oh Bonifas had terrible asthma. And he married, remarried... When he left Europe, he divorced his wife. He left his wife! To marry his darling little second wife, and they had a little daughter in common, and then his wife became the glaze specialist. But he never, his pottery was always pretty soft, his firing was pretty low firing. Pretty high fired, or low fired. [ANNE GERBER seems uncertain whether it is high- or low-fired--Ed.] You don't want to go into all this stuff.

ANNE FOCKE: When you did, going a little forward, you did get involved in the Henry Gallery, and with the museum both, eventually.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Oh, and Sophie Krauss and I... It was put into our head; it wasn't original, that what the Henry Gallery needed was a friends group. It must have taken a year and a half to convince Spencer, who was then the head of the department, to have a friends group, because he didn't want to have any interference in the department, no how. (laughs) But finally they did it, and between Sophie and me we got that friends group started, and then it attracted a lot of people and it's going, it's a good thing, yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: Tell me about Sophie.

ANNE GERBER: Sophie died when she was about 76, and that was about 12, 15 years ago. She was born and reared in Memphis. She was an ex-Jew who married another ex-Jew and then came to (for me it's very important) Seattle, where he became very successful in lumber, in some sort of lumber. They became Episcopalians, and they operated in a WASP circle. And as far as I could see they were accepted. I loved Sophie. Didn't get acquainted with her until I got to be a member of the Contemporary Art Council, and then she was old enough to not want to drive at night, and I had a car, so we took a couple of trips together, and then... Oh! She was very important, too, as a distant friend, because Sidney went to her house (I had the flu or something) to the wedding of one of Dudley Pratt's children. And here Sidney saw this art. That was before we had enough money to buy!

ANNE FOCKE: You mean it was Sophie's at that point?

ANNE GERBER: Sophie at that point had been collecting: Baziotos... Oh, all that period. American. And Sidney was just impressed as all get out, and that helped me a lot-- so that when we got to New York and he saw Bazionis, he was willing to buy it. I never thought he was going to spend money that way. Because it was hard enough for him to make that he wasn't going to go that easy. You know, it's normal. So, that was a... Gee, you want to know any more about Sophie?

ANNE FOCKE: Sure.

ANNE GERBER: When she died, she left her kind of collection to Memphis, her roots were still there, to the museum in Memphis. She didn't leave anything that I know to the museum here.

ANNE FOCKE: She collected, then, for a long time, throughout her life?

ANNE GERBER: Um hmm. She sort of tapered off in the last few years. She was more interested in leaving-- she had cancer-- and she was more interested in leaving her estate in the proper condition, 'cause she had a lot of money. And she had bought a whole square block downtown that still hasn't progressed from where it was when she bought it.

ANNE FOCKE: Really. Downtown here?

ANNE GERBER: Downtown here. It's on the left side of the street, up there the block before University, I think. On the west side of the street was a remains of an old clothing company there; I think it's a one-story place, a...

ANNE FOCKE: Oh right.

ANNE GERBER: ...a little highrise, an old, old highrise, not very high, on the other street, so she controlled the whole block. She adopted, in her... The year we went to New York, she had just completed adopting the three girls who were daughters of her best friend at Smith College, and Janesse's [at one point she married Chris Kirk, artist born here, now lives in New York--ANNE FOCKE], [Janesse's--Ed.] mother was one of them. I'm using a lot of tape space.

ANNE FOCKE: So what. Tape's cheap.

ANNE GERBER: Cheap? Okay.

ANNE FOCKE: Historians can pick and choose.

ANNE GERBER: She was finding it pretty unnecessary to purchase by that time; she wouldn't buy anything on

that trip, and I didn't...

ANNE FOCKE: This is a trip that you and she made?

ANNE GERBER: To New York, yeah. I couldn't understand it, 'cause she saw a lot of things she loved, but she wouldn't buy. She wanted her three daughters and their children to inherit everything!

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I see. Well, she's always... I mean, the bits and pieces I've heard about her, she seemed like a very interesting person.

ANNE GERBER: She was very enlightened. Yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: Were there other people like that, that were very significant to you in one way or another? I mean, you had mentioned Walter and... That were...

ANNE GERBER: Hmm. You know, nobody comes to mind, besides Sophie. I remember once I was interested in Urban League. See, the Fair Housing Listing Service was wallowing after Sid died because all the... I didn't know how to handle it, and all the volunteers fell away. I had this whole lovely list of house listings around and all over, and Black people and Asians used to call me, and I'd take 'em out to see them, but I never sold one house. Not one! In a year and a half! Because I didn't know how to do it. Sidney knew how. And, it was such a relief to me when the urban committee called up and wanted to talk about them taking over, 'cause that was the solution for me. I just couldn't drop it. And that would mean that I could not only not do it, but I wouldn't have to worry about not doing it. (laughs). And they did it!

I did it if David Guren could be the director; it didn't occur to me that times were changing and that the Blacks would no how allow a white man to be in control of a section of their thing. David, at the same time, in three years did his best to train young Blacks, but they threw him out before he did it, and so it just fell apart. So they made the sacrifice, and David did an awful lot of neighborhood integrating. See, Sidney had started it. And I had given enough Black people the courage to go up to houses where there were for sale signs, and in turn they... Just to do that took a lot of courage for them. About five of them in that manner bought the houses, but that wasn't very much. It was a long haul. By the time Sidney died, he and the women and men had managed to place 250 families from the central area all over. It didn't touch it. But still it was more than nothing.

ANNE FOCKE: But Sophie wasn't involved in any of that?

ANNE GERBER: Oh! That brought it up! She knew I was busy working on it, and let's see, where did she leave that \$6,000 to in her will? Oh, it was another program that I... Because this house was ripped off another time by twerps. I found that one of the boys really needed help a lot. I started a program in the school system for the central area, providing psychological help.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. I started with just \$2,000 a year, but the teachers were so eager to have it happen that they got services from psychologists and psychiatrists for almost nothing. In some cases those men and women did it, they really did it for nothing, because... The first year they took care of 12 kids, which they never could have done on their \$2,000 a year, that's the way it went. That went on and on. Sophie looked at me one day, and she said, "Do you want me to contribute to the Urban League?" I said, "No. If they can't get this program started, the housing program, they don't deserve to have it. But, at the same time, she left \$6,000 to this school thing, and she didn't even tell me. I didn't even know it 'til she was dead for three years. I couldn't figure out, they had so much money in that fund.

ANNE FOCKE: So you didn't even, oh amazing!

ANNE GERBER: They said that Mrs. Krauss had left it to them. So you know I thought she was just great. I'm down to \$1,000 on that trip [the school psychologist program--Ed.], but I still keep it up. And I think that the school system is putting in some money into it, too, 'cause they found it was a very important thing. They had no psychologists or psychiatrists connected with the school system up 'til that time.

ANNE FOCKE: Amazing. Well, one would hope that they'd...

ANNE GERBER: They don't tell me that there is now, 'cause they're afraid I'll stop, and they don't get that much. So I just keep up the \$1,000. Inadvertently, the people that call me, keep in touch, let me know. That it's okay.

ANNE FOCKE: Thinking back to the Friends of the Henry Gallery, which it seems...

ANNE GERBER: (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: A very interesting contrast. What sorts of things did the group do? I mean, was it mostly to raise money for the Henry Gallery.

ANNE GERBER: Well, the money... Yeah. The director would make a proposal for bringing something, and the association would support it. I can't remember how much, we didn't have that much money, but it was something. Whatever it was it was more than they had before!

ANNE FOCKE: And you were involved in it for a long time?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: Up until? Probably when Jan [Jan Van der Marck--Ed.] was at the university?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. I'm trying to think. I don't know if I retired. I got kind of pissed. (laughs) It's only interesting in a minor way. Kayla Skinner got to be a member. She just took over, and it made me angry because the young, she's not so young, the tall thin one, who speaks with a New England accent?

ANNE FOCKE: Fifi [Caner--Ed.]?

ANNE GERBER: Fifi. Fifi was her designated [shawmess]. In Yiddish that means the one who takes care of all the little things. And before I knew it, Fifi was telling everybody what they could do and what they couldn't do. I just, you know, it was Kayla. I recognized it was Kayla's doing. They just figured out everything. It made me mad enough to want to separate from it, so I did!

ANNE FOCKE: Did it change the direction of art that was being supported?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, no, it went on bigger and better.

ANNE FOCKE: The Henry Gallery, or the Friends?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Well, that was a problem with LaMar [Harrington--Ed.], you know. That was those years.

ANNE FOCKE: I was just sort of involved a bit myself, but not enough to really understand what was happening. It seemed to me, when I was there, it was just shortly after I was out of school, that there was an awful lot going on at the Henry Gallery that I found pretty exciting. It was experimental film...

ANNE GERBER: LaMar hated it! When she... LaMar was so good about going to the Dean's office and speaking into Anne Gould Hauberg's ear, and to other people, that things were not going right. Well, she was responsible for... What's the art historian? [Gervais Reed--Ed.]

[Tape 3, Side 1]

ANNE GERBER: Totally. You could turn it off. 'Cause I don't want this to...

ANNE FOCKE: Oh. Okay.

[Break in tape]

ANNE GERBER: LaMar [Harrington--Ed.] did a wonderful job of the crafts, but...

ANNE FOCKE: She's known and the Henry Gallery was known throughout the craft network.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. She did a marvelous job. Crafts were just coming up-- and she found the best in the country. But three or four years went by and I thought, my God, are we ever going to get to anything experimental? So it was just bound for a crash.

ANNE FOCKE: Jan was at the university for what?

ANNE GERBER: Part time for the Henry Gallery, part time for the school of art history. And during those years is when he did such a marvelous job and satisfied the kids, all those young ones. They had something to listen to then.

ANNE FOCKE: I think that there's a whole group of artists who are now in Seattle who came through his influence.

ANNE GERBER: Very influenced by him.

ANNE FOCKE: At that point.

ANNE GERBER: And you know, I called them when he came. [ANNE GERBER is referring to a recent visit by Jan to Seattle, probably 1982, sponsored by Contemporary Art Council--ANNE FOCKE] Called them to be sure and come in case they didn't know. They came, almost everybody I called came. 'Cause I knew they wanted to hear him. And what did he do?

ANNE FOCKE: This last time that he was here?

ANNE GERBER: He just [claps hands]. Because Helen Gurvich and Parks Anderson had gone up to Vancouver and on the way back they asked him to talk about his history developing the museum down there [in Miami--ANNE FOCKE]. And that was-- did you go to hear him?

ANNE FOCKE: I was...

ANNE GERBER: You didn't miss anything! It was painful!

ANNE FOCKE: I was regretting it, until I heard what...

ANNE GERBER: It was terrible!

ANNE FOCKE: So he told the history of when he was in Miami?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Who wants to know? His life in Miami.

ANNE FOCKE: More interesting to know what he's thinking about...

ANNE GERBER: Well, it was just past Documenta, and he could have told about what was happening in the world! Anyway. Jan has a terrible, kind of a penchant for, or had up to that time, of not having adequate contracts where he went to work, like in Chicago, where he left in a terrible situation; the Henry Gallery, where he didn't make it clear just what it was he was to do in the Henry Gallery. He was just a co-director with LaMar, and she was only an assistant, 'cause she doesn't have a credible background for a director.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. That was always very confusing to me in terms of whose job what was, where the responsibility lay.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. It was the dentist, Dr. Schluger, who told me once, unless he starts making good contracts he's going to be in this kind of trouble the rest of his life. (laughs) And Saul [Schluger--Ed.] knows about the terrible things that can happen in the university situation. (laughs)

[Break in tape]

ANNE GERBER: Except for the Contemporary Art Council is... He's [probably referring to Saul--ANNE FOCKE] so wonderful. He made a collection, a good collection. [much noise; has apparently walked away from microphone]

ANNE FOCKE: You go...

[Break in tape]

ANNE FOCKE: Was Saul around at the...?

ANNE GERBER: Henry Gallery Association, yes. But then the family changed because Helen always wanted children. Never could have had them, and she went through one disaster after another on adoptions, and then all of a sudden they heard about four little girls, and they took 'em all! Four little girls!

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, amazing.

ANNE GERBER: Isn't that wonderful?

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, it is.

ANNE GERBER: They're wonderful people. And now they've all flown the coop. But anyway, he got busy with the kids and then he's, in his specialty which is gums, he got invited on handsome trips to speak all over the world on his specialty.

ANNE FOCKE: Ah hah.

ANNE GERBER: So that's it; he had to make a choice.

ANNE FOCKE: How about the museum [Seattle Art] and your own involvement there, when did...?

ANNE GERBER: Well, in 1967, we had some pretty nice, third-rate things here. You know, they were small; we never had the money to buy the firsts. We had a hell of a time getting as good a representation as we did because those dealers would never show us what they... They wanted to get rid of their dogs, but Sidney was marvelous. You know, he'd always check with me and I'd give him the high sign: no, this isn't good enough. So he'd say, "Let's go, Annie. They won't show us the good things." (laughs) We'd get up and they'd bring more stuff down. That's what they do!

ANNE FOCKE: Amazing.

ANNE GERBER: Dealers are low-class people, when you're on the other side of the fence, you know. Anyway, you know, that Leger and that Max Beckmann, little Kandinsky, and the Marsden Hartley, they were getting pretty valuable. It almost left me. And a couple of times I came home, and some way or other, somebody'd get in here. The last time the Albers was cattywampus on the wall. It just hadn't fallen off. And I thought, my God, I better get rid of these, I better get these out. The kids who came in here had no appreciation. What they wanted was money, booze, drugs.

ANNE FOCKE: Electronic equipment if you had any.

ANNE GERBER: And electronic equipment. So I called Dick Fuller, and I told him I wanted to give some, whatever he wanted to the museum, because I had to get rid of them here. The next morning he came over, the next afternoon he came over with Eugene [Neil--Ed.] Meitzler. And Richard had his long black overcoat, never took it off, and he went all over the house making notes on his little pad. They were here for two hours, and when he left, he wasn't even going to tell me what he was going to take, what he was going to accept. So I said, "I really am very interested in knowing what you are going to accept." He was going to take three things: the Leger, the Beckmann, and one other. I felt terrible! But I couldn't say anything, 'cause I knew why. So I said goodbye.

And the next morning, he called at eight in the morning. He said "I, I, I (you know, he stuttered) I, I, I think I, I, I made a t-t-terrible mistake". And he said, "Eugene Meitzler has told me that I should take everything"-- the national things, and all the local, too, because they could use them on teaching programs or sending out requests from schools or whatever. We had a lot of 'em. I just got rid of everything; they brought their truck and then left. And then...

ANNE FOCKE: And that all happened in about three days?

ANNE GERBER: I was going to the museum. You know, I went to see every show. They called me up one day, and I kind of wondered, you know-- it was a pretty fancy collection all together, such as it was-- and they never asked me to be on the board! And once somebody called up and wanted to know if I'd be... (That's when you were working up there!) Wanted to know if I'd come to a meeting of the education committee as a nonvoting member. So I went to that meeting.

ANNE FOCKE: This was the education committee of the board?

ANNE GERBER: I found that they didn't know what they were talking about. They were just talking utter nonsense! And it made me sort of mad. I wasn't mad up to then. So I just called John Hauberg. I don't like to stew about anything. I just like to take care of it, whatever-- clears the soul. And I said, "John! I've been invited to be a member of this committee as a nonvoter, and I feel like a second-class citizen, and, besides, I feel that I'm qualified to be on the board and I've never been asked to be on it." Then, he said, "There, there, there, there. You're on the list." (laughs) And I said, "I can be on the list and dead, too!" Two weeks later, I got an invitation to be on the board. And I've been on it ever since.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, good for them.

ANNE GERBER: You gotta be a little aggressive. You know that. So that's when I first got on the board. And I'm very quiet, but I can see where I can make some differences once in a while.

ANNE FOCKE: So when was it you went on the board?

ANNE GERBER: I don't remember, but I hate to think; I don't want to because I don't think it's democratic. I think I should be off the board but everybody's on the board forever, if they hope that you can leave them something-- either art or money. That's the way it is.

ANNE FOCKE: The board'll just get bigger, bigger...

ANNE GERBER: Sure! Too many people on that board have no interest at all in art. And that's okay, too.

ANNE FOCKE: As long as they don't...

ANNE GERBER: As long as they don't swing a negative weight. Some of 'em will stay on that board, allowing the museum to think that they're going to leave 'em stuff, and they won't do it!

ANNE FOCKE: You were involved in the Contemporary Art Council (CAC) before that?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yeah. A long time before that. Jinny [Virginia Wright--ANNE FOCKE] started it.

ANNE FOCKE: When did it start, about '60?

ANNE GERBER: Let's see. It's about 20 years old now! See, it started about three years before Sid died, and that would make it about '63. Jinny started it; it was in her mind for a long time. Then it was limited to about 20 people, maybe three or five more, and only one person of a couple was a member, and the only thing that the other member of the couple could do was come to functions. It was very controlled; it was supposed to be very elite, and that was a hard thing to swallow. What did I want to tell you?

ANNE FOCKE: Did you start with it when it started?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. I was one of the first. Max and Florence. Max Weinstein was a member. Polly Rawn. I think Bob Dootson came in after three or four years. That was when Jinny had her shop, her store, gallery, her multiples, and she got acquainted with Bob. He started buying multiples, and that's why she knew he was collecting.

ANNE FOCKE: I worked there on Sundays.

ANNE GERBER: And that was a big... Did you?

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. My first little gallery job.

ANNE GERBER: When Jinny had it or when Bob had it?

ANNE FOCKE: No. When Jinny had it.

ANNE GERBER: 'Course it went until, it went in that elitist sort of thing, gradually to about 30 or 35 people. Until Charlie Cowles came and said, "This is nonsense! You're never going to collect any money at this rate." And he helped us open it up. It was when Kirk, Paul Kirk, said, "This is an impossible situation. This is a public museum, and we should not have an organization of this sort here." Now, Jinny's trying to start another one.

ANNE FOCKE: That's what I heard.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. I didn't go to that meeting [meeting to start a Collector's Forum--ANNE FOCKE], 'cause I won't go in for that. She wants to raise-- she's trying not to kill CAC (and she well could) by saying if the people in the new organization will pay \$550 a year (and that's not unreasonable!), with \$150 of that going to CAC. But there would be a limited number of people, and the letter that I got-- would it be of any interest to you to see it?-- just said, "We're going to raise all this extra money and we're going to use it by bringing people in and only we [those who join--Ed.] are going to hear 'em." And that's what I couldn't understand; I couldn't do that. I wouldn't mind the \$550, but I'm not going to do it, unless they have an aggressive program of having those people talk to the public. I think I saved it [the letter--Ed.]. I couldn't bear, I couldn't get rid of that thing.

[Break in tape]

ANNE GERBER: [Discussing Bob Sarkis's invitation to join the Collector's Forum--Ed.] ...those people there and collects so well, and Bob Dootson said, "Over my dead body!" And, oh, Charlie Cowles just hated him. They never told me why, but I didn't care. For me, all they had to do was know Bob [Dootson--Ed.] didn't care about art.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah, indeed.

ANNE GERBER: And he's interested.

ANNE FOCKE: What's that?

ANNE GERBER: He's interested in this organization. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, Bob Sarkis is.

ANNE GERBER: Excuse me a minute. (laughs)

[Break in tape]

ANNE GERBER: 1969, and in the fall of 1968, I was appointed chairperson of the committee on exhibitions for CAC. Well, CAC had had quite an impressive history of bringing big shows like "The Eye." Remember that one?

ANNE FOCKE: What did they call it? Optic Nerve? No.

ANNE GERBER: Ah. Anyway, so when I went to New York, I just looked high and low for something new, fresh, and the only thing I saw was conceptual art, so I thought the next thing to do was to find somebody who'll do it for us, so... Conceptual art was only in two galleries, and in both, I asked who they would recommend that might be willing to do a show in Seattle.

ANNE FOCKE: Do you remember which galleries? Was one, let's see?

ANNE GERBER: Guess.

ANNE FOCKE: This was based on current stuff; it'd be Webber and, maybe, I'm not sure about Webber.

ANNE GERBER: John Gibson was one of them.

ANNE FOCKE: John Gibson, yes.

ANNE GERBER: John Gibson, and then another one, that I don't think is in operation now, because I haven't seen the notices for it. The man in charge there was a (chuckles) partner of Xavier Fourcade. I don't know what they called the gallery, though. And that poor little man...

ANNE FOCKE: Xavier?

ANNE GERBER: You know, anybody working with him would practically have to have treatment! He's a son-of-a-bitch! And, anyway, I didn't know Xavier then, and that was the man that I'd asked, and without even thinking he said, "Lucy Lippard." He got me her telephone number, and I called her up when I got back to the hotel; in a day or two we met at lunch. And she was really keen about it! She started right out making a list of artists she was going to get, and then over the whole year, she got it together. Then when she came out here... Was it at that point that you met her? Or did you know her?

ANNE FOCKE: No. That's when I first met her. And you, too, I think?

ANNE GERBER: Isn't it wonderful? All those artists that have gone on?

ANNE FOCKE: I didn't realize that that was Vito Acconci's first museum show. That's what I've heard, anyway.

ANNE GERBER: Oh, a lot of 'em were just barely known then. She told me, "This is going to be the definitive conceptual art show." And it was.

ANNE FOCKE: I think it was.

ANNE GERBER: Because in the last years when I go back to New York, whenever I land for half an hour, and we talk, they say that's what it was. [The show was titled "557,087," supported by Contemporary Art Council; took place in 1969--ANNE FOCKE]

ANNE FOCKE: Actually Lucy worked with Seth Siegelaub [on the show--ANNE FOCKE].

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. They stayed here.

ANNE FOCKE: That's right, they did.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. He'd come home every night and get his long rest and she'd go out dancing. She was just a bundle of energy!

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah, she was. Is! How did the Contemporary Art Council members...? I mean, this was a show that they sponsored, right?

ANNE GERBER: Oh! I came back and I had collected a whole lot of magazines with illustrations of what it was, and that young... Tom? Remember Tom?

ANNE FOCKE: Tom...?

ANNE GERBER: He was the director before...

ANNE FOCKE: Maytham.



ANNE GERBER: Maytham. Tom. Oh, he hated the idea. But he was a nice man. He said, "Do you have to do it?" And of course Jinny hated it because her cousin was married to Lucy's ex-husband.

ANNE FOCKE: That's right. Merrill...

ANNE GERBER: Oh, he's a recognized painter.

ANNE FOCKE: Robert Ryman.

ANNE GERBER: Robert Ryman. Yeah. You know his things don't change very much, but they get more marvelous. In "Documenta," they were absolutely wonderful. Big ones! So. It went up. Remember that little Black band that played that night?

ANNE FOCKE: Oh right.

ANNE GERBER: Sitting on the floor. And the rope, who did that one? If I looked, I saw that catalog...

ANNE FOCKE: No. I shouldn't guess. I'll get it wrong. But I remember carrying the rope around a lot.

ANNE GERBER: And they played rope with it, they jumped rope with it. Remember, the SeaFirst scion, Bob Arnold, had a hell of a time. He jumped rope, and he was livid. I hated him. 'Cause I didn't think that rope should be jumped with. (laughs) Somebody pushed the Hesse.

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: Eva Hesse tubes.

ANNE FOCKE: And Lucy was quite upset about that too.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Jinny called me up and said, "Well, it's a bomb!" (laughs) She did! And do you know what she did? We had an evening at the Merrill house? At the inception [probably means reception--Ed.], the night before the opening, and I didn't know much about... I couldn't imagine that Emmett, not Emmett Greenberg...

ANNE FOCKE: Clem. [Clement Greenberg--Ed.]

ANNE GERBER: Clem! She paid for Clem to come! And I didn't know that she'd paid for him to come to say that it was a dreadful show, and that's what he said. And you were there!

ANNE FOCKE: I think I was with you then.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And so I called Jinny up and I said, "I brought six people to this show and I didn't bring 'em there to have Clement Greenberg say what he said." He wasn't even a neutral! (laughs) So she had them send me my check back. That was all right. I wasn't going to put up with that! And of course the Haubergs, it was an unspeakable show to them. But every day, or maybe every other day, some kid would call and say thanks. And that was good enough for me.

ANNE FOCKE: It was... Every now and then I think somebody ought to send you out again to sniff out an important show.

ANNE GERBER: Well, right now, I think it's the Germans and Italians. If I had a [Georg--Ed.] Baselitz I'd give an ear! But they're too expensive for me. Oh, that damn money! Last night I went to Diane Katsiaticas' show, and I would like to have something, but I really don't want to, because I want to save my money, maybe I can get a Baselitz. And I just like her so much and I want to support her, but I'll probably be awful and not get anything. Did you go last night?

ANNE FOCKE: I didn't.

ANNE GERBER: Go and see it.

ANNE FOCKE: I will.

ANNE GERBER: It's an astonishing show. Well, we finished!

ANNE FOCKE: I think that's...

ANNE GERBER: All right. I don't think that you got...

DATE: APRIL 21, 1983

[Tape 4, Side 1]

ANNE FOCKE: I decided I wouldn't try to be, you know so strictly chronological or anything, but just get your thoughts on different things; perhaps one of reasons that you were chosen for this was the collecting that you've done. And I would assume that that's changed over the years, what you've collected and your interests and so forth. I remember at one point you mentioned (it was a while back) that your attitude toward collecting and what you wanted to buy changed after Sidney wasn't part of the decisions any more, after he died. What was that?

ANNE GERBER: Um hmm. Well, we had kind of a small collection of Americans of the Stieglitz group and then we got into some Europeans, like one Kandinsky, one Klee (one postage stamp Klee) and then we were lucky enough to find a Max Beckmann that we had enough money for, and then we got some small abstract expressionists: Helen Frankenthaler and...

ANNE FOCKE: I was just going to say, the things I remember when I used to give tours at the museum. I think that was after you gave your collection.

ANNE GERBER: Let's see I gave them...

ANNE FOCKE: And I think I know which pieces those are because I gave tours of them. But the Frankenthaler...?

ANNE GERBER: Anyway, in the meantime, Pop Art came on the scene, and we didn't have any Pop Art and I-- I don't know what's the matter with me, but I always want to get something early on.

ANNE FOCKE: In the early phases of it?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And then after Sidney died, it was in my mind for a long time, and then when I came home one day, and somebody'd come into the house and the Albers was on the diagonal on the wall and a couple of things were on the floor, I decided that I better get 'em out of here, 'cause it was '67 and the neighborhood was hot! I didn't know whether this wooden house would be standing here. Now that was an exaggeration, of course, because we're just surrounded by friends here. I called Dr. Fuller.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah, you told me that story. About when he...

ANNE GERBER: I told you that story. That's when he decided he'd take the three, and Eugene [means Neil--Ed.] Meitzler changed his mind the next morning they came the next day and took everything I had. And I had collected some interesting posters and I got them up. The next time I went to New York, I decided I was going to have, I can't remember his name, the Judd, the Donald Judd. So Jo Baer, whose family I was a friend of, took me to Judd's studio, and that was the first one. He sent me home to find a wall. And that was the first of the minimalists. After that, I got another minimalist, the Bell [Larry--Ed.], and the Flavin, and...

ANNE FOCKE: Craig Kauffman?

ANNE GERBER: Craig Kauffman. You know I never had very much!

ANNE FOCKE: Was that about when you bought the Tuttle piece?

ANNE GERBER: Well, it was in one of those years when I went to New York. Yeah. When I saw S-S-S...

ANNE FOCKE: Saret, Alan.

ANNE GERBER: Serra. Now that's a Serra [Richard--Ed.] out there.

ANNE FOCKE: No, there's Serra. That's Serra, not Serat. [ANNE GERBER has one piece by Alan Saret and one by Richard Serra--ANNE FOCKE]

ANNE GERBER: Yes. That was the year I got the Tuttle at, I can't think of the gallery. And that was the year that I contacted Lucy for the show, 557 [full name: 557,087--ANNE FOCKE]. And then later on I commissioned the Richard Serra. In between I got a number of local artists.

ANNE FOCKE: In a way, your house was all cleared out, so you had room for things.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. It's easier to do it that way, than stacking 'em up downstairs.

ANNE FOCKE: I would imagine.

ANNE GERBER: And then I found that I was loaning people paintings and not making a record. So I still don't know where they are. The only one that came back was Mr. Otis up there. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: What a nice place to see it.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, I love it. I have the book so when anybody notices the painting I get out the book for 'em.

ANNE FOCKE: Ah hah. I also know that you really have... There was something you said in the notes for the Civic Club talk about wanting to balance local with national, international, I think you have done. I mean, I also remember you saying about Richard Fuller that his moral, his conscience got him to buy Northwest art, but I don't have the feeling in your case that that was...

ANNE GERBER: Oh. It was, because we felt responsibility to local artists, and we figured that somewhere along the line it was important for them to... It's hard enough in the best of times for artists to operate.

ANNE FOCKE: Right. No. I think that that period really has been important to a lot of people. You do both things?

ANNE GERBER: I'll never forget when Chris Kirk came to hang a painting, and he looked down the hall-- the two graphics, and the construction at the end of the hallway there?

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah, uh huh.

ANNE GERBER: Well, it was worth it to me, to see him think inside without saying out loud, well here I am in good company.

ANNE FOCKE: Right. Oh! I think it's really important. I think if people keep work from around here separate from work from elsewhere, you're never going to end up using the same standards or anything.

ANNE GERBER: Well, it was nice on a lot of things, and I couldn't understand how Bob Dootson had a thing about not buying local art. Jinny Wright just took-- you know, it was Jinny Wright's influence.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah.

ANNE GERBER: 'Cause I've heard her talk to him in early years about don't waste your time and money and space on local art.

ANNE FOCKE: That's too bad. I presume there is a community or group of people here that do buy local art or art by people in this area, but it seems like maybe they're sort of two different groups, though: One that buys from around here and one that buys elsewhere. How much do they over... How much do people do both? How many people are there like you that sort of have an interest in doing...?

ANNE GERBER: I don't know, because the overall number of people who buy is so narrow, of whatever.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. That's true.

ANNE GERBER: And it's naturally easy to buy local art because it doesn't cost so much, so the wonderful thing is that young people that haven't put together their establishment yet can have live art in their house. And feel very proud about that. I remember since a long time, you were really dead unless you had some live art in your house. (laughs) Isn't that true?

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. I mean, I almost feel about that about myself.

ANNE GERBER: So, when I was on the commission [Seattle Arts Commission--Ed.], local artists would get so angry because of all the outside art brought in. I used to feel that they weren't exactly justified because the best of them could make some living just doing what they were doing. Are you warm enough?

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, I'm perfectly fine. It also seems like to have your own work seen and shown and purchased in the context of work from everywhere is the healthiest kind of environment, however comfortable an artist feels with it.

ANNE GERBER: Well, that's the main thing, that the artists have to have things to measure up to, for their own work.

ANNE FOCKE: I mean I think that otherwise you end up using a different standard on yourself and your artist neighbors than you use when you look at art anywhere else, and that's really unfortunate.

ANNE GERBER: You just get concretely fixed into hating every piece that comes from outside like Phillip Levine.

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: He's so bitter.

ANNE FOCKE: It's very unfortunate; Norie [Sato--ANNE FOCKE] told me just recently she was-- all of a sudden found herself-- with three [ANNE FOCKE added later: Outspoken proponents of local art]: Larry [Beck] and Phil [Levine] and Ted [Jonsson]. [Last names added by editor.]

ANNE GERBER: The worst!

ANNE FOCKE: I mean, it's sort of like I think of them even in terms of size versus Norie and I think, oh poor Norie, my heart goes out to you!

ANNE GERBER: (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: But she could handle it, right?

ANNE GERBER: Oh sure.

ANNE FOCKE: I didn't really worry about it.

ANNE GERBER: They weren't going to beat up on her. I mean, after all, we saw her with boxing gloves on! [In a special event at an and/or picnic, a boxing match between Norie and Paul Dorpat--ANNE FOCKE]

ANNE FOCKE: She might beat up on him! Right. How did that kind of collecting community develop-- it seems like you started...? And what has influenced it?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, a lot of people had started.

ANNE FOCKE: I mean, did it grow gradually, or how did it...?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, well, it became a thing, you know.

ANNE FOCKE: Uh huh.

ANNE GERBER: It's not a nice thing, but you just had to have something, and the wives pestered their husbands until they just loosened up a little. It's normal.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh sure. I was thinking that maybe the Contemporary Art Council might have spurred that along or...

ANNE GERBER: That's the reason Jinny really started, to help collectors come along. And so she did develop Bob [Dootson--Ed.] and Richard Lang.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really.

ANNE GERBER: Sure, she introduced him to what's-his-name, the one who did an important writing on the abstract expressionists?

ANNE FOCKE: Clem? Clement Greenberg?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And Richard [Lang--Ed.] would never buy anything unless Clem gave him the go-ahead, and that was deadly right there because I don't think that they got the best of things.

ANNE FOCKE: I haven't seen that collection.

ANNE GERBER: Richard never talked about his art, in any other aspect than "This is what I paid for it, and this is what it's worth now."

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. Did Jan [van der Marck--Ed.] have much of an impact, influence on...?

ANNE GERBER: Absolutely none! And it broke his heart. You see, if they had... If Jinny had believed in Jan, her collection would have gone in a different direction. But Jinny never listened to anybody but herself and Clem and a couple other people in New York.

ANNE FOCKE: So he didn't have much, I mean not only not much influence on her, but not on other people as well.

ANNE GERBER: It influenced this whole territory because as a result she didn't stand by him. She was glad, really glad to see him go because he was teaching his kids at the university the world.

ANNE FOCKE: I mean obviously he affected the artists in the community, and I mean in an incredible way.

ANNE GERBER: Really!

ANNE FOCKE: And I guess I was curious in terms of what influence he might have had on any other aspect of the community-- the collectors, or the, I don't know, audiences or university. How did he get here in the first place?

ANNE GERBER: Well, remember that Norman Davis, my boyfriend, did a lot in the World's Fair [1961-Ed.]. So it hails back to the World's Fair, and Norman was sent to the... All this time I thought that Norman had really made an adjustment in his attitude about art, because he was mostly interested in historical coins and knees and noses, you know.

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: Italian ceramics, early ceramics, and I find that it didn't even affect him!

ANNE FOCKE: Jan?

ANNE GERBER: No. Norman. Through the Stedelijk, meeting that wonderful man at the Stedlikj who recommended Jan for here-- that's how Jan got here.

ANNE FOCKE: I see. Did Jan do a show then, at the World's Fair?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yeah. He worked on that, on the European part of that show, as well as some Americans, too. So he got acquainted here, and then he got acquainted with the university. But he negotiated very poorly: half his time was assistant director at the Henry Gallery, which was deadly, and half was at the School of Art. That's where he made his impact!

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: And LaMar was so jealous.

ANNE FOCKE: Of the impact he was having, or...?

ANNE GERBER: No. Just the idea that he might have an impact. She didn't even give him a chance to have an impact at the Henry Gallery. He did that big video show.

ANNE FOCKE: Right. \_\_\_\_\_

ANNE GERBER: And she just killed him about it because it wasn't popular and she'd go around to the administration and tell them how few people were coming.

ANNE FOCKE: That's one of those shows...

ANNE GERBER: She killed Gervais Reed too. This is some historical material. This is only from my point of view!

ANNE FOCKE: Well, that's, I think, one of things that's important about what the Smithsonian is doing is getting lots of points of view. That video show, though, was, in its own way, I don't think it was perhaps as pivotal for me as 557 [full name: 557,087--ANNE FOCKE] was, but it was very important.

ANNE GERBER: It was.

ANNE FOCKE: I had gotten interested in video and had a deck myself and I needed desperately to see what people were doing. I spent hours there and I think I saw every tape. It was the way I began to get a sense in my head of what was happening.

ANNE GERBER: Um hm. She wouldn't let him get at the books to find out what money he had. And after that show she wouldn't let him do anything. And she'd yell and scream at him, and pound on the table. I knew some of the youngsters, young people working there, and they'd tell me about it. You know, he was suffering. Suffered through a year and a half. Then he said he didn't have to put up with that junk.

ANNE FOCKE: How long was he here?

ANNE GERBER: About two years.

ANNE FOCKE: I only got to know him right before the end, just before he left.

ANNE GERBER: Oh I just loved him.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, did he have another set of contacts outside?

ANNE GERBER: Oh he had contacts all over the world.

ANNE FOCKE: I mean in the city, though.

ANNE GERBER: Oh, here? Well, no. Jinny was his, he thought Jinny was his main one. And all the time I knew she was erasing everything he said. You could tell by what he had in his house.

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: And then he put together a very good show. You remember, "Second Half" was it? "Second Half Century"?

ANNE FOCKE: Oh right. At the museum.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And they got mad at him because he just ignored costs. He just did it. And that's just what he should do.

ANNE FOCKE: [So that was a nice show.] For the sake of...

ANNE GERBER: The only influence he made was on Helen and Max Gurvich, but they weren't buying stuff anyway. [Phone rings; walks away from mike] You know, it was nothing, it was a lot of lovely social contact.

[Answers phone; break in tape]

ANNE GERBER: And I have to have it all redone, all the siding. Hate it. But I have to.

ANNE FOCKE: What does moss do? It sort of eats away?

ANNE GERBER: It makes it weak and spunky.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, yeah. Have you kept up with Jan at all, over the years?

ANNE GERBER: You know, it was kind of a crisis when Jan came. Helen [Gurvich--Ed.] and Parks [Anderson--Ed.] went up to Vancouver and drove him back and they asked him to talk about something that nobody was interested in. It was a disaster! Were you there?

ANNE FOCKE: I wasn't there, but...

ANNE GERBER: You heard about it. And all those marvelous people came to hear, because they knew that he had ideas of the world at his fingertips. He talked about his participation in that museum, just the dullest thing imaginable. So I got so mad, I got so mad that I couldn't sleep that night! (laughs) I haven't written to him. He sent his latest address.

ANNE FOCKE: Hoping to mend your fence?

ANNE GERBER: I told Helen just exactly what I thought and she told him. None of it makes a bit of difference.

ANNE FOCKE: Have you any contact with him, though, otherwise? I mean since he's been here?

ANNE GERBER: Oh no. Well, no. I didn't visit him, and I don't like to call people when I go to New York.

ANNE FOCKE: Really?

ANNE GERBER: No.

ANNE FOCKE: Besides that, you could spend all your time calling people and not...

ANNE GERBER: Sure. I have enough to do. Every minute. And I don't like the idea of making people just change their life even a little bit.

ANNE FOCKE: How about Charlie Cowles? I mean his impact on \_\_\_\_ collecting?

ANNE GERBER: Charlie? He always has... He had no impact.

ANNE FOCKE: No impact.

ANNE GERBER: None! I didn't think he knew anything about art! (laughs) He was like a mercenary! An art mercenary. And he brought in a lot of interesting things, but, you know, he'd bring things back that we'd had too

much of. But he was good for the other people. (laughs) I'm so selfish.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, from my point of view, I like it when you're selfish. I'm apt to see something that I wouldn't have otherwise. Now how did he get here? Charlie.

ANNE GERBER: Jinny [Wright--Ed.] brought him in because, you remember, Tom Maytham left?

ANNE FOCKE: Oh that's it. Yeah.

ANNE GERBER: And they had that poor alcoholic here as director?

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, Bill.

ANNE GERBER: Bill Woods, that poor weak man. Bill must have been miserable every minute, with his wife nagging him on one end...

ANNE FOCKE: The museum on the other.

ANNE GERBER: ...the museum on the other end. The museum treated people, the museum treated Tom terribly. Really he [Tom Maytham--ANNE FOCKE] deserved more respect than he got. (laughs) I don't know how he stayed here that long while he was looking for a job.

ANNE FOCKE: But he's now in Denver.

ANNE GERBER: Um hmm. He's happy there. And they like him too.

ANNE FOCKE: I understand that it seems to be working out fine. I haven't really seen him but...

ANNE GERBER: Yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, what was Charlie's impact, do you suppose, on the community?

ANNE GERBER: He brought in a lot of Rauschenberg and he brought the Oldenburg [show--Ed.].

ANNE FOCKE: Oh that's right.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And he brought in H. C. Westermann, was it?

ANNE FOCKE: Um hmm.

ANNE GERBER: That was a gorgeous show. I don't want to take those things away from him.

ANNE FOCKE: And there were a few sort of community things that actually I appreciated. I mean like his willingness to collaborate with and/or. I thought that was... In a way, that allowed him a kind of opportunity to...

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. You know, he could be so fascist on one hand, and then be so marvelous and democratic in another instance.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh you mentioned that he opened up the Contemporary Art Council. That that was one of the...

ANNE GERBER: He's responsible. He just laid down the law one meeting. He said, "If we don't open that up, the museum is going to start another Contemporary Art Council." And now Jinny is at work on that collector's thing.

ANNE FOCKE: Also, back to some of the galleries that you-- Seattle galleries- - My first contact, one of my earliest gallery contacts was Manolides Gallery, and I was sort of poking my head up, but I remember a comment that Jim [Manolides--ANNE FOCKE] made to me, or told me once about you and the first time you came in to his place. He said you sort of quietly walked in, looked around, and picked out the best piece in the show. And I presume that that's the way...

ANNE GERBER: Well. I didn't know Jimmy, but I started going to that show, and it was so appealing, and then he wasn't doing very well, so I just... That was, those were the years that I had some money, too. So I bought a lot of stuff from him. The [Eric--ANNE FOCKE] Groenberg, the...

ANNE FOCKE: Arneson?

ANNE GERBER: ...Arneson, and then Merrily [Tomkins--Ed.] was with him and all was fun for me. You know all of this stuff has made life fun for me.

ANNE FOCKE: Were there other galleries that were as, or since then, that were as influential?

ANNE GERBER: I don't really like gallery people. I think that galleries turn nice people into lousy, mean people.

ANNE FOCKE: You certainly said that earlier about New York galleries.

ANNE GERBER: They're the same, only worse.

ANNE FOCKE: That's too bad, because actually a number of artists have talked to me about needing some outlet, needing an agent or a...

ANNE GERBER: It's a necessity. A necessary evil. But I... Did I talk before about the thought of a cooperative? Well, when we were traveling salesmen into New York, we'd spot a couple of coops, and that was really a solution, except that they never worked. 'Cause they never had a strong enough director who was able to keep the artists at peace, and so there was a lot of squabbling that went on. I told Linda Hodges -- she's a powerhouse! -- and, it was just before she opened up this one [Hodges Banks Gallery--Ed.] and I figured it's not going to last, too! You know, it might, it might. But it can't do that well. And she's high pressure, and she wants to make money. So I figure that... I gave her an idea that if she was ever through with this gallery, that what she should do is organize artists and set up a sound set of rules and work out a cooperative that would really go on year after year, because they could sell their work and everybody could do better, instead of giving the dealer almost 50percent. That's criminal.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. It's amazing that it's that high.

ANNE GERBER: It's really terrible. Unmoral. And then the dealers don't do that well either, I guess. (laughs) Foster/White has certain things they get large prices from. But I didn't realize that Linda would never consider doing a thing like that.

ANNE FOCKE: Really sort of a more traditional gallery orientation...

ANNE GERBER: Yes. I don't know how she can, after being at the Fountain [Gallery, Seattle Branch--Ed.] that time, how she could just figure that there's a lot of money to be made.

ANNE FOCKE: It seems to me that if one had wanted to make money that galleries are not...

ANNE GERBER: Not the place to go. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Not the thing to get into.

ANNE GERBER: That would be wonderful, if somebody would just be very smart and work on a project like that.

ANNE FOCKE: Were there ever, I mean, in Seattle before I knew it, were there any efforts at anything like that?

ANNE GERBER: I don't think so. The only thing I remember was in Los Angeles-- we were down there once, and Billy Al Bengston had just gotten awfully mad at the gallery system, and he said, "I'm not going to, I don't have to use it! Why should I?" But I understand now after about eight years, he's back with a gallery. So there it is.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. It's so hard to sort out what an alternative might be, because museums don't... They provide a forum of some sort but not the sales outlet.

ANNE GERBER: Yep. Well, it has to have space, it has to have the possibility of public relations, lots of advertising... But I just think that if it would start out on a lesser scale and just build on a good solid foundation that it could be done.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, sometime I'd like to talk with you about that, more about the future rather than past, but...

ANNE GERBER: How's your restaurant going? [at and/or--Ed.]

ANNE FOCKE: Well, it's stalled a little bit, because we're having to stop and fight with the landlord.

ANNE GERBER: You're still fighting?

ANNE FOCKE: But we're actually making amazing strides toward-- well, not buying, but working with a group of investors to buy the building for us.

ANNE GERBER: You are?

ANNE FOCKE: And we're, I mean, this was just yesterday that the group...



ANNE GERBER: Is this confidential?

ANNE FOCKE: Yes. I don't know exactly what is and isn't, but the group we talked to basically said, "Yes. They wanted..." And then they just told us that yesterday, so I'm kind of... It's a big building and there's lots of-- and I'd like to let you know what went on-- I mean we've really done a lot of thinking about how we're going to make it work, and...

ANNE GERBER: Negotiating.

ANNE FOCKE: Negotiating, but also just planning in terms of how to use the space, what needs it might fill. And some of them relate to that issue because I am concerned that there isn't a place where works can be seen.

ANNE GERBER: God, isn't that wonderful!

ANNE FOCKE: One of the things I've heard a lot of lately, and tussled with, is there's a lot of artists really talking about putting their own shows together. They just need some help in doing it.

[Tape 4, Side 2]

ANNE FOCKE: Let's see. I had some other sort of silly questions, like what was the most exciting purchase you ever made? Either how you did it or what you bought...

ANNE GERBER: Oh, Sidney didn't tell me, but we had \$20,000 one year. And that was a lot of money! 'Cause he'd only started to make-- the ski company was just then developing, and we didn't have very much money. So he surprised me when we got to New York. We started buying, and I thought it was time to quit, and he said, "No; we got some more money." (laughs) So, really that year that we bought the Beckmann and the Kandinsky and the Leger. That was a...

ANNE FOCKE: How about the most exciting show you ever brought, besides 557 [557,087--Ed.]?

ANNE GERBER: Well, every one was just continuing education, and I just get thrilled, you know, because it was now! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: That's the only reason, and I learned an awful lot. You know I realized how limited the school [University of Washington--Ed.], how limited the school attitudes are.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. They end up continuing to be limited, despite the fact that it seems like it should be easy to bring in lots of information, and...

ANNE GERBER: They just resent. Oh, they resented Jan because he brought in outside ideas. You know, that darling Hazel Koenig and Spencer Moseley? When they were together, which was a lot-- and they had some of the other people-- what do they do? Talk against Jan! It was just deadly.

ANNE FOCKE: That's too bad. Well, I sometimes wonder, I mean, I'm very interested in how Seattle and those of us here that are interested in it can be part of the dialogue, you know, the national and international dialogue. I mean artists are really interested in somehow...

ANNE GERBER: Well, if, you know... I remember coming in from the airport with Lucy [Lippard--Ed.], and she said-- you know, she had a connection with Jinny Wright.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, that's right.

ANNE GERBER: So she had some idea of the dynasty, and she was saying to me that it just takes such a little bit of money to bring artists from New York here, and send artists from here there, or wherever, and it would help everybody so much!

ANNE FOCKE: Um hmm.

ANNE GERBER: There was no way that could happen.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah, moving the artists back and forth has always seemed to me to be more important than, almost more important than traveling shows that move the art around.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, 'cause everybody gets together, and goes to a dance, and goes to a beer parlor, and does a lot of talking. And that's real stuff.

ANNE FOCKE: Um hmm. Do you think there's art, I mean this is sort of a terrible question, but any of the work that artists are doing here that relates or comes up to the quality of the work that's done in other parts of the country that you see, that's as challenging?

ANNE GERBER: I really get chauvinistic until I leave here, and then I see... I don't really know.

ANNE FOCKE: Not only now, but in the past. I tend to concentrate on today, but...

ANNE GERBER: I think it's more likely to begin to begin to happen. After all, Michael Lucero is having a success, Craig Langager, that little darling (laughs), has made it!

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah, that's good.

ANNE GERBER: That dealer has put herself out to get his things all over, and they're selling, and their life is beginning to get a little easier now with Sarah working. I always expect to hear about a divorce or separation, because he can't help himself. He's just impossible. And I don't know how she, how her delicacy can put up with it, but she has more strength than I think.

ANNE FOCKE: She's very, maybe very tough inside.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: I think some artists now, and some in the past, have had a chance to show elsewhere and be seen.

ANNE GERBER: Um hmm. And then was... After all, New Museum had a show in New York, and the three people I talked to said, "Well, you know they aren't going to tell us exactly what they think to our face. They made a big fuss!" [last sentence seems to be part of the quotation--Ed.]

ANNE FOCKE: They did. Yeah. That's right.

ANNE GERBER: I just love Barbara Noah, Barbara Noah's work and her concepts, and I like the idea that she has such outrageous concepts.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I do too.

ANNE GERBER: I don't always like everything too well, but there it is; she's always working at it. \_\_\_\_ sevens and...

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: I think that [Nirmal--Ed.] Kaur is pretty special and Irv Tepper. I never go past that hall and see his cup and saucer and the drawing without just being glad that I have it. I try to get Bruce [Guenther--Ed.] enthused 'cause I'd love to have a show here, but Bruce hasn't... He really is a stubborn bastard! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Oh dear. Barbara [Noah--Ed.] was telling me that the new museum show, once it finishes in New York is going to be coming to the [Seattle Art--Ed.] museum.

ANNE GERBER: Coming here, I know. In September, or in the fall.

ANNE FOCKE: And she was saying that she couldn't figure out what she liked more, the fact that the work was going to be seen in New York or the fact that she was going to slip in under Bruce and get in the museum.

ANNE GERBER: In the museum; that's a triumph.

ANNE FOCKE: Because he's not a fan of her work.

ANNE GERBER: Oh, he hates her work. He likes her! But he can't see her work. Well, Parks [Anderson--Ed.] invited me to come to the program committee of CAC and I knew they were talking about a possible 20th anniversary of CAC and it should be something important, and after going to "Documenta," I think that we should be able to see a few of the best of the Italians and the Germans. It seems to me that that's what's important! After all, Jinny hangs onto her Schnabel and brings him up at every instance. She's gonna win. But I did go to that meeting and I plugged. She was sitting there, and when I finished, she does what she always does, she says, "Well, we'll put it up there and judge for ourselves." You know, like when she called up and said, "557 [557,087--Ed.] was a bomb." (laughs) Of course, it was a bomb for her!

ANNE FOCKE: But, not for...

ANNE GERBER: Anyway...

ANNE FOCKE: So you pushed for the Italians and \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNE GERBER: Oh sure. At first everybody said, "Gee, that's a swell idea." I brought all the catalogs and the documents. But before that meeting was over, Bruce and Virginia were getting around, and it wouldn't do any good to show some lousy Germans and some lousy Italians.

I just, what I'd like to do is be a co-curator of that showing, go to New York and haggle with the dealers. Xavier Fourcade gets the best of the Georg Baselitz and... God, I saw some lousy things in Germany.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, yeah, I mean, you could pick lousy things anywhere.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: Because there's lousy things, that isn't an argument not to do it.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. You know, it was so marvelous. There was no Schnabel in "Documenta." There were a couple of little tiny [David--Ed.] Salles. But I talked to Ernie Fuchs after he talked to us, and he said, "Well, you know, they both came to Germany, and \_\_\_\_\_ they sized up that whole situation about two years before (laughs) two or three years, and went back and started doing them, and that's just about what their work looks like! It's derivative, because it isn't... The impact of what's important in Europe is gone in the Americans; it's just not there.

ANNE FOCKE: See, now I've heard things like that and simply haven't had the chance to see.

ANNE GERBER: No. Nobody has a chance to see.

ANNE FOCKE: That's right, and it would be...

ANNE GERBER: It's all protest, and revolt, and humanist, and almost fascist in its way. But it's strong.

ANNE FOCKE: It sounds very real to what the situation is there, now, too.

ANNE GERBER: Sure.

ANNE FOCKE: Well. I think I'll leap back again. Something else that I think is important in Seattle that you were involved with at the beginning, and so was I, was the Seattle Arts Commission. You probably have been with them longer than anybody else, since you were there at the beginning and...

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. I retired about a month and a half ago.

ANNE FOCKE: Right. You told me that. Let's see, now, I had a nice, specific question about that...

ANNE GERBER: I always felt that if you'd stayed on and became the director, that it would have gone in a better direction. As it was, well all I can think of is the way King County and Seattle Arts Commission-- King County has that marvelous art, the earthworks in Kent, and across the valley is the Herbert Bayer. I took some friends out there for a picnic last Sunday, and I tell you-- of course, they're just elevated above everything that's happening in Seattle. So right now, I'm sort of prejudiced.

ANNE FOCKE: Sure. It makes sense.

ANNE GERBER: But still, that Robert Irwin gets in there. I was kind of in on the-- I was never so influential this last four or five years, 'cause Richard Andrews was always scared that I was going to try to work hard for a Flavin in the city. And I felt he should! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: He should have that fear?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. But he never put me on a committee that would allow me to. I was on one good committee, and that was the NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration--Ed.] project. That's going to be a good one.

ANNE FOCKE: That's going to be a good one. Yeah.

ANNE GERBER: But the [Michael--Ed.] Heizer, you know, that Heizer project [Adjacent, Against, Upon--Ed.] really started in this room.

ANNE FOCKE: Is that right? I don't know. Tell me the genesis of that. I wasn't...

ANNE GERBER: CAC had a party here, for Heizer and Barbara and what's his name, I can't remember. And Charlie Cowles tootled into the kitchen where I was working, and we both said the same thing at once. We had the same idea-- that Seattle ought to have a Heizer. And that man, he organized the very Sunday, the next day, to go, and I told him where it ought to be! He had two other site possibilities, and so the next morning he took the Heizers out, up to the Florence... You know where the glass factory was.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, Pilchuck.

ANNE GERBER: Pilchuck. Went up there to the tree farm, because John Hauberg had said that he'd be glad to have a Heizer up there but it had to be portable. (laughs) So they \_\_\_\_\_

ANNE FOCKE: You knew they were \_\_\_\_\_

ANNE GERBER: Heizer never, never, never accepted any limitations of anything he wanted to do. So they went up to the tree farm, and they went somewhere else (I don't know where it was), and then they met me and my two dogs at the Myrtle Edwards Park. It was just a dump then; there was still the stuff...

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, I loved it then, actually.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And I watched him, that artist, as we walked across it, and I could see it, his eyes were just glinting, and that's where it was.

ANNE FOCKE: That's great.

ANNE GERBER: After he left that place, he came back to the hotel and called his father, and asked him where he could get rock, the kind of rocks that he wanted. And his father told him exactly where to go! His father's a geologist and he and his grandfather did a lot of work in the Cascades!

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, I didn't know that. And that was the proper sort of connection, for him to do a piece here, and then \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. So...

ANNE FOCKE: Are there other memories you have of the early arts commission days or what its impact was at that time.

ANNE GERBER: Oh I... Well, of course, in the early days they didn't have much money to do very much, but they had to learn how to put one foot in front of the other. And I think that (chuckles) Chris Kirk, and you, and I were always plugging for the same kind of quality, and Jinny never did. She was, I was always aware of her just holding back. But she always did come up in a crunch, because she put in some money for the Tony Smith, and a lot of money on the Heizer, so I shouldn't say that. It's probably not at all correct, so \_\_\_\_\_

ANNE FOCKE: One person's view.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. That's right.

ANNE FOCKE: The Arts... I have been actually less conscious of what the Arts Commission has been doing in its last four or five years than in the earlier ones. I have a feeling that it has a different impact, or different...

ANNE GERBER: Well, it's Richard Andrew's ideas, and it's okay. 'Course that NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administration, Western Regional Center, Seattle--Ed.] project is going to be... I went over there Saturday.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really.

ANNE GERBER: The whole NOAA section is closed; we could only get to the part where-- the gate's only open to visitors Monday through Friday. I went to see 'cause some of the stuff's done down there now. It's not landscaped yet. They're not going to have notices of it until all the landscaping is done. The Robert Irwin [downtown at Public Safety Building--Ed.] is going to be wonderful, and nobody's going to understand that, so that would be a chance to bring in another aspect. The trees bloom there, now, and the fencing is... Do you know \_\_\_\_\_?

ANNE FOCKE: I've seen it...

ANNE GERBER: It's a nice heavy webbing, and it's going to be colored, in my memory, a turquoise, sort of a blue-green, unless it's a green-blue. And I don't know how that fencing's going to set up, because I was over there in the plaza, and I thought that it was going to be close around the trees, but it's not. Because the stuff, the points

of attachment are sort of in grids. And the planters are round, too-- I think they're round.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. I think they are.

ANNE GERBER: But anyway, that aspect of walking around that place and seeing one edge against another...

ANNE FOCKE: That'll be nice.

ANNE GERBER: And there'll be lights on it, too.

ANNE FOCKE: I think actually that the NOAA project-- I don't know about the Irwin-- but the NOAA project, for sure, was partly initiated by Pat [Fuller--Ed.]

ANNE GERBER: Oh, absolutely! I was on that jury and she came. It was her last stint for NEA [National Endowment for the Arts--Ed.]. And she showed us hundreds of slides and then, after we were there for two-and-a-half or three hours, she casually dropped the fact that these three men, [Siah--Ed.] Armajani, George Trakas, and one of the other fellows, were acquainted,

ANNE FOCKE: Scott Burton? [ANNE GERBER apparently concurs--Ed.]

ANNE GERBER: They live in different parts of the country. But it would be their dream, she said, that they could collaborate on a piece. And that did it. If it had been, if we hadn't paid attention to her, it would have been something else, and I don't think it would have been so good, even though I haven't seen it yet, for sure.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, I think that there are, some of the things that I think are pretty important about the way the Art in Public Places program works for the city, really did start with some of the things that she did when she was here. I think.

ANNE GERBER: Oh sure. Well, Richard was there under her. And that was a big influence. Well, that, that place, the corner out there on 45th [It's at 50th--Ed., near Wallingford, is a pretty great thing.

ANNE FOCKE: Right, the Chuck Greening [gateway--ANNE FOCKE.].

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. I don't go there often enough, to see it. And what else is there? Oh, of course, all the little special projects and portable works and...

ANNE FOCKE: Like the Broadway project and the dance steps [by Jack Mackie--ANNE FOCKE].

ANNE GERBER: Was Pat there when that started?

ANNE FOCKE: Well, see, one of the things that she did was to set up projects where the artist was brought in at the same time that the architect was. You know, the artist was part of the team in the beginning, and that's pretty unusual across the country.

ANNE GERBER: Well, that's what Seattle is used as a model for.

ANNE FOCKE: Not enough people are using it as a model. That's what I'd like to do with ours, too, with our building, is get an artist right in there at the beginning, or a couple of artists.

ANNE GERBER: Excellent.

ANNE FOCKE: How about Cornish, did you ever serve on Cornish, speaking, moving, you seem to have been, like it or not, involved in most of the arts...

ANNE GERBER: Oh, well, I was on the board of Cornish there for three or four years.

ANNE FOCKE: Was that a long time ago? That wasn't a long time ago, that was... Mel [Strauss--Ed.] was there then?

ANNE GERBER: When Craig [Langager--Ed.] was there.

ANNE FOCKE: Right.

ANNE GERBER: Isn't he still there? He's still, nominally, administrator, isn't he?

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah, though I think that may be changing.

ANNE GERBER: It's about time. That board has been so damn lazy. They've swallowed every word they told them

and he, he'd get up there, when I was on the board, and I could just read between the lines, and he'd have every phrase polished.

ANNE FOCKE: So you were there for the three years, three or four years.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And then, I was beginning to get more aware 'cause students would come and a few teachers would come and tell me, too, about the horrendous relationships that, even though the... Craig was there, and of course, you know, I understand it. (laughs) But I see some of the things that he got out of his students, and I thought with all that lack of equipment, it was far beyond what I would reasonably expect. And he never stinted. He just worked hard! And then Mel just called him up one evening late, and asked him to come to breakfast with him, and fired him! And that made me mad. I just couldn't stand Mel. And then I'd see Mel come to board meetings and rationalize everything. And there wasn't much [matching]. Oh, I hated him. I began to see him as a great big rat face. He bothered me; so I resigned. I wasn't exactly reasonable, but that's the way it was.

ANNE FOCKE: Well. Was there, I don't think we... Go ahead.

ANNE GERBER: Oh well, you know, I didn't know anything about music, except I knew Suzanne Szekely, and she never said a word. But I knew she was suffering, too, and I admired her so much. You know, you never know when the door closes what's really...

ANNE FOCKE: I don't remember, in anything we talked about before, was Cornish ever a significant factor?

ANNE GERBER: Factor in the city? Oh sure. In the early years, when Nellie was there, it was an important place. And there was nothing to touch it; she had international contacts, and brought in dancers and actors and actresses.

ANNE FOCKE: Was it visual arts, mostly?

ANNE GERBER: Visual arts wasn't so important to her; it was performances that she was great on.

ANNE FOCKE: Uh huh. Did you do much with, or go there and visit...?

ANNE GERBER: I was too poor to go to that school.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, did they have public concerts, or...?

ANNE GERBER: Oh. They had classes if I could have; if I'd had any money, I would have gone to classes, but I didn't... I had some friends, though, that I admired a lot, and they were students there. A friend, was from Eastern Oregon-- and her sister was a dancer and she was the visual arts. She didn't go there to school, she went to the university, and that's where I met her. It was an interesting place, and some of the greats of New York used to come out.

ANNE FOCKE: Then it seems to really have been in a slump phase for quite a long time.

ANNE GERBER: Before Nellie died, it was, and she didn't have the energy that she had had before. You know, it's hard.

ANNE FOCKE: It's hard to keep up.

ANNE GERBER: To get people enthused, keep them enthused, at a high level.

ANNE FOCKE: You know, I was always fascinated, when I first got to know Cornish, that despite the fact that... That was considerably before Mel was there. I don't remember the name of the person who was... ANNE GERBER: Patterson.

ANNE FOCKE: Patterson was the director. But, it amazed me that despite the fact that the school didn't seem to be very energetic in lots of ways, or something, there seemed to be a way for interesting artists to find a spot there, and to reach some students, and...

ANNE GERBER: Um hmm. Well, Barbara [Noah] just loves the students that go. She says, now that she's had experience on the [University of Washington--Ed.] campus, she finds the students at Cornish far more interested and exciting than the students there; but they've had their wings broken.

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. Some of us went there and survived. (laughs)

ANNE GERBER: (laughs) Pretty nasty.

ANNE FOCKE: Are there any other major...?

ANNE GERBER: Well, you know there was a marvelous woman, by the name of Zoe Dusanne?

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah. You mentioned her just briefly, but...

ANNE GERBER: I don't know. Maybe we might have talked about Otto Seligman...

ANNE FOCKE: Not much.

ANNE GERBER: Were the two factors in the arts, in the art community here. Because they were good dealers.

ANNE FOCKE: Any connection between them and Nellie Cornish?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, that was much later.

ANNE FOCKE: I see. So Nellie was much earlier. Nellie, I guess I just don't have my dates...

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. We did mention that.

ANNE FOCKE: Because those and somebody you mentioned at the Henry Gallery seemed to be people that had a perspective that also came from outside as well as in Seattle.

ANNE GERBER: I wouldn't be surprised. Somebody must have \_\_\_\_.

ANNE FOCKE: Right. But that seems pretty... That connection, and other things was...

ANNE GERBER: I can't remember. Jan was the big influence at the Henry Gallery.

ANNE FOCKE: No, this was much earlier, like when you were a student?

ANNE GERBER: Oh! When I was a student, they went through a number of directors, and one was Halley Savery!

ANNE FOCKE: Right. She was...

ANNE GERBER: I think she gave out her library. She got the...

ANNE FOCKE: No kidding.

ANNE GERBER: I think so, I might be wrong.

ANNE FOCKE: Well Savery, there's certainly a hall at the university named Savery.

ANNE GERBER: Savery Hall. Savery was a hero on the campus-- he was a philosophy teacher, and everybody loved him! He had, when I was in school, he had three children, and the son is, Bill, Jr., is an architect in this city. Isabelle, his daughter, is a good friend of mine. She left Seattle as soon as she finished school. I don't know where she is now.

ANNE FOCKE: I was just thinking that, if I think of the significant arts organizations in Seattle, it sounds like you've kind of been involved in all of them, visual arts.

ANNE GERBER: There aren't many. Don't forget that.

ANNE FOCKE: No, no. That's true! But the museum, the Arts Commission, Cornish, Henry Gallery, trying to think, what else is there? Is there something you've missed? (laughs) And/or, I meant.

ANNE GERBER: When I was about 18 years old, a neighborhood house-- it was called Educational Center. It was a building, you know, part of the old Wonder Bread company. They bought the building, and it was established by the Council of Jewish Women to integrate immigrants into...

[Tape 5, Side 1]

ANNE GERBER: [noise while tape is being restarted] I used to be a volunteer 'cause I was always the... I used to come all the way from the University District by bus and I used to love... See, our [Jewish--Ed.] community went through a few stages. First was the Germans, they were the elite, and they got to be wealthy first. Then came the Russians-- that's the wave that my family came in on. My mother was born in the United States; my father [born in Russia/Poland] came when he was six but there were all of us who came as immigrants. So the Educational Center was developed as a health place where well babies-- they have a well-baby clinic, dentists,

doctors, and... I used to go there to sort of work with kids in crafts stuff; I'd bring in crafts, you know, all kinds of junk that didn't cost anything, and make things. Have a little paint once in a while.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: How long did you do that?

ANNE GERBER: Oh, I did that for four or five years and then I was on the board. I was on that board until about 12 years ago.

ANNE FOCKE: Well, that's a...

ANNE GERBER: Then it changed. The neighborhood changed up here. Oh, and then the Sephardic group came in.

ANNE FOCKE: That's the third group.

ANNE GERBER: That's the third. The Sephardics are the Spanish. Came from the Island of \_\_\_\_\_ and Constantinople. And in the middle of that immigration period, the Council of Jewish Women recognized that the neighborhood was changing, so... I was in on that one, too. I thought that the council ought to give it back to the neighborhood; it took about six years to do that.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I see, so the \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. That was a very exciting part of, time in my life. And then it took off, and after that the building was sold and the money went to a... The name was changed to Neighborhood House, and it became the first of the public housing, social service centers. That's a natural trend. Isn't that nice?

ANNE FOCKE: That is nice.

ANNE GERBER: And it's still going. In every public housing authority, there is a form of Neighborhood House.

ANNE FOCKE: That's great, a nice model.

ANNE GERBER: That's about it, kid. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Have you done much, you had mentioned that you don't know much about music, but I know that there are ways that you \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh I listen, that's about it.

ANNE GERBER: Well, David [Mahler--Ed.] tells me that that's the most important part, of being a...

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah, I like that. I'm trapped because I have two friends I just love in the Early Music Guild, and I keep telling them, "What you ought to be doing, working with, is not this music, but contemporary music." But they can't sit through five minutes of it. So do I ever go hear David's and the other contemporary music? No.

ANNE FOCKE: You'll get there. \_\_\_\_\_

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. I got a record of the Kronos. The Harringtons gave me a record of the Kronos String Quartet.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh that's right. They're doing well these days, or at least their name is around.

ANNE GERBER: They're not making very much money, but they're living and they're expanding around. They have [somebody, some?] in terms of business.

ANNE FOCKE: Getting a pretty good reputation?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. Is there anywhere that I could send that record? 'Cause I don't use it.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh! We, we have records in our library; we put them on cassette and make them available to people to listen to. That'd be wonderful. They have some contemporary things, don't they, the \_\_\_\_\_?

ANNE GERBER: Oh yeah. They specialize in it.

ANNE FOCKE: That's what I mean. Herb's going to try to get them to perform with us.



ANNE GERBER: Oh, I hope so. Who is?

ANNE FOCKE: Herb Levy is our music, Soundwork director now.

ANNE GERBER: Oh. Oh, I wish you would.

ANNE FOCKE: And he really would like to get them \_\_\_\_.

ANNE GERBER: I'll contribute a hundred bucks.

ANNE FOCKE: I'll tell him. He's really interested in \_\_\_\_.

ANNE GERBER: 'Cause they were here. I didn't know it, but they were here last summer at Bumbershoot, on a fluke. (laughs) Yeah. I had dinner with David's mother and father not too long ago, and that's where I found... Here I thought they were on the track line that they'd come normally, but no. And they can't come again 'cause there's no fluke raising its lovely head.

ANNE FOCKE: (laughs) I guess what I was wondering is if in the course of your involvement in the arts, you ever got involved much in other art forms, either organizationally or other than just attending theater, or dance, or new music, or...

ANNE GERBER: New Dimensions in Music, when Joan Frank Williams, Joan Williams Frank?

ANNE FOCKE: Joan Franks Williams.

ANNE GERBER: When she first started out, somebody told her to call me, and she did, and so I was on that board.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. That's how I knew about your synthesizer [The Buchla synthesizer at and/or, that had originally been owned by New Dimentsions in Music--ANNE FOCKE].

ANNE FOCKE: Ah hah.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah, but I don't, there's not too much understanding. My most important years was where I was ten years old in Ballard, when a neighbor used to take me to the concerts.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really. Concerts in Ballard?

ANNE GERBER: No. Seattle Symphony and other concerts that happened around. Got me to listening so that when I got to the university, I'd read about the female society and the male society, whatever they're called--musical honor... honoraries! They used to give concerts. That's how I got to listen to chamber music. And I never missed one. So, if it weren't for that I never probably would have sat still.

ANNE FOCKE: Ah hah.

ANNE GERBER: I had school to thank.

ANNE FOCKE: But theater or dance?

ANNE GERBER: No. Never.

ANNE FOCKE: I hadn't remembered much. I mean I do remember various music things that you've mentioned, and...

ANNE GERBER: No, I never... I never participated in those things.

ANNE FOCKE: Never acted?

ANNE GERBER: No. (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: Oh dear. How about architecture, or architects?

ANNE GERBER: Hm mm. (negative)

ANNE FOCKE: Somebody built your house, right?

ANNE GERBER: Wendell Lovett. Although Sidney built...

ANNE FOCKE: This was before \_\_\_\_\_, right?

ANNE GERBER: He did our house over there.

ANNE FOCKE: Wendell Lovett did?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And so when we built this house... Oh no, he didn't! Jack Morse did the house over there, so when I finally beat Sidney down into having a house here-- because we had to have all that space for the Indian artifacts; it just demanded that much more space than we needed. And we found this lot.

That little bastard Sidney wanted to buy an expensive lot down on the lake so he could have his plane and bring his plane up to it. But I couldn't, I just didn't want to live down there; those houses are dull, awful architecture, and I figured the people were no better, and I... He was the one that suggested, on passing here, to go and see whether this was public or private. That was at the end of a long Saturday when we just drove all around the big houses to see if we could find a house to buy, 'cause he didn't want to build a house again. And I went down to the County/City Building and found that this was \_\_\_\_\_. There was another lot that was just on this side of Madrona across to Yesler. And we were friends of the Wensbergs, and they'd sold their house on Mercer Island. We hadn't sold our house at Medina yet; it took us two years.

Anyway, I wanted a change of architect, 'cause, oh, architects are just pains in the neck! (laughs) You know they fall in love with every idea and they want it to cost three times as much as you want, and it was much less integrated then. You know, this house is 20 years old, and it [the neighborhood--Ed.] was 75% black and 25% white, and we knew that we wouldn't be able to get much of a mortgage, 'cause it was red-lined and... Where was I going?

ANNE FOCKE: Architects or the design?

ANNE GERBER: Oh God. Wendell wanted us to go out another third, and he wanted this dining room much bigger and three steps higher than the living room to get more sky. Anyway, he was... Sidney explained to both Wendell and me, "We're going to spend \$34,000 on this house including the pool." The land was just cheap. This piece cost \$2,000. That piece cost \$7,000. And they bought half of it, so it was really nothing. I was glad, 'cause I wanted a house, and I didn't want it to cost that much. I knew Sidney was spending his money on open housing by that time. And I had to be the go-between. Wendell didn't refuse, didn't accept this house at all.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh really.

ANNE GERBER: No, he wouldn't even come to see it. When Sidney was working on Harmony Homes... He built, with the help of [Stimmy] Bullitt, and Stearn, and about five other men-- each put together enough money to start 12 houses to be built in one year. And Sidney did all the work. He'd go out in the neighborhoods where there weren't any blacks or Asians, and he'd find one lot. Once he found two lots over in Bellevue and bought them. But he built two houses there and he wouldn't sell... You know the blacks bought the house before it was barely started. And so no white would... For a whole year they held that house until a white bought that house. He was not going to put two blacks together, 'cause that would make a panic in the neighborhood. I do believe that as little integration as there is in the suburbs, that what there is, considerably, somewhat, Sidney and his young mothers and fathers were responsible for it.

ANNE FOCKE: Uh huh.

ANNE GERBER: Anyway, it was pretty exciting. We couldn't even, we had a hard time finding a contractor to build those houses, 'cause contractors would not, didn't want to build houses on the open market. So this man was the one that Sidney finally got.

ANNE FOCKE: The man who did the contracting?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. And Sid worked with him. Sid cut every corner. It's a wonder this house is standing. (laughs) I didn't care. I wanted this house right here!

ANNE FOCKE: It's wonderful. But more your design than Wendell's?

ANNE GERBER: Well, it is essentially his, except that all the things that would have made it a good, beautiful extravagant house were his and Sidney just cut 'em out. Oh what a shock it was, every time we saw him, he was \_\_\_\_\_. It was all right. And you know, it wasn't until Sidney... Sidney and Wendell wouldn't talk. So it was, when Sidney was dead about five or six years and I'd started the minimalists, somebody that was here told him that it was a lot of fun to come here. (laughs) So he called me up one day and asked me if I'd invite him over. Now he's just finishing a house for himself over on 34th.

ANNE FOCKE: Is that right?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: I think the first things I knew of his were furniture. Didn't he do furniture design?

ANNE GERBER: I \_\_\_\_\_ could. Poor Wendell. He never wanted to take on a house unless he could aim it for an AIA [American Institute of Architects--Ed.] award; that means lots of dough that way. Thirty-four thousand dollars! (laughs)

ANNE FOCKE: It wasn't enough to win an award.

ANNE GERBER: No. (laughs) Well, one thing, his idea, that the four concrete pillars that were put in first. I think that's gorgeous.

ANNE FOCKE: Ah hah. Yeah, that's nice, and they're still raw and bare.

ANNE GERBER: Yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: No, the architecture community in Seattle is one I've only recently gotten to know at all.

ANNE GERBER: 'Course you always knew, since you were on the arts commission, you realized how reactionary they were in their art. They think they know everything about it, like Fred Bassetti.

Did you go over to that building that's about eight or ten floors deep, across from the Rainier Club? That's going to be that 78-story building by Martin Selig?

ANNE FOCKE: I haven't yet.

ANNE GERBER: It's something to see! To look down in that hole!

ANNE FOCKE: That hole? It's amazing. Someone was talking about doing a piece down there. See if they couldn't talk them into doing something with the hole before it...

ANNE GERBER: It wouldn't cost them anything. I mean it wouldn't last long. If it didn't interfere with the work that was going on.

ANNE FOCKE: There's a few architects at the moment who I think are beginning to develop some good working relationships with artists. I don't know if you know that Sheila was hired, Sheila Klein was hired by Olsen Walker, just to be an artist in the firm, and they pay her a good hourly wage, and...

ANNE GERBER: You know, of all the people I cannot conceive of Sheila as doing it. But she... Do you think it'll work out?

ANNE FOCKE: What her real interest is right now-- you know how she's into jewelry and ornament and stuff?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah. All the crafty stuff.

ANNE FOCKE: She wants to put jewelry on buildings, decorate 'em up a little bit.

ANNE GERBER: (laughs) It's a lovely idea.

ANNE FOCKE: You know that's, I mean that's a little bit, kind of short [hands], though. But she's got some pretty interesting... You know what dealieboppers are?

ANNE GERBER: No.

ANNE FOCKE: Dealieboppers are those sort of things that you...

ANNE GERBER: Oh sure, they wiggle.

ANNE FOCKE: Yes. She's going to put a pair of dealieboppers on her building this weekend.

ANNE GERBER: (laughs) They come back, she got back from Italy?

ANNE FOCKE: Yeah.

ANNE GERBER: Poor thing. She's a kick. She's got more chutzpah than anybody I ever met in my life.

ANNE FOCKE: And as a result steps on a few toes, and...

ANNE GERBER: Oh sure.

ANNE FOCKE: I appreciate those...

ANNE GERBER: I'll take Nirmal [Nirmal Kaur, artist--Ed.] anytime, instead of Sheila.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh, in terms of the work?

ANNE GERBER: Yeah.

ANNE FOCKE: I don't know too much about what Nirmal's doing these days. I mean, I've seen some like that...

ANNE GERBER: Well, I hear that she's going on into sculpture instead of going back into stitching.

ANNE FOCKE: Oh is she?

ANNE GERBER: Sewing machine.

ANNE FOCKE: Uh hah.

ANNE GERBER: Gee, I think she's talented.

ANNE FOCKE: Yes. It's nice that she's kept going all these years.

ANNE GERBER: Since Jessie Cornsilk.

ANNE FOCKE: That's right.

ANNE GERBER: Remember when Sue \_\_\_\_\_ lived down there and she spent a lot of time...

ANNE FOCKE: Well, I think I'm through for the time being, unless you think of something.

ANNE GERBER: No.

END OF INTERVIEW

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