



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Joseph T. Fraser,
1970 Aug. 24

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Transcript

Interview

PC: Paul Cummings

JF: Joseph Frazer

PC: It's August 24, 1970. Paul Cummings talking to Joseph Frazer in his house in Philadelphia. How old is this house?

JF: Oh, it's about 1825-1830.

PC: A fabulous house.

JF: And this was suburbs when it was built.

PC: Could we start with you were born in Philadelphia. And you grew up and went to school here and everything.

JF: I went to school here, went to the Northeast Public High School and graduated in 1916. And then missed two years and didn't go directly to college. In that interim of course, the first World War was on so that I was in service in the Army. And then entered the University of Pennsylvania in the School of Architecture in September 1918. We were in uniform while we were in school. Of course that period was a very short one. The armistice was signed in November and by the end of December I was out again. So the Army experience was a very slight one. But it did mean that I had the beginning of my architectural training right at the tail end of the war. I graduated in 1922 with a strange degree then. They gave the graduate architects the wonderful title of Bachelor of Science in Architecture. I guess we were the last class to have such a title. But it was a very funny one and I think it means that, oh, if we'd ever go back and have occasion to wear a hood again it's kind of an odd one because it was different from the regular one that was assumed later.

PC: How did you get into architecture? Was there a family interest in it?

JF: Well, I was one of those fellows who had an interesting educational experience, it seemed to me, in that while I was in high school I got to know very intimately a perfectly marvelous fellow who taught history. He was one of the most cultured men I've known and one of the keenest and generally alert on every score. He took an interest in me. He was a pretty fair musician. He was an organist in a church here in town.

PC: What was his name?

JF: Oswald Mitchener. He taught at this Northeast High School. I had been brought up in a very orthodox Methodist household. I hadn't gone to the theatre, I hadn't played cards, I hadn't had anything to drink. There were a great many restrictions in my early life which I didn't really resent particularly but this was the atmosphere in which I grew up. And this fellow, my teacher, opened really all the doors of cultural and aesthetic interest to me because he was alert. He was an organist in a church in which they had installed a very handsome new organ and he wanted somebody to turn pages and pull out stops and so on. So I guess in my sophomore year in high school I started to study pipe organ with him. I played the piano a bit. So I saw a great deal of this fellow. And it seems to me that he brought me in contact with the very best books and the very best music. The first time I ever went to the opera I heard Caruso. The first time I ever heard a great pianist I heard Paderewski. The first time I went to the theatre I heard Mrs. Fiske on the stage. Things of this sort. And this fellow was perfectly terrific. Well, when I graduated from high school I had no money at all and rather couldn't afford to send me on to college. And I really didn't have any ambition to go to college and this was a great blow to Mitchener because he thought that certainly I deserved to go on. But as I say, I was out of school for two years. I worked for a year and I was in the army a year. During that time I realized that he was right and that as soon as I was free I would go back to school. I think it was he who said, I don't want to see you just take a liberal arts course. Choose something. You've got an aesthetic bent and an interest in good things. Think this thing through and we'll talk about it again. As I looked over the program of the various things I thought that maybe architecture would be good. I liked to draw always. And so that was the decision. I had a wonderful experience in school because I came during the era at the University of Pennsylvania when Paul Cray was the chief critic. He was a very inspired teacher and a great designer. As a matter of fact, it was just at the time when he was at the top of his professional excellence. We all admired him so. Put him on a great pedestal. It was an inspiration to work with somebody who stirred you every time he came into the drafting room. There was something very important in this man. So my architectural experience in school was a fine one. I did get to go abroad for four months directly after I graduated from college. Then came back to go into the office of Robert McGoodwin who was doing some of the finest residential buildings anywhere in the country. As you know, Philadelphia was famous for its suburbs. This was a crazy kind of period when everything was done for eclectic, it could be Spanish, it could be early American. It could be Gothic. It could be anything. And you had to be kind of ready to

design in any style that was called for. McGoodwin was a fine designer. He had a splendid practice. I went with him It was a very tiny office.

PC: Well, we're running ahead at quite a clip here. Could we go back just a little bit. Did you read at home before high school or university? Did you have books around.

JF: Yes, oh, yes. I remember mother gave me a copy of the *The Forsyte Saga* that everybody is talking about now because it's on television. And Mother had given me that when it was first published. It wasn't great literature but it was one of the books that I was reading. Not so much before I went to college but in the University, and the University School of Architecture at that time was tops, they had gathered a wonderful group of men, very understanding fellows. Even the fellows who gave us math and language and so on were, didn't expect that any of us were going to excel because design was the thing we had gone to get. But in those days the architecture student worked night and day, every day, seven days a week, and often all night long. So that it was a grueling thing but very wonderful. The fellow who gave me my English literature was William Harbison. He is a brother of John Harbison who became Paul Cray's partners in architecture. This fellow loved the English novel and he passed that on to me and I've never got over it. Trollope and Dickens and Thackeray and the whole line of them are just very important to me still. I find that in the middle of trying to keep up with John Canaday and what not I nearly always have one of the old fellows by the read and read a little bit of it every night. William Harbison gave me something. I think education was simpler in those days because you had the opportunity, well, you couldn't get to know everybody, but the classes were small and it was a great advantage to know those fellows. They were wonderful guys.

PC: You got to know them then outside the classroom?

JF: Oh, yes.

PC: And that was as important as the class work.

JF: Oh, terribly important. And those friendships have gone on. As a matter of fact, to go ahead a little bit, well, I'll mention John Harbison as I go on, because he became a very important friend to me because he led me to the Academy finally. I suppose that my sphere of activity has been a fairly small circle because I grew up right here in Philadelphia. And went to the University of Pennsylvania which is here in Philadelphia. And then I was affiliated for ten years with one of the best of the Philadelphia architects. And then went through horrible three or four years during the depression without anything under the sun. I then went to the Academy, feeling that it was a very makeshift kind of thing and I was there for thirty-five years.

PC: Yes, perfect, yes. Were there any other people at the University or students who became good friends of yours that you've kept up with?

JF: Oh, yes. A great many of them. Well, there was one particular fellow who is still the dearest friend I have, and who went abroad with me that first time. That was Roy Larson, like the Time-Life fellow and he became a partner of Paul Cray. Then after Cray's death there were four partners, they had been junior partners, and they used their name in the new firm. It was Harbison, Huff, Livingstone and Larson. And they got to be known as H2L2 because of the awful length of their name. Roy Larson and I were in college together and went abroad together that first summer of 1924. When we came back and if our girls hadn't met us in New York we'd still be there because we hadn't a penny when we got off that boat. I'm sure we couldn't have got together a dollar between us. And we both married the girls who met us when we came back. Of course we'd been in love before we went to Europe. And Roy and I both have seen our families grow up together. We have two children. Roy Larson has three, three sons. They're all married and have dandy families. In a very real sense he became the successor to Paul Cray in that he had a very broad interest not only in architecture but also had a social interest in the city. He was active in city planning and served on all sorts of committees. He was largely responsible for the design of the Independence Hall Mall, for instance. He was the younger of the four partners so that as the others retired, John Harbison retired first and then both Huff and Livingston retired and died. And Larson has just now retired from very active duty there. He's been on all sorts of national committees and has been consultant for the government on all kinds of things. He was very active when they were building the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs. So that he's a great many very important commissions and has done a lot of fine work. And we have been the most devoted friends. We waited twenty-five years and we get our wives took another four months trip and did the whole thing over again that we'd done in 1924.

PC: Tell me, how did you get to Europe in 1924?

JF: Well, I graduated in 1922. I was getting a miserable salary. I guess it was about twenty dollars a week. But there wasn't a great deal that you spent your money on. And I just wanted to go abroad. And I started to save right away and so did Roy. He had an advantage over me in that he was, not that he had great means, but he had come to the University after about five years' training in a big office in Chicago. So that he was an advanced student when he came to the school. So we used all that we had saved plus some. My brother had to give me a

little bit of help or we wouldn't have got back at all I guess. There was something rare about that thing that you earned yourself and it all meant so much because you knew you had just so much time in which to do it. And as nearly everybody who goes abroad for the first time, I guess, you feel that you've got to cover the waterfront. Of course we didn't do as much as the kids do now as they go abroad on their scholarships from the academy. But we did do, we went directly to Italy and then worked up through Italy and France and finally to England. And that was it, we didn't get to Greece, we didn't get to Spain. All those things had to come later. And I giving you the kind of thing you want?

PC: Yes fine, that's fine. Well, what was it like in the 20s in Europe and in Philadelphia?

JF: Oh, it was a wonderful time to be studying. As I said of course you had small classes, you had the intimacy with the instructor. You really got to know them as people. And there wasn't the great tourism and all abroad so that you could go very inexpensively. And there was a wonderful spirit that existed among the architects who all went, wanted to go abroad for a period of time. And every fellow who went brought back the names of his favorite restaurants and pensions and so on where you could go cheaply. Oh, we had an exquisite four months. I don't think anybody ever had a better time. And we did it on very, very little money. And I think we saw the major monuments. Of course that period was really the end of the great Beaux Arts influence in design. In our last year in college we were doing those tremendous programs of, oh, great exposition buildings and very elaborate plans, city blocks of great elaborateness. And it wasn't in a sense very practical but it was design in a very excellent sense and beautifully done. So that I think that my schooling was a happy one and very exciting. Two other men in my own class with whom I continued to be great friends, they have both died, one was Kenneth Day. Kenneth was the son of Frank Miles Day who did the very best of the Gothic buildings on the Princeton campus. And the old firm of Day and Cluader did some very exquisite work. It was not very American. But they were very sensitive designers. Frank Miles Day was an artist through and through. His son Kenneth I think suffered all his life because of his illustrious father, he never really had great success. But he was a fellow of charm and culture and I owe a great deal of him. I had grown up in a family that lived very simply. Kenneth's home was open to me very generously and it was filled with all of the nice things of life. There was a lovely library and lovely furniture and a garden and everything about it was exquisite. And Kenneth gave me something that one else could have. And his mother was a great friend to me. His father died just before Kenneth went to college. He had a perfectly lovely sister who also studied architecture. She married a lawyer here in town. She and her husband are both dead and so is Kenneth. He married a charming girl who was the granddaughter of S. Weir Mitchell. S. Weir Mitchell was a well known literary figure in early Philadelphia. Well, these are some of the things that influenced my early life. The other intimate friend was Alfred Bendiner. He was a member of a very Orthodox Hungarian Jewish family. His background was utterly unlike mine. We didn't live far from each other up in North Philadelphia. I got to know his whole family. They were great people. He had three brothers all of whom became lawyers. And they were proud of having an artist in the family and there was something remarkable about this family closeness. And I got a great deal from Al Bendiner. We continued to be very close friends all our lives. For some years he lived next door here. And then when we all bought these houses, we had rented them originally, they were all commonly owned, he moved about five doors above and they lived there for years. He married rather late, I guess he was perhaps forty when he married. He married a wonderful gal. She's still a dear sweet friend. We see a great deal of her. She was a girl of considerable means. He didn't have great success as an architect or designer but he was a charmer. He was quite a cartoonist in his way. They traveled a great deal and he did a lot of very handsome work, but it was more on the watercolor pastel drawing side and lithographs. In fact there is one of his paintings over the dining room mantel and there are quite a few others throughout the house. He was a very remarkable fellow. He had a literary bent. He wasn't a very brilliant writer, but very alert, so that all these influences were good. I've had a good time, I surely had and then the Depression came at the end of ten years in McGoodwin's office. By 1929 when the bottom dropped out I was married and had one child.

PC: What was it like? It must have been a very good transition from the University right into an architect's office.

JF: Well, it was wonderful. McGoodwin was my design critic at the University during my junior year so I got to know him there. He had asked me if I would come into his office so I didn't have the ugly problem of looking around to find something when school was out. I went directly there in June 19 right after graduation exercises were over. And had the Depression not come along I suppose I'd have stayed in architecture and I would have had a partnership with him. It was just ripe at the time all this fell apart. And architects were particularly badly hit because building just stopped completely. Those depression years were just unbelievable. There was nothing, just absolutely nothing. We gave up our home, we lived up in Chestnut Hill. Isabel's folks had a home in Jenkintown and they took us in, we stored our furniture. And there was a period of time there when the only income I had was, I wasn't a terribly good musician and I didn't play the organ very well, but of course you had to hunt around for anything that would give you some little pittance. And while I was at college I had gotten to know a fellow who went into the Episcopal ministry. He was rector of a small church up on Bussellton which is actually within the city limits but it's the area most northeast, and there was a perfectly beautiful little church. A little Victorian Gothic church, not much bigger than this living room really. And I went over there and played the organ and trained the little volunteer choir. I did this I guess for two or three years for \$30.00 a month and that

was the income. And I tell you it was awful. There had been no program for a long while for any aid to architects or artists. And then there was a program, you've probably heard of the WPA days.

PC: Right.

JF: And there was a program that was designed for architects. And on a particular day I went and stood in line with a whole lot of Rome and Paris prize men all destitute and hoping to get a letter job that would give us something to do that was a kin to our training. And the chap, Oscar Stonoroff, who has just died in an automobile accident just a few weeks ago. He was an active architect here in the city, he had a Russian-French background of some kind. He was a bumptious kind of fellow but he was adventurous. And I think he had brought over I think it was when the Germans had just begun to use figures in the presenting of statistics, you know, this business of a fellow pushing a wheel barrow, you'd have ten in a row, there'd be half a wheel barrow, and the next line would have six in a row and so on. And he brought his thing over and they employed a lot of architects to begin to make some of these graphs. And then also we were involved in, oh, it was a time when they were doing a lot of research on workmen's compensation. And they sent a lot of us out to interview people who had these cases and were trying to adjust their income and so on. I only did this for about two weeks. But it was a godsend even for that time. And then this chap John Harbison called one day and said that he had had a call from the then President of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts whose name was Alfred G.B. Steele. And the man who had been secretary, and for a great many years a lot of the old institutions here in Philadelphia didn't call their ranking executive a director, they were called secretary. The Historical Society had a secretary at its head. I think the old Franklin Institute had a secretary at his head.

PC: Why was that do you think?

JF: Well, I don't know. Of course a lot of them had very few officers. And I suppose the paid the paid executive sat with the Board meetings and took the notes of the meeting and so on. It was a pretty informal thing but it certainly was the way that nearly all institutions worked. So John Harbison called and said that Gus Steele had called him and they were looking for someone to take over the running of summer activities of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts at a place called Chester Springs, and would I care to talk to this man Steele about it. Well I knew Gus Steele not intimately, but I designed his house when I was working for Robert R. McGoodwin. So on a Sunday afternoon Isabel and I went out along with this old Mr. Meyers who was my predecessor. And we had a talk with Gus Steele. This job involved living for at least four months in the summer at Chester Springs which is about thirty miles due west of the City, out beyond Valley Forge, Phoenixville. And this had many virtues to us right then. It meant that we didn't have to be right in the house with our in-laws all that time, although certainly me mother in law and father in law couldn't have been more gracious and wonderful to us. They were perfectly marvelous. So the upshot of it all was that we decided to take this thing on although it meant running a summer hotel and a school. And I had no experience at all. And at the height of the season out there we would have 90 or 100 students in residence. And if Isabel hadn't been interested in the whole thing we never could have made a go of it. But she's always been a marvelous cook and terribly interested in good food. And she did all the marketing for this gang and wrote the menus. And we went out there in 1934 and stayed until they had to sell the old property in about 1950. Of course I didn't have that fully responsibility all the way up to 1950 but we had some contact with it. It wasn't a heaven on earth. It truly was, it was isolated in the early years particularly when very few students had cars. We were about eight miles outside Phoenixville which was the place where we did most of our marketing and so on.

PC: Did you have faculty and everything there?

JF: Oh, yes, the winter school faculty would come out a day at a time. Two of them stayed over one night a week. The classes ran all day long and in the evenings too. We had life classes outdoors which was a kind of rare thing. There was a hundred acres of beautiful property rights in the Chester Valley which couldn't have been more exquisite. There was a big outdoor swimming pool on the grounds. And the kids came and I think everyone who had that experience loved it. They had big, open dormitories for them. Thanks to Isabel's getting it started we had a marvelous cook for several years who came out regularly to us every summer. We finally lost her and then it was a headache to get one every summer. You know to pick someone for four months was an awful job. We only had all that absolute, intimate responsibility for two or three years. I was there for two summers I guess before I had any contact with the winter school. And all I did during the winters was just sort of to prepare for the next summer. But then they wanted to make a change in the head of the school here in town and they asked me if I would be head of the two schools. This was the way this whole thing developed. Then I was only with the school branch for about four or five years, *Who's Who* will tell us these dates. I never can keep the dates in mind, but it was about four or five years when the old Secretary, Mr. Marris, died and they gave me the directorship of the whole thing. And then all the rest of time, although I had an administrator of the school, I had the responsibility of the whole institution for a great many years. Finally it was a thirty-five year association.

PC: Well, how was it finding students for the summer school in the mid and late thirties?

JF: We did practically no advertising. It was almost done by word of mouth. People who had been to the summer school told others. And these others told others. And it was inexpensive. It cost the Academy a great deal. As a matter of fact, they closed it down during the war because of its expense. And I went out on an economy program too, which certainly wasn't much help to try to build the thing back. We really didn't have to worry very much about how many students we'd have. They just seemed to come. But over the years, toward the end of the period before they sold the place the whole picture changed. The New England coast had become very alluring. A great many individual artists had begun to have their own classes all up along Cape Cod and the Maine coast. And what with the little harbors and the boats and the sails and all this kind of thing there was something maybe more exciting than there was in the quiet countryside out here in Pennsylvania. And then again with all of that in competition the character of the students began to change. For instance, great many more students who came had cars. And whereas through the first years we had to make our own fun at night and it was very simple fun, but there was some wonderful healthy and sweet about it. But then when the cars began coming and there were tap rooms in the neighborhood out there in the countryside, one of the nearest ones was the old Bucket of Blood down near Phoenixville. And it was a very easy thing for them to go off after supper. And the evening thing became a much less important factor in our life out there. And then came the GI Bill. And there were a good many fellows who chose to be artists because it sounded like the easiest thing they could do. And there was practically no discipline that had to be exercised. We thought of all these people coming as adults and artists are a pretty unorthodox bunch anyway. And it took a whale of a lot of understanding. There had been a very swell spirit that existed out there but then when the GIs came they would go out after supper and night and they would go to a beer joint somewhere and they'd come back at midnight rip roaring drunk perhaps and wake up everybody in the dormitory. And they wouldn't get up in the morning and make their beds. We'd borrow several of them out and then it would be quite for a little bit. It would only take half a dozen of them really to wreck the place. And I think that combined with the problem of getting help, we were very isolated and it was difficult to get maids and cooks and a pantrywoman and gardeners. We gave certain of the students, we the boys cut grass and did things of that kind. We gave them scholarships. We had a proctor system so that I had some help in just sort of looking over the dormitories by taking some of the more talented and advanced students from in town and giving them scholarships out at the summer school. And they were wonderful help. And the girls served tea in the afternoon. It was all part of the tuition thing. The swimming pool was just a great big concrete pit and the Perkioman Creek ran right through it and of course algae grew up just top rate. So the boys who come on scholarships scrubbed the thing down every two weeks, and did things of this kind. It was a great place. And in the morning they were all up and ate their breakfast and by nine o'clock there wasn't a soul in sight. And when the faculty came out they would hunt them through the woods or the fields and they'd go very far a field. We always had a station wagon and when it wasn't picking someone up at the station or carrying someone's luggage, or doing the marketing, it would take the instructors around through the countryside to find the students. So it was a wonderful place. So that went on until 1950. And then the combination of everything, the difficulty of getting help and then this general problem of, while everyone was using it ideally it was terribly worthwhile, and then the moment you had disciplinary problems that seems to be things you couldn't get around and the same spirit of coming out there really to get everything that was possible wore off, the delight of working at it was gone. It kind of spelled the end of a career in a sense of that place. Isabel and I have just dozens of friends all over the United States because of Chester Springs. You see we lived out there we all ate in one great big dining room. We as a family used to sit down at one of the great long tables that would seat about sixty people. You had breakfast, lunch, and dinner with these people and you got to know them very well. And they're scattered all over the United States and Canada. And without attempting really any systematic contacts we just know so many of those people, where they are and what they're doing and so on. And I think every blooming one of them looks back on that Chester Springs experience as a wonderful thing.

PC: Well, what did you do in the winter then?

JF: Well, as I said, after the third year they gave me the winter school, and then we moved from Jenkintown and came up here. For one winter we were on little Street behind us here. We liked this whole section so much and then we rented this house almost right away, feeling that job It was really a seven day a week job because the whole life of the school of course took a great deal of time. And we never were adequately staffed. And there never was enough money to count on for doing any of these things. Then when they gave me the directorship and you had all these afternoon parties, openings, private views, cocktail parties, stuff that you had to keep up with and of course you got to know the whole And I think this is something that somehow ought to get into any report of me and the Academy and this would take a good bit of time. I think maybe it would be worthwhile recording at least one man's idea of what role the Academy had played and continued to play for a long time, and we hope it goes on, because it is unique place. It's dedicated to artists. And solving artists' problems is not a simple thing, but a very important thing. Early in the game with my association there I got to have a feeling that not all artists are great people, but artists are important to our civilization. And a great many of them are wonderful people. I got to feel this so deeply. And there are so few places that really give the artist his due. So often the artist breaks the rules and he's not thoughtful for the other fellow. He's a selfish chap. But he must be because, you know, he's bound up with this business of trying to say something that he can say and nobody else can say it. They're a wonderful bunch of people. My life, our lives and I say ours because Isabel kind of did all

this with me, particularly at the beginning when we went out and ran this summer home. We were doing this thing together and if we hadn't been together in doing it, it never would have gone. So that she with me got to know a great many of these people. And then of course when I became the director and one of the chief activities of every winter season was this big annual exhibition that the Academy staged and this meant that I had to be knowledgeable and meet the ranking fellows all over the country. And my visits to the galleries in New York, which were really the clearing house, were a very important factor. So for years and years and years this thing went on becoming more and more a problem. And now my successor is not planning an annual. They had no annual last winter and they're not planning any annual this winter. But you read the *New York Times*, for instance yesterday there was an article not by Canaday, he wrote a full dull article I thought, we ought not to have this on the tape, he's a friend of ours, but he wrote about an amateur show over at Brooklyn or some place that he had gone to see, but down on that page there was somebody else writing about the general situation and said the prospect for the art season in New York is nil. Where are we going? We're not going anywhere at the present time.

PC: Peter.

JF: Yes, and actually I feel a very deep sense of relief that the responsibility isn't mine now. For years it was fun to have all of the problems. And somebody solving the problems was the fun. And I felt that the Academy was playing an important role. And it continued that role longer than any other institution. Because Chicago and the Corcoran and Boston and Indianapolis and all the places that had been giving annual exhibitions where the artists would sent to juries from all over the country in the hope of getting recognition in that show. Well, that thing has all changed and utterly died out. The Academy was the last one really to try to maintain it. But I don't know that it could be maintained.

PC: The expense too, is tremendous.

JF: It was an era that's passed, that's all. And just what the new thing is I don't know. I have a great deal of sympathy for the fellow who is doing complete abstractions although I hadn't been brought up on abstractions. I think they're very legitimate. I think that a great many people did very splendid things and with great conviction and dedication they did them, too out of a genuine urge to not only be alert to what was going on and it did reflect the chaos that I think that the world has experienced. But it was more than that. And now it's sort of non-art. And this would be very hard for me I think to face with the same enthusiasm that I faced the other thing. As I said, I've been brought up in the Beaux-Arts atmosphere where beauty was something we were certainly endeavoring to find. And yet I became sympathetic and understanding with the artists who finally weren't trying to produce beauty at all. But I'm convinced that a lot of those fellows may have been the greatest creative spirits of their time. But they weren't trying to produce beauty. So it's a confused time. And now when I read of the problem that face all museums as to what kind of exhibition they're going to have. Look at the Metropolitan and see what a kind of mess they've made in certain ways. They have this marvelous stuff to show.

PC: Fantastic, yes.

JF: And more than they can ever put on the walls. But at the present time a lot of it is not thought highly of and it doesn't have public appeal, and yet, my gosh, look at the crowds that go to the Metropolitan no matter what they put on the walls and what they put in the galleries. The artist has to be a part of his time. You can't stop the thing and you can't think of going back. It never does any good. So that in a nutshell I guess I've kind of gone through the thing but without any detail of all the things that I really did in the years of running the Academy. The art galleries and the great collection that the Academy has, particularly the early American things, the art galleries and we in the profession always realized their great value. But this is one of the strange things, now the interest is not only just in the latest things that's been done, the newest abstractions, but to buy a Gilbert Stuart now becomes an item.

PC: Oh, boy.

JF: So there you are. I guess it was about as interesting a time to be engaged in this thing as could be. Yesterday's paper had an article on Waldo Peirce. Did you ever meet him?

PC: No, never.

JF: Well, he was a terrific guy. A wonderful fellow. I guess he wasn't a great artist. And this chap who wrote about him yesterday said that he wasn't a top artist. But he was a wonderful spirit. He was chairman for my painting jury one year and I was with him for, oh, two or three weeks running. We were in New York most of the time. We visited all the galleries together and so on. It was an experience that I could almost write a book just about the things that happened with that one man. So this knowing of artists and being very close to their problems and I'm afraid I didn't add very much to solving them and they're very difficult to solve. But I've known intimately some of the very best. For instance I look back on my intimacy with Franklin Watkins here in town, I think truly one of the very gifted creative fellows. And nearly all of the faculty at the Academy were very

meaningful people. And they produced some good stuff, great stuff. But then again the fact that I got to know Marin with intimacy, and old Charlie Burchfield, and Demuth, and these people. And a lot of those people had a background in the Academy, too, long before I ever was around. So that my life there at the Academy was a very, very wonderful thing. And it came to a close I guess at about the right time. I'll have my seventy-second birthday in September as I said and I kept at the job until I was past seventy. And I think it's high time that somebody else was solving these problems. I gave it up with a certain reluctance but certainly, too, there's been a wonderful release from those problems, problems, everyday there were problems. And the fun began to drain out of solving them.

PC: Yes, well, what do you think are the major problems that artists have when they come there?

JF: Well, this urge to paint or to be a sculptor, this drive is a very elusive thing. What it is can't quite be described. When you want to do it and find delight in it, more than delight, as a matter of fact, so many of them suffer through it. They work so hard. But then of course there's not guarantee at all that no matter how great the urge you may not have the talent at all. You might even have great appreciation and never be able to produce things. And you could paint every day of your life all day long and never paint a good picture or a worthwhile picture. There's a certain tragedy in it. And yet those people and of course often they mess up their lives, they're not very stable. But in many ways they live much more fully than the fellows. If you could graph an artist's life you'd have those great peaks and awful depths. The common fellow in the street maybe goes to a baseball game and gets a ripple here and there or something or other. But the art student is a very interesting person. Most of them are so full of hope. The best of them work terribly hard. And it takes a hell of a lot of doing. It isn't an easy life at all. And then this business of going to school for four or five years and then lots of them aren't very well fitted for teaching. They can maybe teach other artists. And the faculty at the Academy have always been practicing artists. There are no professional teachers there. Anybody who trained to be a teacher has never been hired at the academy. They are all artists who have gone through the mill. And that whole thing has changed too. Because I look back on the early years when the people who were teaching at the Academy. Carles, McCarter, Garber and Pearson, Breckenridge and this whole list of early fellows, they had all made the big exhibitions and all had won recognition and they all had prizes and commissions. And none of them were destitute. They found a way of life that was agreeable and not at all in the gutter financially. But there are very few that reach that spot. There are hundreds and hundreds every year that are coming out of school that will never be artists at all. But they find remunerative jobs in other things. Years ago when I first went to the Academy there was a class in illustration. And illustration was a fine art then. There were a great many illustrations used in great books. And that has utterly died. There were several men on the faculty of the Academy who had made a very splendid reputation as book illustrators. This was a way of making a living. They sold their illustrations. But that all dwindled away. And then there were those who looked at illustrations as being not art at all. You always have these terrible poles of thought and extremes among the artists. The artists on the faculty didn't get along well together. I think maybe they had mutual respect but some of them not even that. So it was no easy job to even be the fellow who tried to keep peace in the family and have a fairly smooth running organization because these people are so difficult. But in spite of all of these things I'm still convinced that they are a wonderful bunch and they're important. And just how they'll do I don't know. One of the big boons the Academy has had, and they've had it since the beginning of the century, there was a foundation set up called the Lambert Fund. This fund didn't give us a great deal of money, it was for the buying of work of rather unknown artists, and a great many of the fellows who went on to importance had their first picture bought through the fund. Then there was the xdx Fund that was set up for European travel. Before I went to the academy they were able to send, oh, I suppose sometimes twenty or twenty-four students abroad for three months in the summer. that fund was not controlled by the Academy board but was in a trust with one of the big banks here in town and the investments I think were limited to real estate mortgages. And of course came the day when that proved to be almost fatal. The fund went way, way down. And there were some years when there were very few, maybe six or eight scholarships given. Of course we had to increase the amount of money because it costs more to live now over there and so on. But these funds were wonderful things and going over the list all the years of the Fund awards shows that there were very few of the really talented people that were ever left out.

PC: Really?

JF: They managed to pick and choose the fellows.

PC: Who picked them? Who was on the selections?

JF: The faculty did it. And they did it as a full committee. And those days of judging were simply unbelievable. Because each one would have a favorite perhaps and he was going to see that that guy got a European scholarship or die. Sometimes, oh, the meetings were very difficult, very noisy and very

PC: Well, what would you do? Would you sit around with the whole faculty?

JF: No, no, no. Each student was, we used the big galleries upstairs in the Academy and each painter for instance, was given so much wall space and he could hang up one picture or forty if he could get forty in that space. But he couldn't exceed that space. And then the faculty came up and there would be maybe, well, in the last few years I guess they looked at maybe sixty competitors. That would be in sculpture and painting and so on. And they would go around the room. We had a score card and we did it by elimination instead of really voting for on winners. They would go round and round the walls. It would take maybe three quarters of an hour to go once around. It was a grueling day. We served lunch in the galleries for the men. They came early and they would often be there until late working on this thing. It would keep take maybe three votes to keep a fellow in the first time around and sometimes there were, oh, twelve, fourteen men voting. If you'd go around and he couldn't get three votes he would be eliminated then. And the next time around you didn't consider the wall. You considered all those who were still in competition. And then the number to keep it in was increased with every round until And you kept watching that thing, to see how many still were in competition. And you also knew how many were available because of the funds that were granted each year. We had to check with the bank before we started the day to see how much money there was. They were truly scholarships because they gave a recipient had to account for three full months on European soil. But no specification at all as to where he stayed or how long he stayed or anything of that kind. He didn't have to bring back examples of his work or anything of that nature. But when he won one of these things the first time he also won free tuition which brought him back to school the next year. This thing brought a traveled and more mature crowd of students always back into the student body and you'd have this more mature group which had won. It was a great leaven in the loaf. You see, these people always coming back.

PC: Oh, I see, a great idea.

JF: And then they could compete. If they won a second time and they had the opportunity of winning a second time. A lot depended on how many were available. And then there was another foundation that we used for a while generally just to give second awards. And for a second award you didn't have to go over right away. The first time you won within two weeks you were aboard a ship going to Europe because you had to try to get these three months in the summer between the two sessions of school. Well, of course we gave them a good bit of leeway on that but that was the general plain.

PC: How long would one have to be a student before they could try?

JF: You had to be there three years before you could try. And then you could try as many times as you wanted to. And there were some years when there were very few who won on the first try because the advanced people would come back and they did stand a better chance, they'd have another year of schooling. But that wasn't always true. And there were years when a great many first tryers made the grade. And they did a great thing for the school. There was some spirit that existed there. It wasn't competition in the same way that a great many school competitions are held. Of course there was finally a judgment. And they won or lost on what they put up there on the wall. Although that wasn't true either, because the fellows who judged were the fellows who knew the student and really the work on the wall was only a reminder of the person they knew, you see.

PC: Right, sure.

JF: They were voting a great deal on what they knew and whether the person was ready for this thing.

PC: Yes, what they'd seen happen in the classroom.

JF: Yes, whether they would take good advantage of it and so on. It was a, I think it's been wonderfully fairly done over the years. And there are very few really talented people who try who haven't had that much recognition. But of course when you've done that you've been there for maybe four years and maybe you've won a second and have come back for a fifth year. A lot of students would be there for as long as five years. And for a great many years we had a coordinated course with the University of Pennsylvania. The Fine Arts School out there gave a degree in fine arts and they accepted our work as being the technical work. And they did all they accepted our work as being the technical work and they did all the college work out there. That was a five year course. So the people who took a coordinated course as it was called, had to be around for five years. But then the day that they're through and they go out and they sit in a room with an empty canvas in front of them what are you going to do, you know. It takes a brave person, a very brave person. But they're all right. And I'm sure their lives have been enriched for having done this thing. Of course sometimes bitterness comes later on. But bitterness comes with fellows who've had the greatest success.

PC: Sure.

JF: The tragedy again is that so often men will enjoy maybe ten or fifteen years of great popularity and then comes the day when that's not around. And particularly in these last twenty, twenty-five years when styles just change overnight. Why the thing that you feel proficient in or your dealer finds he can sell one year he can't sell at all the next. And there have been an awful lot of men who have come down to a pretty bitter kind of an end.

And yet it seems to me this is part of it, too, that you keep trying to remind these kids that they have to work out some sort of philosophy. They're among the few people who get up every morning and do what they want and you pay an awful price for that privilege, you see.

PC: Yes, absolutely.

JF: And it takes character to work when you're not working for anybody, just satisfying yourself, you know. So that those who get ahead are generally fellows who've gone through a good bit. Of course in a school like the Academy you have everything from wealthy kids who come with no financial worry at all to those who haven't got a dog gone penny and they have a great time even buying their canvases and brushes and paints and so on. So you have all kinds. It's a wonderful leveler. I think there's some character that builds in an art school. Crippled people can come to an art school and be perfectly happy because the rest of the student body pays no attention. In a way it's selfish because they're so bound up with the things that are concerning them each one that they'll accept anything. But over and over again I've seen great happiness in people with terrible handicaps. Of course it's a wonderful therapy. We want to think of art as something more than therapy but you can't be very wicked you know, and sit drawing something on a canvas. What time is it getting to be?

[PAUSE]

PC: Okay, this is part two.

JF: Are they things I've touched on?

PC: In a way, yes. You have mentioned about the problem of art in Philadelphia and being between you know, New York and Washington. Has that had an effect, do you think, on the Academy and on the people that came to it?

JF: Oh, yes. I do indeed. Of course the Academy of Fine Arts was the only fine arts school or at least dedicated to just the fine arts. But it didn't mean that a great many people were there hoping to be painters and sculptors. While there were a good many Philadelphians came to the school there certainly were a great many people who came from all across the country. And a lot of them fell in love with the city and wanted to stay. So that there has been a very active art life going on. But we weren't the only ones. Oh, some years back when the old school at Broad and Pine Street which was an affiliate of the Philadelphia Museum, which was called the School of Industrial Arts, and in their early years they did nothing but teach the applied arts, then with the advent of a new dean down there came years ago who in theory at least believed very strongly that the industrial arts ought to grow out of the fine arts, and that the fine arts ought to play a very strong role in the training. So that he then began to employ certain of the creative fellows on his faculty. And it did mean there was really no competition but it did mean that that gave us two schools in a sense who were putting out people who had fine arts training. And then of course the Tyler School connected with Temple University was still a third one. And then you had the Fine Arts Department of the University of Pennsylvania. They had departments, not elaborate, but they did have departments in painting and sculpture, too. Their philosophy was quite different from ours and although we collaborated with them toward degrees they had a lot of students who were in the program out there as painters and sculptors but very much in a contemporary vein. They were perfectly willing almost to start with Picasso. And yet it was a very vital group of people. They imported most of their faculty to cover that part. Although the dean Holmes Perkins I don't think was really given enough funds to set up as complete a fine arts school as he would have liked. It was easy to understand why he wanted to. His competitors, the other big fine arts schools in the universities had all the departments right on the campus and he didn't have that. And the very fact that although there were those, and I think he was one, who thought of the Academy as being a very conservative place and that all the things that we did were utterly academic, I think this was an unfair judgment because there were sufficient men on the faculty there at the Academy who were very interested in the contemporary theme.

PC: What you're saying leads me into my next question, how would you define the Academy in the early days when you came there as far as ideas and painting concepts?

JF: Well, they didn't have any competition in Philadelphia but they were part of the whole class. I think the things that were going on at the Boston Museum School and the things that were going on at the Corcoran in Washington, and the things that were going on at the Chicago Art Institute. And at Indianapolis were going on at the Academy. The painters chiefly and the sculptors too, for that matter turned to the life figure not because everybody was going to go on and paint or model nude figures all their lives. But because it was a very difficult problem and if you could master the figure you could go on and do lots of other things, you see. So that in this way for a great many years, I don't think there was very much thought of the Academy's being either dry and dull and academic. It wasn't until the whole art field began to move quite away from that as a basis that we appeared to be in a sort of different category. And yet the work that went on in the School, while there were still life classes and there were still portrait classes because of the exercise, they still had to draw but of course you

see even the importance of drawing became questionable. We at the academy still continued life classes and portrait classes and they do model in sculpture classes from the nude figure. This is just a fundamental exercise very akin to what the pianist does. You've got to do those scales or you'll never be able to play a good piece.

PC: Right, you've got to make the bricks before you build.

JF: It's just a kind of fundamental thing. Of course you knew there are always some of those people who get to the top bracket, too, who have ignored this thing and haven't gone through all that. But it's also true that a great many of the ranking contemporary fellows all have had that academic training at one time or other. There was a discipline that had been in their training.

PC: Has it changed say, the student's attitude from the 1940's to the 1950's to the 1960's.

JF: Yes, I think it has. And there was a period of not exactly revolt but they You see, there's a great deal of freedom given a fellow in the Academy. He comes and goes to classes as he chooses. There's no compulsory attendance at anything. You can't make anybody an artist by telling him he's got to be at a place at a certain time. And the life classes became less popular. And there was a great deal more of wanting to paint away from the model. And too soon I think, they wanted to be on their own. I know that one of the requests that face the people who are running the School is the fact that so many of the advanced students want little private studios where they can get off to themselves.

PC: When did this happen? Or when did this start?

JF: Well, I suppose it began maybe fifteen or twenty years ago and it's just built up. You see, there are so many ways perhaps of studying art. But if you go to an academy that has a faculty of a number of people they're all there because they someone has thought that each one of them has some kind of virtue of his own and therefore he would bring something that would be of help to somebody else. And if you're in a place of that sort where there's a variety of men and a variety of ideas then you have the opportunity to listen and try all of the things that are told to you. And then part of your training is the decision making when you came up against what am I going to do for myself. And then of course lots of people have trained magnificently under one person. They'll spend their whole life with a master. And this is different kind of thing. But in an academy where you have maybe fifteen or twenty people with whom you can have contact.

PC: Is that the average academic body there?

JF: Yes, and of course certain of those men I think when they had a life class they gave their best thinking to directing the students who were in that class. But there were certain others of the faculty who were quick to encourage all of this abstract thing. And the proof of the situation was always evident in the spring when they put up all their competitions on the walls. And you'd have people who were still painting representational but then you also had utterly, completely abstract walls. People who didn't go to the life class at all. And that was their privilege if they wished. Last spring we were abroad and I didn't get to see for the first time in a great many years that I haven't seen the walls. But I talked to a couple of the faculty members who were rather noted for being much more academic and realistic in their approach who were exceedingly enthusiastic about the work they saw finally go up there on the walls. So you can't have a thing like this going on where great contemporary exhibitions were being shown in our own building or out at the Philadelphia Museum, or at the Philadelphia Art Alliance, or out at the Philadelphia Museum, or Lord knows where. And we're so close to New York that they saw all of the current shows. And you can't isolate a group like that and say you're going to do this kind of thing.

PC: The outside world comes in.

JF: Oh, sure. Oh, it's bound to be there. I don't think we were an isolated situation at all. We were reflecting the thing that was current, that was all. And a lot of it I think very healthy, very healthy. The reason I spoke of the other schools and you spoke about Philadelphia, it means though that a great many people hoping to be artists are here in Philadelphia. But the professional art gallery has always had rough going in Philadelphia. If a person has the means to buy an expensive picture or an expensive piece of sculpture it's exactly like the gal who can afford fine clothes. She likes the fun of going to New York for a day, the whole thing is delightful, New York beckons. Then again when we had our big annual exhibitions, most of the time each artist was represented by one piece. Well, if a person's interest was whetted in seeing one example of a fellow and you find that he's represented by such and such a gallery in New York why then it's easier to go there and have the fun of a day in the galleries and you may see twenty things of that fellow. And if you really like it, you'll buy it over there. So the gallery situation here always has been difficult. We've not had either very vital galleries or very successful galleries. We've had a couple of kind of old fashioned galleries which somehow got along with very realistic academic things. And then we've had galleries who had a stable of artists who did nothing but utter abstraction, or, well, all kinds of things, Op art, and what not. But they haven't lasted very long. It's better right now. And I can't tell you why. I think that most of the galleries and even New York galleries an awful lot of them have to be subsidized in a way. There's nearly always some wealthy person or some backing that keeps them going.

PC: A lot of them making money though.

JF: Well, some of them do.

PC: A great many.

JF: But I don't think there are many here in Philadelphia that could show a record of great affluence or great success. But there are all these artists or people wanting to be artists. Painters shall we say, we won't call them all artists, many, many painters, not so many artists, but they're all clamoring for attention. And one of the things that the annual at the Academy did, and I used to try and always hope that although the opportunity was here and because our Annual shows were juried shows and we bought a professional jury here anybody in the whole United States could send. And of course it was a whole lot less expensive for the Philadelphia artists to send because he could carry his stuff in and it did mean that there was a very large number of submissions from the local people. But the proportion of acceptances was never so terribly high. And a lot of them were upset and unhappy with the Academy because they weren't accepted. But at the same time down underneath I think that professionally they appreciated the fact that the opportunity at least was there, there was always the chance that they would make the grade. And then over a period of years of course the Academy did have local shows and some of them were very good. One of the problems at the Academy has been the same business of people who studied at the academy continuing to live here and having an affection for the Academy and wanting terribly to be artists. Their contacts with the Academy was perhaps their only real professional contact so that showing in the Academy or having something there was of utmost importance to them. And the alumni society of the Academy has never been a very strong organization because artists by nature aren't joiners and they generally don't have enough money to support and pay dues and all this kind of thing. And the fellow who lives in Chicago or Los Angeles and so on it doesn't matter his paying three dollars or five dollars a year to his old school alumni doesn't mean anything to him. And so the Alumni Society got almost to be a local society. We did have in the Academy for many, many years an alumni show. It was almost a local show. One of the problems there was that we weren't the only place in Philadelphia to train so of course the fellow who had trained at some other place couldn't get in because they were closed exhibitions. Of course the Academy could be unpopular on many scores no matter what you did. There were times just after a jury met when lots of these people whom I got to know very well as friends. And they would almost pass you on the street without speaking maybe just after the jury had turned them down. And I could always appreciate their disappointment. This was very understandable. Of course it would wear off after a little while. I think the Academy truly played a friendly role over these many years to the local artist. And it certainly was something that I had on my mind all the years. But there again we didn't have a large budget and these exhibitions all cost a great deal of money.

PC: Was very much of it sold from those exhibitions or Annuals?

JF: No, well, there were times when we sold a great deal. And there were several exhibitions where there were wonderful sales. As a matter of fact, both of the memorial shows You saw the print upstairs of Ben Spruance there in the little library room. We had a memorial show of Ben. We had a memorial show of Al Bendiner, this fellow whose work is back over there over the mantel. And they were exceedingly successful. Both those shows were big. Print fellows in a sense maybe they're not more prolific but I guess they are at least when you can have any number of prints in an edition there are more around. Both of those shows were great big shows and consumed a lot of galleries. And we sold a tremendous lot of stuff. And our sales records were not too bad on the Annual shows. Quite a bit of it was what we bought ourselves. There were certain funds at the Academy dedicated to purchase from the Annual exhibitions. So that there was always some money available out of every one of those shows. And of course this was important because it was more interesting to the New York galleries to send us stuff if they thought there was a chance to a sale.

PC: There must be an enormous collection there now, isn't there?

JF: Yes, it's a pretty big collection. I don't know how many things there are now. As a matter of fact, within the last if you wish to just check that figure there has recently been printed a report on the actual number of items in the collections. I believe I have a copy of it upstairs. This was started before I left and has since been printed.

PC: Oh, there is a catalog?

JF: Yes, there are a great many things there. There were periods though in the Academy's history when they didn't buy too wisely. They would go more by popular taste. One of the weaknesses in the situation was that the right to purchase and selection for purchase was all put in the hands of the board, a lay group of men. There might always be some members who were interested and alert to what was going on but they weren't always strong enough to hold the day when it came to making the choices. And they would buy maybe an Alexander Brook twenty years after they should have simply because it took that long for them to get familiar with the name. And then maybe they would buy a picture not as good as the things that he was doing when he was at his best and at a larger price. One of the things that I worked for there was the bringing in the professional advice

on the purchase. Because it seemed to me that it was terribly wrong and unfair that the selections were in the hands of the lay people.

PC: Did you have the situation such as the Art Students League in New York has where although their teachers contracts come up every year some men have stayed there for decades? Are there people who have taught at the Academy for years and years and years and years?

JF: A great many have.

PC: Oh, really.

JF: And the faculty became almost too ingrown. We hadn't sufficient means to go afield and you would have to pay a much larger figure if you were going to bring a man, say, from Boston once a week or bring a man from Chicago once a week. So when there were able people here that you could get who could afford to accept a figure that didn't take in all that travel business it was a most natural tendency to draw from the local lot. Although there have been a good showing from New York at least and some from Boston.

PC: Who's taught there for say, over ten years or fifteen years?

JF: Oh, this fellow Garber must have taught there for twenty-five years at least, maybe more. McCarter was there for fifteen or twenty years. Watkins I suppose has been there for twenty years. I guess Pittman has been there for twenty years.

PC: Are there people teaching there now who have been there for a long period?

JF: Well, a few. Watkins is no longer active really. Pittman still is. Walter Stumpfig, I don't know that he's active. I don't want to be quoted on this, but he's very unwell. Whether he's still on the active faculty or not I don't know. There's a very good crop of youngsters by youngsters I mean young fellows who are maybe thirty to forty and who had their training there. Very able young artists who I think are doing important work themselves. But of course the business of being important gets to be relative. And all those fellows that I've just mentioned have gotten prizes in those big annual exhibitions at some time or other. Now prizes and medals are not thought of at all, they're not valued. And of course people don't make that kind of national reputation at all. You get beyond fellows like Burchfield and Ben Shahn and a few fellows like that and that sort of spelled the end of all of that kind of thing where they had won all the medals and the honors and so on. But I think lots of young people here in town, the fellows who are there on the faculty are probably just as good artists but they haven't had any opportunity to show in Chicago or Washington or Boston. However several of them now are making the grade. They're getting New York dealers. Three or four of the young instructors at school have good gallery connections in New York. They're making their way, too. But it's much harder to get a national reputation. I remember talking to Kienholz in New York one time. He came down to do some jury work for me. One of the things he said is that today you can't be an artist in the United States. You must live in New York City. This is the only place to live and to be a national figure, to have a national reputation.

PC: Well, it has a point and yet it doesn't.

JF: Yes, oh, I think it's too bad. You don't hear them talk about it quite as much now but there was a sort of California School, a very virile and fine painting school who began to have recognition and their shows came to New York. We showed them at the Academy as all California artists. I don't know where we were on that thing.

PC: The artists and his career are always problems.

JF: The national problem is just an entirely different thing, you see. I would hope that the academy can still play a vital role nationally but also it seems to me that we must never forget that it is this unique institution and that it has responsibilities to the people who are close by. And somehow or other it plays this full professional role. After all you see, we train them and then we give them their first recognition maybe in a trip abroad or something of that kind. They come back and they settle in Philadelphia and maybe join up with the fellowship which is our alumni society. And then we begin to show them and maybe we will sell their first picture and so on. And then as they begin to get an established reputation maybe the opportunity comes for them to be a faculty member. So that we play a very full professional role in the life of an artist. And I think perhaps this is more true of the old academy than of any other institution at the present time.

PC: What kind of methodology is there in the academy for selecting its instructors? When somebody retires or leaves and must be replaced how do you pick somebody to do that? What kind of criteria?

JF: Well, an awful lot depends on the director becoming part of the thin and absorbing whatever meaning the old place has. You endeavor to bring in interests and abilities that will be both alert to today but that also will have respect for this thing which is not traditional painting but the whole of the American traditions. And I suppose

over those years although I don't like to think of myself having chosen, and I never did it alone, there would be those key people on the faculty who were leaders in the thinking. And also there's always a school committee most of whom are lay people. You have at least a group with whom you can discuss this thing and come to grips with who might be the successor or who ought to be added. I never did it alone. In this connection I think of an interesting thing. When Henry McCarter died, whose picture is right over your head, he was a unique teacher. He never had a great crowd around him. And yet during the years of his teaching he had some precious thing that somehow got through to maybe a rare group of students. And to his credit I think he had some of the best names of those people who are out and making their reputations. He was very difficult to understand. His talks were very rambling and he was just as apt to tell them all about the wonderful dinner party he'd been to the night before and what the menu was and how the table looked and what the ladies wore and so on. But then somewhere along the lines he'd come to some very potent art truth. And he was subtle and very perceptive and it seems to me that he had a following of sensed who were the most talented students and had a following of them. Well, he taught there for many years. Garber taught there for many years. But Garber was much more of a plodding kind of fellow. I don't believe McCarter ever would yell at the kids or scream at them or bawl them out, well, maybe in a very subtle way. Whereas Garber used to find that this was efficacious. And he was very bumptious at times. And these two men didn't get on at all well. Here was one man who was, McCarter toward the end of his life got into completely abstract things. And away ahead of his time, he even went so far as to endeavor to paint things in oil that were the essence of sound. He painted a whole series of pictures called *The Sound of Bells*".

PC: Oh, really?

JF: He felt that the vibrations resulted in color and he was endeavoring to put this down. Well, McCarter died. And it was necessary of us to get someone to replace him. There was no one else of that same kind of rare sensitivity that he had. He had a quality all his own. The fellow I wanted so very much to have on the faculty and who wasn't on the faculty at that time, was Franklin Watkins. Garber was the oldest man on the faculty. I'm very fond of him. I have great respect for him. I went to him to talk about the whole problem, not to just take the person he would suggest or anything, but he was the one with whom I counseled. I broached the subject, told him that I had come because I cherished his judgment and I so wanted to do the right thing. And I felt that the Academy had lost some rare thing in the death of McCarter and I didn't know quite where to turn to find anything to replace it. You never really would replace it, but I said that the person I thought most highly of was Franklin Watkins. Now it happened that Franklin Watkins had studied under Garber when he was a student there but he hadn't really approved of Garber particularly. And Garber and Watkins had been kind of poles apart in their general approach. Watkins was over on the rather rebellious school McCarter and particularly Arthur Carles. Garber said, Joe you've picked the one person. He said now he and I have not really been friends particularly and our approach is very, very different but there is no single man in Philadelphia who could come have and bring the thing that Watkins can bring. You've asked exactly the right person. It finally developed that we asked Watkins to come. And I told Watkins this story. He was terribly pleased that this man who was far apart from so many of his convictions but for whom he had a respect, too, although he didn't agree that he was going to come. And Garber said, Joe I can stop teaching tomorrow if you bring Watkins on the faculty. He's got the thing the kids need and he'll understand. I tell you that as just a little story because it seems to me that it kind of indicates that on almost every score when we made a change there was some reason like this for bringing a certain kind of person into the picture when it seemed necessary. Here was Francis Spaeth whose little landscape is down here at the end of this room. Oh, he was a precious fellow. he was not a very successful artists financially. He had early recognition. And as quite a young man he not only began to win prizes in different national shows and the Milch Gallery in New York took him on. And this was high recognition. Milch at that time was of the prime American champion of painters and they were doing a very good business. Francis Spaeth came on the faculty of the Academy at about that time. Well, he was one of those fellows who was, oh, just full of ability, and a very rare, sensitive thing it was. But he had no ability at all to put himself forward, none. And so many of his pictures turned out to be extremely gray, this is one. And Francis would say, Joe I don't know why they turn out gray, I'll start out and think I'm going to make a very sunny picture. This is all going to be just vibrant and sunny. And I pick a piece and an opportunity and there would be all sorts of color in the picture. But, he said, this is the way it turned out. Milch had been able to sell his early pictures and then as they got into this gray thing Milch said I can't sell these gray things. Well, as a matter of fact, Milch didn't give him up, Spaeth was on their list until, oh, maybe five years ago. And now Milch has gone out of business. But the Academy somehow appreciated the fact that this fellow Spaeth had some quality. And the students for the most part loved him. Somehow he was close enough to them. He had a very remarkable mind. He was kind of on the poet side. He was, oh, very much in the clouds a lot of the time. But he was nothing but an artist. And the kids all respected this. And I'm quite sure that the connection with the Academy was extremely important to him financially, although we never have been able to pay very large salaries. But he was there affiliated with the Academy for all these many, many years. I suppose now he's got almost a record. He came from North Carolina originally and some, oh, eight or ten years ago and he had an opportunity to go down there to one of the state colleges and be an artist in residence. It meant going back into his own country and where he knew a great many people. And they've been very kind and good to him. But he comes up every summer for summer school and teaches. He just doesn't want that

connection with the academy. It is a very vital thing. Maybe I've overdone this thing. You asked about the faculty. But there is some blooming string that ties them all together.

PC: Well, what about somebody like Arthur Carles who I gather was a very difficult man at times?

JF: Oh, wonderful. Did you see this thing from the Philadelphia Museum? That just came yesterday.

PC: Really, no.

JF: That whole issue is on Carles. Carles was not teaching at the Academy when I came. He was another one of those terribly gifted fellows and the creative thing was developed under this man. Again he had no theory. He was only an artist. But he was so completely an artist that something had to rub off on to the students who were susceptible. This fellow was a very, very fine painter.

PC: He didn't teach at any point while you were at the Academy?

JF: No, before I came there had been a row, a legitimate enough row in many ways, but it was tragic because he should have continued to teach there. He had had a private class going. I got to know him really very well. And even though there was all this tension I brought him back in that I had a one man show at the Academy, not a large one. I felt it was so tragic to think that there had been a break and I wanted to do all I could to somehow heal that wound if I could. So he had a one-man show not so many years before he died. And then after he had died we had a big memorial show there, a very handsome show. He was a good painter and I think he will still continue to be more and more thought of. He had great magnetism. Franklin Watkins, who doesn't paint like him at all, was very strongly affected by him. And McCarter then, they didn't paint at all alike. Yet, you know, it's a funny thing. A year or two before I left the Academy I hung a gallery of the men who had been on the faculty during my directorship. In selecting the faculty members for this show I went all the way back to Breckenridge who, Lord knows, had done a whole lot of very stereotyped portraits and not too inspired and not really one of the great painters. And I don't know either whether he was a great teacher because as I think back very, very few of the artists who grew to any position ever said Breckenridge was the fellow who gave it to me. But I hung all these pictures in one room. It was Breckenridge, Harding, McCarter, Carles, Garber, Pearson, Spaeth, and several others. And you know, it all hung perfectly well together. They were an era, they were all painting. They were all part of the thing that was going on. They thought themselves absolutely diverse. But the room hung beautifully. It was obvious that it was all of a piece, somehow. I don't know whether the times brought something into the color. And yet Lord knows McCarter and Garber and Harding, oh, dear me. I've got a little painting back here of Harding's. He was much more of a decorator. For a great many years we had a very good department there on decoration. Harding was about as good a man as there was in the country. He had, oh, dozens of techniques at his command. If a kid got a job to paint on metal outdoors he could tell you what paint to put on the metal. And if you were going to paint on paper he could tell you what to do on paper. And if you were going to do a genuine fresco and you were going to paint on wet plaster he could tell you all about that. He had a terrific amount of information. And I don't think of him as a great painter at all. He did some very nice decoration. He did a monster decoration in the New York World's Fair. I guess it was in the United States government building there. There was a great gallery there, a big hall. And he did a painting that must have been about forty feet wide and about a hundred and twenty feet high on a great hall. It was a very, very decent piece of decoration. And of course the kids who were studying with him at the time were terribly thrilled to think that they were working under a master who had such a commission as that. It was going to be a painting that millions of people would see and so on. I hope all of this gives you some picture of what went on in this place. Harding was a unique fellow. He had a very prominent lower jaw and it just stuck out. And he had a terrible temper. He was kind of a self made man and he kind of gloried in it. But he was a fine fellow. I had him as a teacher in the life class. We drew from the model. So for two winters I studied under George Harding and knew him only as Mr. Harding out there at the University. I had a terrible time ever getting around to calling him George when we became very good friends and he was an instructor at the Academy. Well, maybe you'll forgive some of this reminiscence but you've opened up things that I haven't thought of for a long while.

PC: This is exactly what we want.

JF: But there is a thing which goes through this dog gone place which is very, very all right. And of course you go back further and you have the great Eakins who was such a vital person there. And that connection with the Academy came to grief. There was some disagreement about his methods of teaching. And there were a whole lot of things that perhaps really have never been explained. And the connection with Eakins was severed. But Eakins was a student there and he taught there for years. He was a terrific influence. And Lord knows if any school in the country can be proud of having produced an artist, the Pennsylvania Academy ought to be for having produced Thomas Eakins. He was maybe as great a painter as we have produced. In that whole area along with Eakins there was Cecilia Beaux, who is not early in his class, of course. Well, Mary Cassatt studied there at the same time, too. When the Academy was 150 years old.

PC: Oh, yes. The big 1955 exhibition.

JF: Yes, maybe you've got that as a question?

PC: Yes, right. That's just what I was going to ask you.

JF: Well, the problem that rose then was what ought the Academy do to celebrate, really do the right thing in the way of celebration. We gave the matter a great deal of thought. Finally the solution was an exhibition, really it was twenty-five one-man shows, of the twenty-five most important people who had been either founders or teachers or students at the Academy, people very intimately connected with the life of the Academy. That thing started with Benjamin West, who was not here at the time of the founding but was the most influential person in getting the Academy started even though he was the most influential person in getting the Academy started even though he then was the second president of the Royal Academy in London. But he had been brought up in Swathmore, Pennsylvania so Philadelphia was of great importance to him. That was a little abstract but it was interesting to be able to start this thing that far back. And then of course the most vital guy and the fellow who really was responsible for our beginning was Charles Wilson Peale. And then of course all the Peale family as they came along were all very intimate with the workings of the Academy. And William Rush, the very first American sculptor, you see. The exhibition started with them and went on through. Burch and Bingham had their earliest training at the Academy and so these fellows were included. Then coming up to people like Chase.

PC; And Marin.

JF: Well, yes. Then we went through the whole, when I think of hanging of this exhibition I think of the galleries. We had the whole center part of the galleries with a marvelous show of a great big exhibition of Eakins. And we had Cassatt and Beaux. Then we came up to the era of Carles and McCarter. And then all the way down to, we had no living people, Marin and Demuth who were the last two men were right up really very close to the contemporary thing. It was a wonderful, wonderful exhibition. It was worthy of the 150th year of the Academy. then if you will recall, at just about that time, I guess it came along with McCarthyism, it was claimed that almost all the artists in the United States were communists. And the Museum of Modern Art had been the agency which selected the shows that were being sent to Europe. And one or two of the shows were recalled because it was said that all the artists were communists, or Red, or something was the matter with all of them. I knew almost everyone of them there were no more Red than anything under the sun. There may have been a taint, but the artists weren't doing any harm. For the most part they'd join anything that appealed to them at the time. it was certainly a very disquieting thing to have happen. But at any rate, we had this show all organized. And the State Department came to us and said, "In the face of all this criticism we would like to have an exhibition that we could send over to Europe right now which can have no controversial stuff about it all. Will the Academy assist us in sending this whole show to Europe?" Well, it was an enormous show and we had borrowed from every museum in the country and private owners and so on. And it was a tremendous task to do it all over again because they had all lent for a certain period of time. The board was interested in doing this thing so we did start. It developed that we could get about half the pictures and sculptures, not more than about half the show. But it was a big then that went. But then a great many of those leaders said that they would not give their permission for it to go unless it could be a personally conducted thing and that the works would be guarded from the time they left until they came back. Well, it finally developed that Isabel and I were the ones that took it over. We were gone with it four months. We showed it first in Madrid and then in Florence an then in Innsbruck. And there was a USIA agent there, a very able man, he is now in Washington, who took in on to Ghent and to Stockholm. And the show was on the road then six months. And we sent some terribly important things along, Peale in his museum that shows him holding back the curtain, you know, that's down here in Independence Hall. It was thrilling to see the posters that were used in Florence, Chase's *Woman in a White Shawl*. Golly, never under the sun would you expect it would ever be shows in Florence. And all overseas were these posters on all the walls with Chase's *Woman in a White Shawl*. That was a thrilling thing to do.

PC: How was the exhibition received in these places?

JF: Well, it was received quite well. The problem, the trouble with it was that the government had not done anything on as large a scale. And this was a kind of last minute thing that they had thought up to try to take some of the ugly taste away from the things that had been withdrawn. And they hadn't done a good job in letting the USIA and the American Embassies know that this thing was coming. Oh, we faced an awful situation in Madrid. Lord knows, I had never done anything that had to do with protocol and talking to the right people at the right time and all this sort of thing. It so happened though that just before we went away, we have an artist here in town whose name is Emlyn Etting. His wife Gloria is one of the Braggiotti musicians and writers. And Glora Braggiottis sister was the wife of John Lodge Massachusetts fellow, our Ambassador to Madrid. I'll think of his name in a minute I know it just as well as that. At any rate just before we went away Gloria said, "Well Joe, if you're going to go to Madried you'll have to go see my sister and you'll certainly want to look up John isn't it awful that his name escapes me, but I'll remember it in a minute. Well we'd only just got to the hotel in Madrid when there was an invitation to go to the Ambassador's house to some sort of big party. I don't remember what

it had to do with particularly. But it was I think the day after we got there. And of course we went to the party and had a very nice time. It was a very dressy affair and very, very nice. And we met with the Ambassador and his wife and met a lot of other American officials. It was an international thing, people from all over were there. Well, but while we were there we learned that John Lodge, this is the name I've been trying to think of, and his family were all due to go to Toledo? No, I guess they were going to go to Seville following the Easter season. And they were to be away at the very time that our show was to open. I talked to several people there at the party and we were told that if the American Ambassador wasn't at our party at the opening that nobody else would come.

PC: Right.

JF: No, you couldn't get anyone to come. Isabel and I got back to the hotel and we just felt absolutely, well it cost a terrific lot of money to send this show over there. A hundred thousand dollars for the insurance alone. I think I had about four or five million dollars worth of pictures under my wing. Isabel said, well, maybe this is the time to use Gloria's letter, Mrs. John Lodges name is Francesca. So she wrote a letter to Francesca Lodge and told her of course that we had been to the party the day before and we appreciated being invited, and had a good time and so on. But that we were terribly concerned about this situation. That we had brought this show and the government was spending a tremendous amount of money to send it over, and we learned that the Ambassador was not going to be in Madrid. And we were very upset and could not talk to John about it and how would we go about it. Would he have time to go for cocktails? Could we give him cocktails or could we take him to dinner or breakfast or lunch or what? And we got the message back by hand. Francesca said she was terribly disturbed by our note and certainly she would want to do all she could and of course it would have to be done right away because their plans were made, they expected to go away. The show was to open about two weeks after we arrived. We were in Madrid for six weeks all told. At any rate, Francesca asked us to come for cocktails the next day at their house. So we went and even there, and I don't remember how under the sun, the USIA or the embassy go to know about it, but they didn't let us go alone. They sent the wife of the cultural attache with us. I don't know what they thought we'd do, but something very wrong I'm sure. So we went there at any rate. Francesca Lodge is a very cordial sweet, gracious lady and just as informal as they come. We had cocktails with her on the terrace. John couldn't get free. But she apologized for that but she said, "You spill the whole story to me and you may be sure he'll hear it all." Well, we explained just what had happened and where we stood on this thing. And after a very, very pleasant hour and a half or so we got up to leave. She shook our hand and she said, "John will open your show. Now go home and don't worry about it. Get the pictures on the wall. This will have to be." And whether she in a sense was the power behind the throne or not I don't know, but it was effective and John came and opened the show. And every ambassador was there, too. And that opening was very fine. We couldn't put up all the pictures, the place they assigned to us wasn't quite large enough. It was in the lower floor of an archeological museum three or four city blocks from the Prado, a wonderful location and a beautiful place. But not really physically large enough. And the business of hanging that show when I had no Spanish and they had no English. And all the fellows who helped us were just wonderful. Well, we had a great time. We finally got it up on the walls. Then came the opening day and there was a wonderful turnout, a great crowd. All the right people came. But there again the USIA hadn't been alert and although we tried to get posters out right away, I went to several different meetings and gave speeches that of course had to be translated, all this sort of thing was done. There was a fair attendance but no great acclaim. Of course we gave a party for the press and they all came and they did a pretty good job for us. But it was not well organized on their part. And when the truck drew up to take the pictures away I'll never forget as long as I live. An open van came to take all these treasures from Madrid to Barcelona where they were to be loaded on a boat to go to Naples and from Naples they were to be loaded on a boat to go to Naples and from Naples they were going to go again by truck of some sort to Florence. I'll never forget seeing that thing go out of the gate of that museum. The pictures were about three times as high as the truck itself standing up and this old truck swaying like this with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of pictures in it. Oh, my that was an experience. But they all got there safely. The frames were kind of messed up, but we went to a wonderful place, to Florence, and there were artisans there who could fix the frames magnificently, so almost all the frames went right into the workshops as soon we got to Florence and maybe they were all fixed up better than they were when they started. Well, look here, I've got awfully far off the track on this thing, this is part of the history. Again this was an important thing. And that show was seen by people who had certainly never, never seen maybe an American pictures let along this cross section really of the history of American painting from the very beginning up until maybe ten years before. Demuth probably had died two years before we organized that show. So it was worthwhile.

PC: Let me ask you about not some of the artists here but the patrons.

JF: What about a drink? Would you have a drink?

PC: One of the things we haven't talked about at all are the people who are the patrons or the trustees of the Academy over the years. Have there been very important ones, the people who really maintained a position and done a great deal for it? To go back to all these people why don't you say something about the Women's Committee which you said had been so good.

JF: Oh, I'm happy to speak about the Women's Committee. I remember distinctly about a reluctance concerning the board's setting up a Women's Committee. I think they had the feeling that maybe the board was adequate and they could get along without the women. But there was a strong feeling among certain members of the board and certain of the women who were willing to take this thing on. And it has been a great boon to the Academy. And I should think that any institution is more blessed if it can have a group of fine ladies who roll up their sleeves and do for you.

PC: What kind of things have they have been involved with?

JF: Well, they've had benefits that have been quite remunerative in that they've raised money. But one of the fine things that they've done is to bring a grace into the place, in that. For all of our affairs never since there's been a Women's Committee have we had to think about whether the refreshment table was going to be beautifully set and that the food would all be splendid and the flowers would be just right and that the invitations would be worded well and would look and the way they should look. They've had their rough spots. And there have been several periods when they've been led by more dynamic women than other times. But they've had benefits that have brought good money to the Academy and support in that way. They've helped with their membership. They've been very understanding in the School and they've done a great many fine things for the students. And in the spring when we've have these big student competition, I had never personally been at all in favor of trying to sell student work because if a student goes on to be anything he's always ashamed of those things that are out in public or Lord knows where. But we always felt so long as these walls were all hung for the competition primarily and as long as they were all up there, and if the youngsters could pick up an extra hundred or \$150 or \$200 on selling something particularly those students who were going abroad they could do a heck of a lot with that abroad and even those who didn't go abroad, I mean this would buy art materials and all sorts of thing. So one of our directors, David Gwynne, Mrs. Gwynne incidentally was a member of the Woman's Committee too, and Mr. and Mrs. Gwynne started having a party on the day after we had given out all the awards. They invited their own personal list and they were helped by the Women's Committee. It meant that there was an afternoon when the place was filled with people and a great many student pictures were sold. The price might run from \$15 to \$300, maybe nothing over \$300. This was just one of the things they were interested in. Also ten or more years ago the Academy bought a new property. The School was very pressed for space. We had had an old brownstone front house out on 19th and Arch Street several blocks from the school and while it was a dilapidated sort of place, it had some very excellent rooms with wonderful light. All the portrait and still life classes were held out there. But the building had got to that stage where it was not wise to try to put any more money into it to fix it. It needed a new roof and plumbing and everything. So we gave it up, and gave it up before a new property was purchased, so that there were several years when the crowding in the school was very, very great. And then the Academy bought an old hotel at 1810 Chestnut Street, the old Belgravia Hotel. A lot of rather not too well to do aristocrats lived in it, they lived there hoping to die there, a great many of them had over the years. It was a terribly run down building but it was eight stories high and the actual structure was still staunch. We bought this building and that gave us an opportunity for the first time to have dormitories for the girl students. In a period like this when so many of the girls may come from great distances and we had had no dormitory system and no supervised housing of any kind, there were a lot of parents who looked with great delight at the fact that we would have some housing supervised. So we made dormitories of certain of these floors. The Women's Committee pitched right in and helped us in setting all this up. They did a great deal toward the social life that might be enjoyed by the girls. They fixed a lounge for them. They did very worthwhile things. Of course it was always wonderful to have a group that was interested in bringing money for your support. But the Women's Committee also did these gracious things, they were a group of very, very splendid women who just were, and still are, very loyal and I think they're, oh, a great boon to the Academy.

[PAUSE]

PC: This is Paul, well, could you give me the names, for example of some of the women who had been busy and active and involved with the Committee over the years?

JF: Yes, I'll be glad to. But in answering that I would almost like to refresh my memory. Not that I don't remember those who are active now, but I would like to go back a little bit further and I'd have to remind myself of who some of those ladies were. Have you cut that off up to know?

PC: Yes.

JF: We have talked about the Women's Committee and how valuable they have been. But we haven't talked at all about the board. And I think that any account that I give concerning the Academy most certainly would call for some statement of my relationship with the men on the board. I hasten to say that I got on very well indeed with the board through my whole experience there. When I took my job at the Academy the president of the board was Alfred G. B. Steele, a man I had got to know because since I was practicing architecture I had the privilege and fun of helping to design his house in Chestnut Hill so that I knew something of him and his wife and

their fine children. Although Gus Steele is no longer living his wife continues as one of the sweetest and dearest friends we have. The board of the Academy has traditionally been made up of men of the city who have been lawyers and brokers and businessmen. But I think I ought to say that by some mischance they have not been great art lovers.

PC: Are they a self-perpetuating board? Do they select

JF: Yes, they select from their They continue to build up the board. And the board has changed from a board of twelve men when I first went to the Academy in 1934 to, oh, I think now a board of about twenty-four. And to hold a seat on the Academy board I think has been something cherished very much by all of the members who have filled those chairs through these many, many, many years. And in so many instances they have been men who have stood for the very best of Philadelphia life. As a professional man, I could have wished that more of them had been collectors of art because there have been many times when it seemed to me that the Academy dedicated as it was uniquely to artists and their problems, that the problems might have been better understood and perhaps better solution might have been found if the men with whom I had to confer were more closely allied to the problems that face the artists every day.

PC: Right,

JF: I would like too, to add that now in my retirement I look back to certain members of that board, and the present board as being among the dearest friends I have. So that the board has been extremely important factor in all my contacts.

PC: Has it changed a great deal over the years? Or have some people been members for decades at a time?

JF: Well, there have been some men that have been there for a long while but, oh, maybe in the last ten years there have been a great many changes. One of the things about Philadelphia boards is that there are so many men who are common to many boards. It's not at all unusual for a man to be a member of the board of the Academy of Fine Arts and also be a member of the board of the Philadelphia Museum, and the University of Pennsylvania Museum, and also maybe the Franklin Institute or

PC: Universities, all kinds?

JF: University of Pennsylvania. Part of this is a pity because it would seem as though a city as rich as Philadelphia is in so many cultural institutions there are responsibilities that more people out to share than the few who have done it. And those few have done a very gallant job over the years. But there are a great many men who have shared the responsibility of not just one institution but many.

PC: You brought up before about various of the people and you also mentioned that you wish that the board somehow had been better in the direction of bequests and things of that nature.

JF: Yes, I think that this is very difficult to analyze or even talk about because although I think that the Academy board has been made up of a group of men who were not very actively alert in seeing that bequests of both money and kind came to the Academy, they rather, just left it in the hands of Providence hoping and just taking for granted that it would happen. No I better not

PC: There's one thing, what about Peale House? How did that come about?

JF: Well, I gave you part of that. Didn't I tell you that we had lost the building, the annex that was added on our street?

PC: Right, oh, Peal House is part of that whole

JF: Yes, because of course then when the activities that we had in that annex were given up and all of that thing had to be moved into Broad and Cherry Street we were in a heap. And that continued for a good while. Then we bought this old Belgravia Hotel and that gave us eight floors. And it opened a whole new vista of activities. First of all, it gave us space for school rooms. They weren't ideal in the truest sense but they were pretty darn good rooms, a lot if it with north light. We made some alterations there of course. But it gave us very good space. We took two or three of the floors and made them into dormitories for girls. And there were about three or four floors I guess three floors for the school. And then on the ground floor there was a big lounge for the students and a lunchroom at the rear of the first floor. And there were two very handsome rooms that opened on to Chestnut Street, which was the south side of the building, but they were not good at all for school rooms, the sun poured in there all the time. But they were a good size. One had been the old hotel lounge and the other was the dining room. We redecorated those rooms, put in very simple walls, false walls around them, and made two galleries there which we called the Pearle Galleries. As a matter of fact, there ought to be some word said here about the naming of that, the use of the name Peale. When the academy bought the old Belgravia we had to think

of some name, something to call this thing. And certainly PAFA Annex wasn't any good and the annex isn't a very pretty name anyway. And Peale had been so influential in our founding that no other single name perhaps is as meaningful in the Academy's background so they decided to call it the Peale Building. And then when the galleries were established they were called the Peale Galleries. Right next to the hotel property there was a single old private house that hadn't been occupied for years. And this was torn down and a very beautiful lounge was built there, a contemporary modern room that gave access to a restaurant which had been a private dining club in the lower, almost basement floor of the old hotel. But the access to that room had been, was miserable. So we built then this very, very handsome room. You've been there?

PC: Oh yes, it's beautiful.

JF: And I've told you about my good friend through the years, Roy Larson, with whom I went abroad and went through school and everything, he designed this room. And that of course gives us very excellent access to this dining area down below. And the Peale Club really just grew out of the accident that down in the lower floor of this building that we had bought was this dining club that had gone, I guess it was a failure, it was broke. But only about a year or two before it failed they had put in the most elaborate kitchens and walk in refrigerators and all this kind of thing, handsomely equipped. And the idea developed then that maybe this could be something that could be used to advantage. And they decided to establish a Peale Club which was not at all separate from the Academy and you could not join the club as such. They decided that the category of membership in the Academy known as contributing members of \$100 a year would have the Peale Club privileges, the bar and the dining area. And as that idea was formulated the idea of having two galleries which would bring Academy art activity right to the dining area. This whole thing developed at one time. And so when the new building was designed access was made right from that lounge room into the galleries in Peale House proper. And that has proved to be exceedingly successful, oh, wonderfully successful.

PC: Has it attracted a lot of new members?

JF: Oh, membership has grown tremendously. And I fear that a great many of those members perhaps seldom go to Broad and Cherry Street but they are listed as contributing members of the academy. And from a very few contributing members who were listed at the time that that thing was established the income now from that membership is a very vital factor in the life of the Academy.

PC: What would you say are the greatest changes that took place in your years there as far as the School or maybe the academic life, or the instructors. You know, what changed a great deal? Or is it fairly constant in its activities?

JF: Well, you ask that question, and I'm a little hard put to give you an answer because I would say that perhaps it hasn't changed a great deal. It's gone through periods with changing administration and some of those eras have been perhaps more understanding and sympathetic with the problems that any art school faces. At the present times I think it's exceedingly healthy. The administrator of the school right now was a former student at the Academy, a painter and showed lots of promise as a painter but he was just one of those people who reared a family. He worked with the Curtis Publishing Company for years. And with the breakup of the Curtis Publishing Company he was looking about and by the craziest chance I ran into him in the railroad station one day and asked him what he was doing because I knew that it must mean that this upset down there would probably put him out of his job. He had a very important job there. And the upshot of all that is that he's back here running the school now. The kids love him. You see, he's close enough to this thing to understand these people. And they take a lot of understanding. It's very reassuring to me because it seems to me that here was, what I was going to say I almost take back because I think that to try to hold on to something is no good but I do believe that there is something, the relationship or the understanding of the aspirations and the life that is led by students is a very vital factor in the health of an institution. And I think that right now there is someone there who really understands these students. They are not very unlike the students that have always been there. Perhaps art students don't change a great deal, maybe they're kind of revolutionary but they don't organize. They're very individual. And I did say before that there's a kind of wonderful melting pot sort of thing. They put up with anything. Art school days are great days I tell you.

PC: Well, you had a program there of visiting critics for a while. Has that been in progress for a long time? Or is that new?

JF: No, we've had that for a good while. At different times there have been opportunities to have someone come from a distance. For instance, Barnet would come as a visiting critic. And I don't remember when that title was first used. The role of the visiting critic really isn't at all different from that of any of the instructors. It just means that he visits if you will, because he has to take a train down from New York and go back. For several years we had, oh, a dear friend I can't give you his name right this minute, but I'm certain that those visiting critics that we've had who did not come on a regular monthly basis, and I guess that was probably one of the reasons why there was a different designation given. He might come down to us once a month. Or there have been winters

when we've had maybe a different critic come in once a month all through the winter on a special day, just to give it some kind of fillip.

PC: Yes, you know, there's one thing we haven't gotten into at all, and this is your other activities like involvement with the Philadelphia Art Alliance, and Fairmonth Park, all that kind of thing. How did you find time for them?

JF: Oh, you find time. Those things don't take so much time. I suppose that the fellows who have the executive jobs, it's not unique with me because I think other men who have the ranking job have served on these boards too. I think that the Fairmount Park Art Association is a natural enough thing. I've always had a great yen for sculpture and the Fairmount Park Art Association has done so much to encourage and buy sculpture to enrich the city with it. And it happened that there were quite a few fellows on that board whom I knew although I don't think there had ever been a director of the Academy on that board. But these things come. I think you almost can't avoid it. The Philadelphia Art Alliance is a great big board and they have a tremendous breadth of interest there. They've rather made a point of having the ranking executive of nearly all the other cultural institutions on the board, you see. One of the things that I enjoyed for a number of years was sitting on the City Art Commission. This was a terribly interesting challenge. The responsibilities of that committee are broad in that all of the things that have to do with the city and also have to do with aesthetics came before that committee. The parks and monuments all through the city all came up for their attention. As new things were contemplated and contracted for, the Art Commission of course had to approve those things. And the group of men that were on that Commission were a wonderfully able group of men. And this same fellow Larson who designed the Pearle Club was the chairman of that Commission for many years. And in a sense that was following tradition because Paul Cray, for whom he worked had been Chairman of the Art Commission for years.

PC: Is it a strong Commission here? In some cities I know it's really kind of honorary.

JF: Well of course this was an honorary thing in that we weren't paid a salary. And we did a heck of a lot of work. The Commission met every two weeks all year around and we'd convene at 1:30 in the afternoon and we'd often be there until 7:00 and 8:00 o'clock at night. And we had to go through a tremendous lot of work. And fortunately it had never really had any political overtones. But that began to be evident and finally there was a breakthrough and our present mayor saw fit about three years ago to throw the whole commission out. So we all were out. Larson went out first. And then within a very short time all of us went. I think now all the appointments have been really quite political. It used to be, I think, without there being any rule that the director of the Philadelphia Museum, which is a city museum, was on that board. And Henri Marceau did a marvelous job on that board for years. The director of the Academy had been on the board. This was one of the funny things that happened to me. I had rather hoped to get on that. I felt that it was a responsibility that I would enjoy taking because I had an architectural background, and for the Academy's sake I was very ambitious for it. Mr. John Lewis, who loved the committees had many very heavy responsibilities professionally otherwise and so he sat on a great many committees. But when there was a vacancy, I forget how that thing came about, Gus Steele who had been the president when I first went to the Academy had been the representative. And you see, he wasn't a professional man and it was just simply that a layman had gone on but representing the academy. And then when it came my turn really John Lewis decided that he wanted to do this thing. He was a lawyer and a layman. And he just took the job himself, or took the appointment. So I waited a very, very long while. And then there was a time when he appointed one of the members of our board, as a matter of fact, it was Jim McGill, the chap with whom I lunched today, who is now a board member emeritus and he hasn't been active now for some years. He's quite an elderly fellow, a wonderful chap, and a great friend. But finally my turn did come along. And I enjoyed it very, very much. It was a lot of work with a very serious and considerate group of men. There was even the business of trying to keep the ugliest signs down from the main streets. There were certain rules set up concerning the height of buildings around parks and along our parkway, you see, and signs near the center of the city. And there were all these things that were being constantly acted upon but so often because of our negative action nobody knew what we did, in a sense, our work was never seen. We would be vetoing the ugly things and then if nice things came up there wasn't very much credit given. You see, we didn't design anything, but if a design was submitted and we thought it was bad we could always send it back. We passed on the design of all the public schools. The new public schools for instance all had to come under our direction.

PC: You really had a great effect on things.

JF: Oh, yes. It was an influence for good. There's no doubt about that, but it wasn't a very glamorous thing because almost nobody, some of it never made the news and lots of people didn't know who made up the Art Commission. It was not a thing that was talked about a great deal but there was a lot of important work that went even through that room. There were about eight of us. They always had a painter on the board. Watkins was on the board for a good many years. Then Spruance took Watkins's place when Watkins went off. There was always a sculptor on the board. It was made up of a knowledgeable and sensitive group of fellows. That I'd almost forgotten. I don't know, I guess I was on the Art Commission for five or six or seven years.

PC: Sort of apropos of something else it's always interested me that there are two professions that people train for but frequently go into other activities. One is law, and architecture is another. For example, Harry Grier, who is director of the Frick is an architect. Did you find that your architectural training has served you in good stead?

JF: Oh, wonderfully. Yes of course. I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't had that. But you see, an architect even in your schooling not only did you have to take a foreign language and you had to have some English and you had to have this and that and the other thing, but you also had the history of painting, you had the history of sculpture. And the embellishment of architecture certainly in my day was very important. So that an appreciation and understanding of what good sculpture and painting was very, very essential. It was just taken for granted. And so I didn't feel at all out of my element when I had to deal with this thing. But I certainly hadn't ever though that I would get into the thing with the intimacy that I did finally. I think that my architectural background was just perfect.

PC: That's interesting. To get back to the academy for second, did you have a great influx of people on the GI Bill after World War II? Of didn't that effect you a great deal?

JF: Well, no, I don't think it affected us very much. We got some good students and then we got some loafers. And because the system is so free it was more difficult when it was just a day school and they came and went as they pleased and there was no grading or anything of that nature. However, they did bring in a problem of grading because the government insisted on it. And this was very difficult because how under the sun are you ever going to take an artist student and say his color is worth 42 or 96 or 31 or whatever. But we went through a certain formality with the government to satisfy them. It was all right. The GI fellows had to submit their work, I think there had been various rules. But once or twice or three times a semester, and the only thing was that if the work was so meager and it seemed as though they were not taking any good advantage of their privilege they could be asked to leave. But they didn't do that very often. And they weren't an element that hurt us at all. One of the things about the school that is so nice, and we haven't mentioned this, is that there has always been an evening school as well as the day school. Students can sign up for evening classes and pay their fees and come just to the evening classes. But the day students have evening school without extra payment. And this was a great boon to a great number of students. So many of them come from out of town. And they're so bound up in this thing and they wanted all day long and all night, too. We never had any food services in the Academy but there are little electric plates there and so on and some lockers and a couple of refrigerators where they can put a little bit of food for themselves. And there were lots of those kids who would come in the morning and make their own breakfast and they'd have enough there to fix their dinners at night. Of course over the weekends when the place was closed they hadn't access to that at all. But this was another kind of, a little thing, but solving the young art student's problem. He probably lived in some tiny little cubicle of a room with no right or opportunity to cook at all. So that while there was no food service there at all many of them almost lived there all the time. They'd come in at 9:00 in the morning and the building was open until 10:00 at night and they could be there that whole time if they wanted to. And there was no one to ever say why weren't you here yesterday or why did you come in at 11:00 today instead of 9:00 and so on. They have to work out their own salvation. There's was little discipline problem in an art school, at least we've had very, very little.

PC: It's interesting. Klonis at the Art Student's League said the same thing. It's a place you go because you want to and not because you have to.

JF: That's right. And I think because they just accept the attitude of anybody just as though it's perfectly normal. And it seems to me that maybe even the business of being so familiar with the nude figure it seems to me that even the ugly part of sex that's in universities now, undoubtedly it goes on, it must be a factor in the art school just as well as any other place. They're just a bunch of normal young animals. But it seems to me that it never taken, doesn't become a major factor, now of course they look different with all their long hair and so on.

PC: Well, art students have always had long hair though, haven't they?

JF: Well, there are so many things that people have a very wrong concept often of what an art student is like. And as a matter of fact, and I don't know whether this ought to be recorded either, but I mean I think we've got a minimum number of queers in an art school. We don't seem to have as many, undoubtedly they're there, I've lived with it for an awful long while and I felt that I was a pretty normal guy myself and I think I was conscious of what went on but we've had so little upsetting trouble. Of course every once in a while something would happen. Out there at Chester Springs there were a couple of times when we got a girl one summer who we found suddenly had had a very unfortunate influence on one of the young girls, very young girls. We caught the thing. I don't think the child was hurt. But it meant calling the parents and getting this thing all straightened out. But this was the rather unusual thing. Not that I put the artist up as any saint at all. I think they do have a lot of virtues. Sometimes they do bring headaches. They break the rules. And often they're not very neat people. But they're not the kind who deface the property.

PC: They really come to do their work.

JF: They do. It is a place that is meant for work, and I don't think there is an instructor who doesn't talk of this sometime about what a hard life they've really picked out for themselves and that they'll never get anywhere without this work. And you get a whale of a lot of kids who just want to work. And there it is. I don't know what more I have to say. If we got on much more we may begin to belabor the subject. But one thing we haven't mentioned at all that interested me in the years I was there, I had a helper. Elizabeth Swenson, who was head of our public relations. She had been for some years at the Curtis Institute of Music and she had a fine knowledge and appreciation of music. And I think we were one of the first places to introduce music into the galleries.

PC: Really?

JF: Twenty years ago we started chamber music concerts. The fellow who planned all those concerts was Vladimir Sokoloff who was one of the great pianist accompanists in the country. Oh, I think he was accompanist for Scoeti for a while. I think he did a world tour with one or two of the other top violinists. He never made a reputation as a great virtuoso himself but he was a wonderful musician and a swell guy. He taught at the Curtis Institute and still does. He was the pianist for the Philadelphia Orchestra for a good many years. When the score of a symphony or anything they played called for a piano it was he who played the piano part. His wife also is a fine pianist. She has a wonderful reputation as a teacher at the Curtis Institute. Well Sokoloff planned these things for twenty years. We did this thing on a shoe string of, it didn't mean that we had Szegeti come as the soloist. We did it on almost no money at all. The chief support for it we got through the fund that was built up in the musicians union for recordings. There was a fund there that was dedicated to helping finance work, you see, for musicians. It really wasn't sufficient to pay a decent fee. It paid the minimum fee. And Billy Sokoloff planned these things. Chamber music is that rare thing and there are a lot of very beautiful things that are almost never heard, or perhaps they're scored for a peculiar set of instruments, or what not. But there's a great literature of very beautiful stuff that's seldom ever heard. And while we normally had trios and quartets and so on, he would get those different groups together. And for twenty years we had Friday evening concerts that were free to the public. The concerts were set for 8:30 and from 7:30 they could come in. They were done right in the galleries where all the shows were hung and we just simply set up the chairs not matter whether there was sculpture among the chairs. The acoustics in the old place are perfectly phenomenally wonderful. You can sit at the far end of the gallery all the way up against the Broad Street wall and hear just as though you were sitting in the rotunda. It is just wonderful. And we did have beautiful concerts. It happens that the present regime isn't interested at all and feels that when you can't advertise great names and so on people won't come. There was an audience of anywhere from 300 to 500 people who came on those Friday nights. They'd come early and put their coats on chairs and go and look at the show. And we'd have about an intermission of about 20 or 25 minutes and they'd see the exhibitions. Otherwise they wouldn't see the exhibitions. I mean they may not have been picture conscious or sculpture conscious people. But to sit in those lovely old rooms and with all this stuff around you, oh, it always gave me a great thrill. The Women's Committee again helped us on this thing. We didn't get enough support financially from the artists union to do the whole trick so that we had to augment it. Sometimes we would get private gifts to help us through. Elizabeth Swenson was a peach on this. She loved the thing herself and we never could have done it at all if it hadn't been for what she did. She followed this thing through all those years. And we had great stuff. Bully Sokoloff played in a great many of the concerts himself. Of course a lot of things were scored for, say four strings and piano, or three strings and piano or maybe clarinet flute and piano and so on. And I think there was some rule about the artists union getting their money, the fellow who directed this thing had to be part of it. At least once in each concert he had to do something. He and his wife Eleanor played for several seasons. They did the Brahms Four Hands on one piano thing, Brahms' waltzes. Oh, they were swell. We had marvelous evenings there. Just wonderful evenings. And that was a great delight. Part of the joy went out when Miss Swenson retired. And when the new regime came in they seemed not to be interested at all. Of course those things were themselves out too.

PC: Oh, sure.

JF: But we were the first museum to do this. Now the museum on the parkway does it regularly, the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The Philadelphia library has its concerts. The very lovely Curtis Quartet plays there. Jim McGill, the fellow I had lunch with today, is a great Haverford College fan and he's given a great deal of money to support a new building out there. He's given them a new library in the last little while. And he put a string quartet in residence out there. It seems to me that this music thing goes hand in hand so beautifully with painting and sculpture. So music has taken its role in the program at the Academy too. The old building is a wonderful building you know. It's Furness architecture. One of the few monuments to his record that is still standing. And it's just as staunch as the day it was built.

PC: How old is the building now?

JF: It was dedicated the year of the Centennial here, 1876. So it's very close to its hundredth year. It's a strange building. Its architecture is peculiar.

PC: It works very well though.

JF: Oh, yes. It's beautiful. Beautiful rooms, beautiful galleries, wonderful light. And the school rooms are fine, fine rooms. We did need more space for the number of students that we served. This whole scheme that involved the buying of this old hotel and moving school rooms over there was done with the idea, though that, that too, might be a temporary thing because the hotel building really was not ideal but it took the pressure off. And then as one of the side issues that came up with that, this Peale Club thing has been such a great boon that I think they would think a long while about giving it up.

PC: That's marvelous. Well, are there any things that we haven't talked about or touched upon that you can think of that might be interesting?

JF: No, we've talked about Chester Springs and its virtue. One of the things that pointed up the importance of the academy was that 150th Anniversary Show. It was a great, great show. And of course, there's not other institution whose history goes back that far. There is material at the academy that can't possibly exist anywhere else because of its age. We were founded in 1805. And until about 1835, I think it was that the National Academy was established in New York, in those years between there was no other exhibition place in the United States, you see. And so as the research fellows begin to look into this thing they have to come back to the Academy to look up our records of what happened there. In the last years that I was at the Academy I had begun to stress this, and I think they're doing something to carry this along too. And of course we had three buildings. The two early buildings were both down here on Chestnut Street, around Eleventh and Chestnut, they were both rather classic, mostly Greek classic Georgian buildings. And both of them were very beautiful. The first one burned down in 1846. It was rebuilt almost at once, and built larger. They soon found, however that even with the larger buildings that within not so very long a time, I think there was a period of almost no activity from 1870 until 1876. They did take the school and find temporary quarters for it. But they gave up the building down on Chestnut Street. And then in 1876 at the time of the Centennial, they opened this building up here. So they've lived in three houses. And now Peale House augments the present situation. And they've both had and gave up the beautiful Chester Springs.

PC: Good, good.

JF: Well, I don't know what more we can say. It's really been fun to talk about it all.

PC: It sounds like a suburb and very rewarding experience with lots and lots of excitement.

JF: Oh, it wasn't all joy. There were crises and what not. But I've been a lucky guy in that after that terrible period of the Depression to finally find a place where I could take my two children. Some years I guess we stayed out there six months of the year out in Chester Springs. Joe had started school up there at Friends Select, one of the private Friends Quaker school. They were very understanding and lenient about that. He would take a month or two of school at the one-room country school out there at Chester Springs, he'd start there in the fall and then he'd come in and join his class here at Friends Select, and then in the spring when we'd go out early he'd give up Friends Select and go out back to his one-room schoolhouse. There was a very, very good teacher there. She got to be a friend. The kids at the school was all nice, just local youngsters. And even that was an advantage. Something came as just a byproduct of this whole business. That hundred acres out there was so beautiful. There was a wonderful hill behind the school. The original buildings were pre-Revolutionary. And it had quite a history of having been a spa. You know there was a time when people took the waters and there were three springs on this hundred acre property. There was a different chemical property in each spring. One was iron, one was sulfur, and one was lime rock. They were each housed in little pavilions. The people came either to drink the water or to bathe. The sulfur spring stank to high heaven. But it was a very interesting building. A kind of little Roman bath of a thing. Oh, it was a handsome little thing. All tumbled down. John Lewis, whom I've spoken of several times, his father was president of the academy at one time. And it was under his regime that the Chester Springs property was bought. It was a great favorite of his and he gave it a great deal of attention. But a great deal of money that went into it didn't really have anything to do with art. There was a boggy area down near one of the spring houses. There was a magnesia spring that had wonderful water which we drank. And there was a reservoir up on the hillside. But down near the magnesia spring, which was in a funny little spring house, there was a kind of boggy area. And Lewis had developed this into a very handsome Oriental garden.

PC: Oh, really? Goodness, everything was out there.

JF: Streams ran all through it. There were bridges and all sorts of exotic flowers. And he brought an English gardener over from England to take care of this thing. He was an autocrat of the first water and he ran it. He did everything just exactly as he pleased. And a great many people in Philadelphia considered that he had given all this. But all the while the academy was paying the bills. He even acquired more property, if I remember it was 110 acres. There were handsome buildings on the property. There was a big main building that had been a pre-Revolutionary inn. It had a great long dining room where you could seat a hundred people.

PC: A good sized room.

JF: And the food was all lined up freshen your can't think of anything more

PC: You know questions here.

JF: Unless you have some questions.

PC: No, I've really reached the end of the questions.

JF: We haven't talked much about annual exhibitions but I think I did touch on that saying that the time for those is all over. I hope that the academy will go on with some important exhibition schedule because I think the city deserves it. And I would hate to see any other institutions take over that function. I must say that for years and years there was really a very decent almost unwritten agreement between the Museum on the Parkway and the Academy. Of course the Museum on the Parkway covered the world of art and they had the whole world around to draw from. The Academy of course from its inception had been a place dedicated to American art. So in building up their collection the Museum probably has comparatively little American material compared to some of the other great museums. And then this business compared to some of the other great museums. And then this business of serving the American artist became the Academy's responsibility. And somehow maybe the American artist doesn't need now and maybe never will again, need the kind of support and backing that those big annuals gave. But the academy certainly brought to Philadelphia for a period of many, many years a cross section of what was going on every year from one end of the country to the other.

PC: Yes, because there were no dealers where people could see their work and the museum over on the parkway didn't do shows like that.

JF: And they weren't always great shows but it was a think built really to do a service for the American artists. How that will be continued in the future I don't know. As I said, I'm glad I'm not in a position now to be the one who has to decide how the artists' interests can best be served. You wonder, too that you continue to train these young people when right now the prospect is not a very rich one.

PC: Well, I don't

JF: But we hope the world is always going to need these art people.

PC: I see it not so weakly. I think there is more prospect than we can imagine.

JF: Well, maybe it's so.

PC: I think that increased education and travel and affluence and people seeing and wanting more. You know, Americans never stop wanting things. I think even though there's a somewhat financial problem in the country now that when that's resolved, you know, people don't seem to be stopped in their collecting. Parke Bernet last year had a tremendous year. Many of the galleries had the best year they've ever had. I think tastes shift.

JF: Oh, gosh yes. Of course there are markets for almost anything. If you want a Sully or a Stuart or a Copley you go to certain places. But then there are other places that are serving another kind of art life.

PC: Oh, absolutely.

JF: Lord knows, there has been a terribly active art market now for several years.

PC: Yes, and it's growing. It really is.

JF: And the auction houses have done such terrific things. The prices are sky-high.

PC: Well, it's competitions. So okay that

JF: You're a fellow that wants to be satisfied.

PC: I mean do you feel you've

JF: Well, I guess I've finished. If you're in Philadelphia again and you come up with any idea that we haven't somehow or other covered, I don't know what else we could talk about.

PC: Okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW]