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Oral history interview with Porter A. McCray, 1977 Sept. 17-Oct. 4

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Porter McCray on September 1, 1977. The interview took place at his apartment on 59th street in New York, NY, and was conducted by Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Funding for the transcription of this interview provided by the Smithsoinian Institution's Women's Committee.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

PAUL CUMMINGS: Today is the 1st of September 1977 and it's Paul Cummings talking to Porter McCray in his apartment in New York City on 59th Street. Why don't we start at the beginning? You were born in West Virginia, in Clarksburg. Now did you -- just give me some rough family background. Was the family there a long time? Are there brothers and sisters? You lived there a long time?

PORTER McCRAY: My mother was from West Virginia and my father was Virginia. They lived in Virginia, but Mother had gone home to have her baby with her mother.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see.

MR. McCRAY: That's how I happened to be West Virginia, alas.

MR. CUMMINGS: So Clarksburg is not where you grew up?

MR. McCRAY: No. We were there, I think, only two months after I was born.

MR. CUMMINGS: So where did you -- where did you live then?

MR. McCRAY: Then we moved to a little town in Virginia called Waynesboro, where we remained until the year I went to college. And we moved at that point to a town nearby called Staunton, spelled Staunton, Virginia, where there are a number of schools and colleges just nearby, the University of Virginia and Washington Lee and VMI and a number of prep schools in the area. In the valley of Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley, between the two -- Allegheny and Blue Ridge Mountain ranges

MR. CUMMINGS: Sounds like a nice --

MR. McCRAY: -- a little town, Staunton. As a matter of fact, the Episcopal church there was the site of the meeting of the House of Burgesses from Richmond when it was run out of Richmond when Patrick Henry was the governor of Virginia.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh.

MR. McCRAY: The British General Tarleton was in pursuit of him, and they escaped and went over the mountain and settled in Staunton to have the House meet at the church there. And it's country also where there have been a few Jefferson houses done, people who were sort of friends with Jefferson when. At the time, he was in Charlottesville, which is only like 28 miles away. And it is primarily a town of schools, really, the Lyceum Episcopal Finishing School for girls, Stuart Hall, is there, one of the early women's seminaries, Mary Baldwin Seminary, now a flourishing women's college, Presbyterian college, was there. And there was, for a long time, the Staunton Military Academy, which has since ceased to exist.

MR. CUMMINGS: Are there brothers and sisters, or not?

MR. McCRAY: I have a younger sister, who lives in Staunton. But who lived for a while with me here in New York.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what was, you know, life like growing up in a town that was -- what was the population, roughly?

MR. McCRAY: Oh, about 12,000.

MR. CUMMINGS: Twelve thousand? Yeah?

MR. McCRAY: As far as my career was concerned, certainly, the -- I think it is quite important to realize what the southern town -- this was -- after all, I was born in 1908, and the South was still -- even Virginia, which was more

prosperous than some of the deep South, was still existing on a very low economic level. And in a town that size, for example, Staunton was the capital of the largest county in the state, which was primarily an agricultural -- rather prosperous agricultural and apple and peach-growing region, and had a certain economic stability to it. But the town, for example, I think, oh, the population was about 30/70 -- 30 percent black. So it was a predominantly white town. Of course, there was segregation in education in those days there. And however, the town was -- seemed very -- reasonably well adjusted and the cultural opportunities of the town were very limited. There was a public library, a Carnegie library, there were -- the benefits of these colleges and university, you occasionally had visiting lecturers sometimes on cultural subjects. And who had schools of music and there were concerts and things of that sort.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you have an interest in books or literature, music, at home? Were there --

MR. McCRAY: Well, you know, everybody -- not everybody but a good many people had the victrolas and they had --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, wind it up.

MR. McCRAY: -- a certain number of recordings, classical ones usually, and also popular ones. There was very little actual -- there was a -- from time to time, it didn't have a continuous life, but there was a local theater organization, which did plays and which sometimes attempted rather extravagant things, not too well produced. There was a small group of people who were responsive to this kind of thing. The library was noticeably lacking in any kind of very rich representation of architectural literature. The town had some really quite beautiful Greek revival and Federal buildings in it. It had been this town chosen by the state to accommodate the fist asylum for the insane and the first institute for the deaf and blind. And the buildings that were done were very handsome sort of Greek Doric buildings. And the level of architecture was relatively good. Mary Baldwin had some handsome old houses with which it started, private houses, of rather bold character in Tuscan revival and there was one Jefferson house in the town. And by then, there had been some rather interesting even sort of Swiss gothic revival little houses that people who had traveled had brought back. The influence of Davis was felt a little bit back then in some of the building there. There was a house built, for example, on the highest hill in the town about 1850 by the grand nephew of President Madison who had shortly afterward moved allegedly to be the private surgeon to Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee later when he went to be the president of Washington College and later Washington and Lee. And that house at that point, rather interestingly, was bought by a retiring president of Brown University, who had been named the head of the Peabody foundation that was set up with, at that time, really an enormous amount of $2 million or $3 million granted by the Peabody family in Boston to initiate a system of public education in the South. And Stanton was near the crossroads of the Chesapeake and Ohio and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroads. Charlottesville had the Southern Railway. Waynesboro had the Northwestern, so the spot was chosen primarily so that the --

MR. CUMMINGS: Transportation.

MR. McCRAY: -- director could almost anywhere in the South to attend to his business. And he remained in Staunton as long as he lived, and inaugurated of course some very significant things in the training, particularly, of teachers for both black and white. They were interested especially in setting up a system of black --

MR. CUMMINGS: When was that?

MR. McCRAY: That was, I think, about -- it was almost immediately after the Civil War. It was quite interesting.

MR. CUMMINGS: That early?

MR. McCRAY: And I have looked at some correspondence recently when I was home, between him and some of the more educated people, lawyers and so forth, and the rector of the church, the Episcopal church, in Staunton and there was quite an extensive correspondence, in that they all lived in the same town, about ideas. And it was fascinating to me that there could be this kind of rapport [inaudible] discussion of --

MR. CUMMINGS: What was their name? Do you remember offhand?

MR. McCRAY: Just offhand, I've forgotten his name. I'll give it to you, so you can fill it in.

MR. CUMMINGS: But, no, what was life for you like growing up in this sort of --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I remember vaguely the first world war, particularly the awful winter before the end of the war with the very severe flu epidemic that really hit -- killed a noticeable number of people, even in those small communities. The so-called bubonic plague [inaudible] at the same time. And you have to remember that the climate in that part of Virginia is really not unlike the climate in New York.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: It is -- the valley is about 1,400 feet above sea level, so that it has rather cold winters and cold nights -- cool nights in the summer. So that they have the most severe winter, with heavy ice on the ground for months and months and months and other recollections that I have. Typically, the armistice day, I was young, I was what, nine. That was 1918, I was 10 years old. The madness I can recall, a great deal of which I did not understand at the time, but went on on the streets. My parents took my by the hand and we, like the whole population of the town, gathered in the center of the town to celebrate the victory and there was everything from fireworks to excessive drink to everything else that went with it. And I was -- my family eventually, I think, were allowing this shock for my sake and we went home. But after that, let's see. Earlier on, I used to keep my mother's flower garden and our little vegetable garden. And eventually got a job -- in the summers this was -- picking peaches and ultimately advanced to the level of being an expert peach packer, which I think I realized about $7 a week from and --

MR. CUMMINGS: That was a reasonable amount of money in those days. You know, a teenager --

MR. McCRAY: At any rate, you know, did the usual things that kids did, collected stamps and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what was high school like?

MR. McCRAY: -- did extensive hiking. We had marvelous mountains around us. High school was called the Woodrow Wilson High School, already honoring Woodrow Wilson, who was born in Staunton. And it's interesting that today I am on the board of trustees of the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace Foundation. But I also remember Wilson's visit to Staunton --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: When he was campaigning with the first administration and I had asthma [inaudible] and I was spending the summer, that summer, part of it, with my aunt and uncle who lived there in Staunton. And then I used to occasionally go up to my grandparents and spend part of the summer in Hot Springs --

MR. CUMMINGS: So your family lived in that part of the country for a long time?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think they were -- I don't know precisely when they came to the States. It would be the early nineteenth century, I think, along with a lot of other people, looking probably for employment. Both my grandfathers, the one who later lived in West Virginia, and my grandfather in Staunton, were from Hot Springs. They were both Virginians by adoption. And both of them, interestingly, had been in the Civil War. They had both been in the Confederate army. My grandfather McCray had been wounded, had lost a hand in battle. My grandfather Windom [phonetic] was a much more literary person, had done some teaching [inaudible] was not as full of recollections of the war, who my grandfather McCray was, who was an engineer and who had laid a good deal of the trackage on the C&O through the Allegheny Mountains into West Virginia.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, do you, you know, remember any teachers in high school, for example, that were important or interesting or provocative to you?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I don't know.

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, sometimes there are --

MR. McCRAY: Ms. Bernley and Ms. Plum [phonetic] were very indulgent, I think, and who really responded to interests that I had. I did have certain interests in aesthetics and things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really? Stimulated by what?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I don't know what it was stimulated by now. Sort of distinctive, I guess. My mother was a woman with considerable tastes, just in terms of her house and that kind of thing. But there was, I think, in principle there was a rather high -- I'm not sure if it was a high level, but an average level of what we would regard as conservative taste -- using that awful word -- that lasted through the -- and it had something to do with, again, with the economic level of things. People did not have the money to follow the fashion. And they were still sticking with old things that they had, the --

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. And I remember my grandmother and grandfather McCray were married right after the war and it was interesting to me, in view of the present tastes that we have, my grandmother's china, wedding china, was absolutely the severest and plainest kind of white china, which goes very well with some white Limoges that I have. But everything was extremely severe to a certain level. But it partly had to do with the fact

that there was not much room for indulgence. You used what you had and the eighteenth and early nineteenth century had a fairly high level of aesthetic standard, I guess, and that carried on into the -- late into the nineteenth century and even to the early twentieth century in [inaudible] the economic level was -- very difficult I think to understand nowadays, or even then, in the areas of the country that did not suffer this terrific economic setback after the war, the Civil War. It had a great deal to do with the incredibly meager wages that were paid. Our dear Katie [phonetic], who was the most devoted and marvelous black servant that we had through the years, I think, probably got $9 a week. And she lived in, but it was about the average of that time. But the average person in the town probably also had an income of -- the middle class had incomes of about $5,000. And there was no great wealth in the town. There were families that had been there since the town started, who had large real estate holdings and so forth, which since has provided them with considerable wealth. But at the time, the town was not growing. There was not much turnover of that sort of thing. There was not any evidence of that potential income. It was all very low key --

MR. CUMMINGS: It sounds very relaxed.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah, it was.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you go to Virginia Military?

MR. McCRAY: Well, my family before me had gone there. And it was almost considered a family obligation. I was really not the type to go to the Virginia Military Institute and I was almost then a pacifist and for one reason, very realistic reason: I did receive a scholarship to go there. And I remained. It was a bargain I had made with my father. I had already wanted to go into architecture. And he said, well, if you will go to take your college work at VMI, which I must say was not especially conducive to preparation for an architecture degree. I did encounter -- one of my professors was intensely interested and gave a series of lectures on architectural history. He was also the head of the drama department, drama school -- drama -- the drama society, which I was a member of. And we -- VMI, you know, adjoins Washington and Lee University that has -- well, it had an excellent library and it was a civilian school. It had -- had more facilities for becoming exposed to artistic things. And I remember vividly one thing that got me more interested in art, I think, than anything that had ever seen or done before. In the early days, the Carnegie Foundation had gathered together categories of books, color reproductions of world art.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, right.

MR. McCRAY: And they had deposited and they also had classical recordings -- and they had deposited in the library at Washington and Lee one of these, a sort of secondary set, and through friends at Washington and Lee, and particularly some of the members of the faculty who told me about the existence of this -- unfortunately it was not generally available to the students -- but it was in a sort of rare book section of the library that you had to get special permission to visit. And I did really get quite deep into that. Also, it was a period in the state in general and in Staunton, even, when some rather beautiful Georgian houses were being recreated by an architect from New York by the name of William Bottomley.

MR. CUMMINGS: You mean being renovated or being rebuilt?

MR. McCRAY: No, new houses.

MR. CUMMINGS: Newly built?

MR. McCRAY: Newly built.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: Always with older brick from old houses that had been torn down. But rather elegant houses, sort of in the idiom of the great manor houses, earlier ones, in Virginia west of --

MR. CUMMINGS: What got you interested in architecture so early on?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I don't know. I -- the history courses that I had, I think, at VMI, and seeing the [inaudible] of the architectural materials in the Carnegie Library and in the Washington and Lee fascinated me. And then the actual houses that were being done by Bottomley and Duncan Lee were totally traditional but very handsomely done. People were -- there were a few families that were, by then, well enough to do -- to start building these handsome houses. And they were houses on scale of the Wilton house in Richmond or some of the -- not quite as elaborate as Shirley or some of the James River houses, but inspired by those, primarily. And the superintendent of VMI's wife, Mrs. Cocke then, befriended me. And she was, at that time, building -- rebuilding, I must say -- a fascinating early Queen Anne house down on the James River and was using Bottomley. And for some reason or other, she would draw me into the discussions with Bottomley when he would come to go over the plans and so forth. So I sort of got into it then.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you like the routine of the military school?

MR. McCRAY: [Inaudible.] I mean, it was so wasteful of time.

MR. CUMMINGS: All that ritual?

MR. McCRAY: The ritual was just too much, and getting up, you know, 6:00 in the morning and going out and having your name called and having to rush back and wash your teeth and face and stand inspection to be certain that you'd shaved and everything else before daybreak in order to go and have your breakfast. There were awful, awful cold days on the parade ground, on a high plateau, with the winter winds, icy wind blowing across this thing while we were learning to fire .75 millimeter guns or ride horses. It seemed like an awful waste.

MR. CUMMINGS: But haven't you found it was practical now?

MR. McCRAY: No. Not at the time, either. The only thing it did was make me tardy. I've retained a certain amount of tardiness in my life since then, just as a practical device.

MR. CUMMINGS: So after that you went to, where, Columbia?

MR. McCRAY: No, after that, I was graduated in, you know, '30, which was already a terribly rough moment in the Depression. And I think out of my class of 170-some graduates that there were only three of us who got a job. And mine was luck primarily, because I went to teach a military school, prep school, near Staunton, where friends owned the school. And I was hired at $1,000 a year to teach physics and English and world history -- all at once. And I did go off to Columbia and also to the University of Virginia to do some very elementary architectural work. I had primarily -- since I had no prospect of going into -- my father, when the Depression came, said he simply could not at the time follow through with his promise to support me, and I appreciated this. So I tried these other things to be sure that I really was interested in architecture. And at that time, University of Virginia was involved primarily with Fiske Kimball, you know, who later became the director of the Philadelphia Museum. And Campbell, I think, was the name of the dean. And the school was very much oriented toward Jefferson. They were just beginning to restore Monticello, restore some of the parts of the university buildings. So we were very aware of all of that. And then when I came to Columbia, the Columbia School, the architecture school, was even more strongly affiliated with the Beaux-Arts, and Dean Arnault [phonetic] who was at Columbia in those days, gave us totally traditional Beaux-Arts training in Columbia and it has always fascinated me, particularly nowadays, where the world is -- I mean, where the young talk about the costs of things. And it is fascinating to me to recall that the first summer that I came to Columbia -- remember, I was living on $1,000 a year -- I was given quarters, I have to admit -- I was able to come from Virginia to New York to have a room at John Jay Hall, to have cafeteria privileges, and to go to [inaudible] theater, surprisingly enough. Hallie Flanagan was getting very active with the WPA Theater, and you could go to theater very inexpensively, anywhere. And at the end of six weeks, I had spent $280 on that entire expedition. But, I mean, there wasn't anything exceptional about it, it was just the way things were.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, that's still a lot of money as a percentage.

MR. McCRAY: I guess it was, yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: A quarter of your annual income in six weeks, which is hardly 13. How did you select Columbia University?

MR. McCRAY: I don't know. It's just that I had been, in 1927, two years before I graduated, the family of my roommate, who were the Scotts from Richmond, had given me a three-month trip with them to Europe. And I had come to New York on the way on that trip. And I had been here just long enough to become seduced by New York and to see all the things that I want to see. And I think it was probably, though I have never analyzed this, a desire to get back to Europe and take advantage of the many things that existed there.

MR. CUMMINGS: That was your first trip to Europe, then?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: To Europe and New York?

MR. McCRAY: [Inaudible.] And that was a fairly comprehensive trip. We went into Spain, into Gibraltar, and went all up into Spain. [Inaudible] at an early age, had been given the privilege of spending a year in convent in Brussels to learn French and then she had gone to Spain for a year to learn Spanish and then to Germany to study German. So that she had friends in all of these places, and that enlivened our visit.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, absolutely.

MR. McCRAY: And it was even, you know, the last few years -- I think Alfonso Trece abdicated three years after that. I believe he abdicated in '30, somewhere around there.

MR. CUMMINGS: About that, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And then we went up into Scotland, where summer was precluded by a month where they had taken a place called Lickleyhead Castle to shoot grouse and stalk deer and things like that. And since I was not properly brought up in the protocol of this, I had to stop in London and take in the school for casting to learn how to cast for salmon fish, and how to conduct myself in the blind when shooting at grouse.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, marvelous. Love it.

MR. McCRAY: But it was a marvelous summer. I'll never forget it.

MR. CUMMINGS: It must have been terrific. How many weeks or about a whole summer, three months or so?

MR. McCRAY: It was almost three months, I think about 10 weeks.

MR. CUMMINGS: Absolutely marvelous --

MR. McCRAY: That -- I must say, after that, I really was bitten by the arts. Because we -- Mr. Scott was -- bought beautiful things and knew a great deal about art and we spent -- my first real art gallery experience was in the Prado. And he knew it quite well from previous visits. It was an immensely impressive initiation to that whole world. And then we did the same thing in Italy and in France and in London before going to Scotland -- and in Brussels.

MR. CUMMINGS: You covered a lot of territory. Those were still the last of the great days of travel then.

MR. McCRAY: Yes, they were marvelous.

MR. CUMMINGS: The height of the '20s.

MR. McCRAY: We returned on that trip on the old Majestic, which was extraordinary. The Majestic by then, you know, was an English liner, though it had been the queen of the German [inaudible] line and had been taken by the British at the end of the first war.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you were -- you know, after the trip, you came back and you began teaching at -- what was it again -- Augusta?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: And doing several things while finding out about architecture. Did you want to be an architect at that time? What -- I mean, I can't get a direction.

MR. McCRAY: Yes, yes. Of course I did.

MR. CUMMINGS: That was --

MR. McCRAY: And sometimes I -- during the summers when I was not at Columbia or at the University of Virginia, I did take jobs in architecture offices. One summer, a very good office in Richmond, Duncan Lee, who had restored Carter's Grove and Williamsburg. I was still in the Georgian groove, you see.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MR. McCRAY: And also the local architect in Staunton, which was fairly -- I did a little house in Staunton which stands up rather well.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, that's kind of fun.

MR. McCRAY: And it was also an interesting time, because the Scotts, the people who had given me the trip, he at that time was one of the founders of the Virginia Museum in Richmond and they were working on the creation of that museum at that time, and I heard a lot of the discussions [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you have any particular interest in architecture, I mean, going to houses or commercial architecture, public, or is it still just a general --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think my -- which I think is true of a lot of architects in their early training or at least particularly until the last few years, where we have become much more socially conscious, about the role of

architecture and the role of urban development. But most young architects, even when I was in Yale, were interested in houses, because it was a very personal --

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, I think a lot of them still are. If you get outside certain schools, you know.

MR. McCRAY: Well, it's the level at which you have a human relation with your client, you see.

MR. CUMMINGS: You don't with Seagram's or something like that?

MR. McCRAY: Once you get into the other categories, it's a little difficult to hang on somehow.

MR. CUMMINGS: But you were teaching, you were going to school. The Depression was on. I mean, how were things going on? Because you were at Augusta from, what, '30 to '35.

MR. McCRAY: And I went back to VMI to teach.

MR. CUMMINGS: For a couple of years. Now how did the whole '30s, the whole depression era, affect your life and was it limited by the income and the schools --

MR. McCRAY: Well, it was limited to some extent. As I look back on it, everybody was in the same boat. So life went on, more or less at the same level. I mean, the contrast between those that survived the Depression handsomely and those who felt it very severely was not, I think, nearly so -- well, let's say, strong in contrast as it has been in the recent years. There was not a great deal of money in my community and the differences that existed didn't seem to be so dramatic. Life went on. You know, social activity went on more or less. It was the same as what it is now.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you come to go back to Virginia as an instructor?

MR. McCRAY: VMI?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: Well, because they approached me and because the salary was better than what I was getting. And it was a college rather than an academy.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right. How did you like teaching?

MR. McCRAY: I rather liked teaching. But I didn't like teaching in a military school, again for the same reasons I didn't like attending a military school, that you dissipated so much energy on nonsense. The quality of classes in [inaudible] and, you know, artillery training and that sort of thing, I wasn't especially interested in it.

MR. CUMMINGS: But do you find --

MR. McCRAY: But it was a means of making a living is really the only reason I was involved, for no other.

MR. CUMMINGS: But during the time when you were teaching, were you able to pursue your interest in architecture?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I did by these summer jobs.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see. But normally, the teaching schedule took all the time?

MR. McCRAY: It took the nine months of the year. And then we were free in the summers, reasonably, of interest to you.

MR. CUMMINGS: But you then went on to Yale at one point?

MR. McCRAY: Well, yeah. In '37, I guess.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, how did that --

MR. McCRAY: By then, I had saved surprisingly enough out of this meager income, some money, and my father gave me some money and I got a fairly good scholarship from Yale. And I also got a bursar's job at Yale, used to run slides for George Hamilton's course in modern art, which I think was perhaps my initial exposure.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: And I also did slides occasionally for Allison [phonetic], who was the great French historian at Yale

who was a dynamic, funny man.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who is he again. I don't remember --

MR. McCRAY: Allison was one of the great professors there at Yale, the college -- and in the graduate school, too. French civilization. And there were marvelous -- it's very difficult to explain, you know, when you look back on things, to get right to the point, how you happen to gravitate towards certain things. The architecture school was housed in a building adjoining and connected with the art gallery at Yale. We had our art classes in the gallery and went through it every day for some reason or other, so that I got interested in the collections there. I found that I formed early friendships with Toby Sarsic [phonetic], who was the director of the gallery, and with John Phillips who was the director of the gallery collection at that point, and got interested in what they were doing and took Toby Sarsic's courses in museum training, though they were not credits to my degree.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why did you do that?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I was [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And it was quite interesting that Polly Hamilton, George's wife, and Louise Svendsen up at Guggenheim and two or three other people were doing graduate work in art history and were taking the same museum course that I was and [inaudible] was in art history with Marcel Huber [phonetic] and [inaudible] and I sometimes was allowed to audit those courses. And Toby Sarsic each year took those of us who were interested in the museum course and were registered on a week's tour to visit collections here in New York and in Boston and Philadelphia, Wilmington I think was as far as we got, to Winterthur in those days before it had become a museum. And each year, we made that pilgrimage and so a great deal of beautiful things -- a great many beautiful things -- Harry DuPont at that time was still living in Winterthur and the house was absolutely complete, you know. The thimbles and the needles were on the table in those days in each of those extraordinary rooms. And he would, each time you visited, lay on a meal to remember using the extraordinary collections of china that were used for the table and the food and the linen and the china was [inaudible] absolutely extraordinary way.

[End of Disk 1 of 11.]

[Disk 2 of 11.]

MR. McCRAY: -- I remember, here in New York, when Mr. Blumenthal [phonetic] was alive and lived in his house --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, on 69th?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. We were allowed there, but under very strict circumstances. We had the run of the house at Winterthur, more or less, accompanied --

MR. CUMMINGS: My heavens, really?

MR. McCRAY: We were accompanied by someone, partly by Mr. DuPont himself. But in Blumenthal house, we were required to go in each room and be locked in the room while we were observing the things in it and then moved on to the next room.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did DuPont have a great interest -- or a great knowledge, rather, in the things he collected?

MR. McCRAY: Oh, immense knowledge, involvement.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because I know some collectors collect and don't really know more than --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think that accounts for the extraordinary quality of the Winterthur collection. Because he was a perfectionist and he had a great many very good people searching for him and then he had a great eye. And you also remember that not very long before, within my memory, the Metropolitan was making its American wing collection of houses, interiors.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right. Right.

MR. McCRAY: I can't remember -- Mr. Halsey [phonetic], I believe his name was, was the one brought together most of those rooms. And they were really superbly done, because they were -- they had access, first choice, you see, for things that were -- a lot of houses were being denuded at that point.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: Various museums were acquiring the interiors and furniture --

MR. CUMMINGS: You know, as a student, how did you respond to the places besides the Blumenthal and the DuPont establishments? Did it make you interested in decorative arts, did you get interested in all sorts of other things?

MR. McCRAY: Very much. And in that regard, Winterthur, of course. Blumenthal, you know, that very elegant, great [inaudible] that's at the Metropolitan now was then in that house. It was a very handsome house. There were very fine paneled rooms and so forth. And very elaborate, if rather heavy, furnishings and decorative objects. The Winterthur thing, of course, is much more special and instructive within an area that I felt I had some --

MR. CUMMINGS: Where you had some background already. How did you find Pfizer [phonetic] as an instructor?

MR. McCRAY: Well, he was, you know, immensely well informed. But his enthusiasm was absolutely unbounded. And his involvement and his ability to involve individuals was terrific. He was excellent [inaudible] prints and things of that sort in a scholarly way. And he absolutely could charm anybody into getting access to their collection. And his tastes were quite catholic; he was quite open minded. He could go to [inaudible] and look at the house that Ed Stone [phonetic] had done and see the Picassos and Neros and so forth there and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Then go to Blumenthal --

MR. McCRAY: Then go to Blumenthal and see the manuscripts and so forth.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you like the contrast?

MR. McCRAY: Always, I've been fascinated by it. It took me a little while to get hooked on modern, I must say.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: Like everybody else, I had reservations in the beginning. But at Yale, on the other hand, a couple of us in the architectural school started a little contemporary art society, especially in architecture, but also in painting, because Yale itself was doing so little in that area.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who were these other people? I don't even know at --

MR. McCRAY: Dickson McKenna [phonetic] and myself, particularly, came down to New York and just raided architects' offices and Curt Valentin was very helpful in those days in generously lending -- you know, we had a space about as big as this room in the architectural school in old Street Hall and we -- in those days, you could put out a room of Picasso etchings and let the students walk through it and leave it open at night all night long and nothing ever happened to it. I mean, when we think back on it [inaudible]. Or we went to Lescaz [phonetic] in those days or Wally Harrison or Stone or various people who were practicing or the Museum of Modern -- John McAndrews [phonetic] was very helpful in the early stages in lending us stuff every fall, just photographs, to put on shows on modern architecture. It was very informal and very inexpensive. We would borrow a station wagon usually and come down in pick the stuff up, never insured it or anything else, carried it up --

MR. CUMMINGS: Good museum practice.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. I cringe when I think about it now. But --

MR. CUMMINGS: Now how many of you were there involved with this activity?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I suppose there were about five or six of us. None of us had any money to rub together to finance it, so we really put ourselves very much on the mercy of others. Stewart Goodwin, who was the chairman of the architecture department at the Museum of Modern Art was very helpful. He would give us some money and he would tell us about things, where things were and that sort of thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who were some of the other students involved with it?

MR. McCRAY: Let's see, well, Henry Petta [phonetic], Peter Ogden [phonetic], goodness, I don't remember many of those people. It was at the same time that Norman Fletcher, who is now the head of architect [inaudible] at Cambridge and Ben Thomson, who started Design Research, who is an architect, of course, they were all in school at that time and very much very keen about these things. It was a very minor operation, I can tell you, but it injected into our lives something that was a little more contemporary than what we were getting. Again, the first three years of my training at Yale was under the Beaux-Arts system.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: It had not --

MR. CUMMINGS: Changed yet. Yeah. Do you find that was good preparation, though, the whole Beaux-Arts --

MR. McCRAY: I think it had outlived its time by the time [inaudible]. But it destroyed itself in the long run. It got so weak -- or it was ex-discipline. And I suppose counter-discipline that -- in the long run, I have an inclination -- I'm inclined to believe that, in spite of the constrictions of the Beaux-Arts, that it was much broader minded than, say the Bauhaus at the time, because the Bauhaus was, after all, something new and it was fun, it was imported and the -- it was German, and it was certainly foreign to most people and was -- it was almost a revolution in the sense. And they were very intolerant of anything else that was being done.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, that's like --

MR. McCRAY: And, as I said, the Beaux-Arts, over its 100 years [inaudible] had been through all the eclectic styles. So it didn't believe that any one thing was the absolute answer.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, the proselytizers have to be focused.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah, it was typical of the mood, of the era.

MR. CUMMINGS: So what did you intend? You went to Yale and you hoped to come out and go into architecture. But you have these museum classes in art history and all this other influence going on.

MR. McCRAY: I was dangerously diversified.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, did that start making you think about different things, or were you still fairly focused on architecture?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I was focused on architecture. I was student president of the architectural school last year and it was a very painful year, because we were making the transition from the Beaux-Arts to modern and Dean Meeks, who was a perfectly extraordinary man, that was the dean, was remarkably open minded, considering all the blasphemies that were leveled against the Beaux-Arts at that time. And he was confronted by a problem -- I was, you see, about six years older, due to this teaching, than the other people in the school. And I suppose it gave me a degree of tolerance that was helpful, to help him make the transition, I mean, as much as a student representative could. But I had to do an awful lot of persuading with the students to even tolerate the continuation of some of the faculty who were on tenure on the faculty. They had to find something to do for them and they were competent in architectural history or Chevy Stevens [phonetic] had been a senior partner of the great Beaux-Arts firms here in New York that had done elegant houses, had done the Frick Museum, things of that sort.

MR. CUMMINGS: That was Ken Mead [phonetic]? No, that was --

MR. McCRAY: No, it was the same ones that did the New York Public Library and did the [inaudible] Hall at Yale and quite a number of marvelous other things.

MR. CUMMINGS: I can't think what their name is. Hastings Kerry.

MR. McCRAY: That's who it was. Kerry Hastings.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: Here was this man who was brilliant in all of that vocabulary, who had been a classmate and had also been at Graham Hastings with Dean Meeks, that the students were demanding the removal of. And it was a very trying moment.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what brought the Bauhaus to Yale at that particular time?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I don't think it was expressly the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus, by then, had been at Harvard. And I expect the thing that did it more than anything else, in the last year that I was at Yale, which was '40-'41, and the last half of the preceding year, the war had started in Europe. And many of these brilliant Europeans were refugees in this country. And Wally Harrison, I think very intelligently, involved everyone that he could persuade to come to Yale and give seminars. So that we had Aalto and his first marvelous wife who was a great weaver and craftsman, we had Oson Fon [phonetic], we had Paul Nelson [phonetic], we had Gideon [phonetic], though he was not a refugee; he had come with a lot of them to be at Harvard. Jose Sert was a -- had left Spain. Scaparelli [phonetic] gave a marvelous course on color and interior, she was absolutely terrific. Laijes [phonetic]

gave a course in color in interiors and exteriors. Bucky Fuller was coming on very strong on the scene at that point. So it was really a very stimulating, exciting moment, actually. And it was all unrelated to Beaux-Arts. And everyone was -- in the school was -- all around at that time was awakening to a whole new world and it was inevitable that Beaux-Arts would collapse.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why do you Aalto never really caught on in this country the way so many other people did?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I don't think that he was -- and I think his work at home testifies to that -- that he perhaps was not even capable of assimilating the American syndrome of that time. I think if you have ever been to Finland, you understand that, where he is the totally revered artist, as a matter of fact, and where the approach to these things -- even though in the beginning of his career, he worked for a very rich client, the Gullichsens, were the ones who supported him in the construction of that beautiful house he did for them and also for the whole industrial complex that he did for them, workers' housing and so forth. He was more interested really even then in socialized planning than I think we were ready for. And even though he did that dormitory at Harvard, I don't think it was especially successful. I don't think he found our materials, native materials nearly as acceptable to his own idiom of architectural expression as he did his own beautiful woods in Finland. Also, I think that he had, by the time -- before, as a matter of fact, he came back to the States, he had been very much involved in city planning, in that he had done some very interesting studies for the organization or reorientation of certain areas of Helsinki. And you remember when the Russians attacked Helsinki, in the attack, his greatest monument was destroyed, that great library [inaudible]. And I don't think he recovered from all those things. Partly that was the reason. He also lost his wife during that time [inaudible]. But he certainly didn't adjust for various reasons. I wouldn't know what they all were.

[Pause in recording.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Okay, Side 2. Who else at Yale? You mentioned several people at Yale who were interesting. Who else there amongst instructors, for example, were memorable or helpful or --

MR. McCRAY: Well, Max Abramovitz was an occasional -- he was a junior member of Wally Harrison's firm at that point. Max was an occasional critic. Carroll Meeks, who was not in the school of architecture, but was a lecturer in architectural history, had a very inquiring mind and, for example, ended up doing that marvelous book on American railroads and another very good book on 19th century Italian architecture that no one had dreamt of doing up until that point. But Carroll was aware and awake to so many things in the architectural field that were more or less just swept over by the average historian or of which students were more or less unaware. I think Carroll had an impact on a lot of young people at the time who were in the school who later had become involved in the conservation of railway stations by some of the earlier architects and forth. He had a great appreciation for their actual quality and style.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, this was where you met Harrison, wasn't it?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who becomes a sort of character in this.

MR. McCRAY: Well, I was -- had always been very devoted to Harrison because he is such an extraordinary human being. And he was at, I think, the peak of his creative career at that point. He was -- had inherited the responsibility of completing Rockefeller Center when Raymond Hood died and had immense style and inventiveness in so many things, which has been lost in the recent sort of waves of criticism that have come upon him on his later works, particularly the Metropolitan Opera House. If you think, however, that Harrison brought together a rather complex group of people in the --

MR. CUMMINGS: U.N. Building.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- U.N. Building, the whole complex there, against all kinds of political and personal animosities, that he worked as successfully as he did with the technical people at a time when so many of the techniques for skyscrapers were being developed. I mean, the high-speed elevators at Rockefeller Center today are among the best in town, really. And the circulation and the concept of uniting all of the Rockefeller buildings underground was a great innovation in that time. And I think it is in these areas that we must appreciate Wally Harrison. He had an immense degree of invention, also, which he experimented with. He really is a very good draftsman from the artistic sense. He draws beautifully. And he has painted an immense amount of stuff, generally after Picasso or after those --

MR. CUMMINGS: For what reason? Why do you think?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think he has tried to find out what they were trying to do by trying to recreate these things. He has done, of course, a great deal of stuff that is unfamiliar. He was more or less a private architect to the

Rockefellers and has done houses on that estate. He has done things -- for example, Nelson's apartment at 810, at the time he did it, was an immensely challenging --

MR. CUMMINGS: That was the one with the Garner [phonetic] dining room and all that? Or was that --

MR. McCRAY: Well the Matisse over-mantle and Leger did the whole stairwell and that kind of thing. And Wally was working for the [inaudible] individual there and contributed some very handsome things. I mean, he -- Nelson did not want, you know, a Matisse in a traditional setting, I mean the traditional Matisse setting, the white wall. He wanted very elegant paneled walls and so forth and Wally had to design the paneling of a very elaborate nature for this. And he did marvelously elaborate free-form swimming pool for Pocantico and things like that for [inaudible]. So many of his -- so much of his work is still unknown. He did private houses for the family up in the Pocantico area, houses, some of which are quite beautiful. He did a very experimental house for himself out in Cold Spring Harbor. He bought and erected that house that [inaudible] and I forget who the German or maybe he was Swiss architect had at the world's fair in 1939. That was erected as his guesthouse out in the country. And he has been -- though Wally is in his 80s, he has been very inventive with all of the things he has done. Certainly some of them were not successful. But I do think that Ada Louise [phonetic] and -- particularly has been out outrageously critical without knowing the great deal about his overall contribution. I mean, take the -- for example, the International Building in [inaudible] with that great entrance that -- the escalators, that was one of the first monumental uses of escalators as an inviting means of ascent in a public building --

MR. CUMMINGS: And also a great lobby space.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah and huge and beautiful detailing of the -- and I mean he and Nelson dreamed up having Rivera do the -- what later Sert redid, the plaque that Lachez [phonetic] and a number of American artists and European artists were involved in the decoration of a lot of the early buildings. I mean, it's quite surprising that those buildings done early in the '30s were decorated by Lachez, Ruiz. And if you look at the l'Art Deco detail of the Music Hall or the part of it that has survived in the Rainbow Room, they was a quite high degree of attainment in that style, which was the rage at the time it was done. I have a very warm spot in my heart for it because of many reasons.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, you worked with him --

MR. McCRAY: I worked with him a lot.

MR. CUMMINGS: After the war -- which we will get to.

MR. McCRAY: And he had a hell of a time at the Metropolitan in all kinds of internal politics, of which you can't excuse him from a lot of things he did because [inaudible] I mean you think that today the Metropolitan Opera House, that the boxes are draped with gold lame which Mrs. Beaumont [phonetic] added to the architectural design. It is a bit -- for an architect to stomach.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's true, that's true.

MR. McCRAY: Can I say things like this on your --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, sure. Absolutely. Well, what -- because that's what happened. Now, what happened though after Yale, the war came along and you went into American Field Service. Well, you did something else before that. But what did you intend to do when you finished Yale?

MR. McCRAY: Oh, I intended to follow the architectural profession. But you must remember in '41 that the architectural profession had absolutely come to a halt. All materials had been commandeered by the government.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And most of the architectural firms -- architectural firms in the first place were decimated by the draft in various ways and crucial materials had been commandeered for other purposes. And the architectural firms were sending out their most experienced people to do installations for Army and Navy [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: So before I had a chance to think about this, however, on graduation, Wally Harrison asked me if I would like to come down to Washington and work on the interchange of [inaudible] Inter-American Art and Cultural Exchange Program that Wally was responsible for as a deputy coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, that's the whole Nelson Rockefeller thing?

MR. McCRAY: That was a war agency created by -- a government agency that came to be known, quite improperly, I think, as the Rockefeller Office. And Nelson, I think, did -- the Rockefellers at that time had obviously considerable interest in Latin America, oil interests particularly in Venezuela had already been acquired. And Nelson had traveled there and I suppose other members of the family, for that matter. But Nelson had enough of a familiarity with it for [inaudible] to have tapped him to do that job. And Wally, who Nelson has always fallen very heavily on --

MR. CUMMINGS: That's true. I asked him once about that and didn't get a very enlightening answer, though.

MR. McCRAY: You mean Wally?

MR. CUMMINGS: No, I asked [inaudible].

MR. McCRAY: I don't know whether you knew, but Abby Rockefeller, Nelson's older sister, who is the oldest member of the family, was married to Wally's wife's brother, so there was a relationship there.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: And old Mr. Rockefeller had the most tremendous confidence in Wally before Nelson.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. So there was a long, complex association.

MR. McCRAY: And Wally, who is such an immensely modest man, has always played down any reference to his being a -- too close to the family. He is close to the family, there is no question about that. But I mean, it has been used against him in such unkind ways, just nasty ways, references.

MR. CUMMINGS: I think that's sort of normal that an association with a powerful family like that, everybody is going to say -- they're not going to say, isn't it marvelous --

MR. McCRAY: Is resentful.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yes. Now, what did you do -- because you left New Haven then and then when the to Washington, right?

MR. McCRAY: I went to Washington. And at that time, there was a very interesting group of people in the coordinating office, such as Agnes Rin [phonetic], who was at Vasser, Phil Adams, who was later at the Cincinnati Museum; Carlton Spriggs [phonetic], Henry Allen Moe in the scholarship areas; Bishop -- I can't remember his first name -- in the literary field. Most of the people who had written about Latin America were involved. So that there sprang up -- the acceleration of these things is amazing. It couldn't happen except in wartime that things happened quite as fast as they did. But there was this sense of urgency, a great deal was produced in a short time. There was an urge to -- I shouldn't even say regain, but to establish for the first time some kind of respect among Latin Americans for some kind of cultural tradition, of which they had no awareness in the states. I mean, France and Germany and England and Italy and Japan were culturally more entrenched, I believe, than we were. And there was this effort --

MR. CUMMINGS: Italy, maybe.

MR. McCRAY: Oh, and the Germans, certainly, the Germans were then. And the French. After all, French was the second language in most of Latin America then. But the -- the effort was made to start sending down ballet companies, [inaudible] company was sent down. An elaborate exhibition of contemporary art was sent to all of the capitals, practically and accompanying docents were sent with it. Peggy Bernier [phonetic] was -- Peggy Riley [phonetic] in those days, and accompanied those exhibitions in some of their travels, giving lectures on American art overall. And then there were lesser things sent to smaller towns [inaudible] in some cases. While I was there, we took -- mountains of material had been done with WPA and organized marvelous print and photography shows out of the accumulation of warehouses of stuff that were really just being dissipated at that point. Down in Guatemala, I took quite an elaborate exhibition of the sketches -- the sketches that were made for the murals in public buildings, quite a large exhibition was made of them.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, the fair there or something?

MR. McCRAY: It was a fair. And I was made the mission of the thing, right out of Yale, sent down to do this thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Time to start.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what was that whole fair, though?

MR. McCRAY: It was primarily a trade fair. But it had this huge section on mural decorations in government buildings. And in absolutely nothing flat, I went around and solicited from Bergdorf's, I believe -- it's funny to think of it now -- and [inaudible] and Saks and Lord and Tailor's and Abercrombie's some gilt edged places and the publishing houses and the recording houses and asked them for -- RCA, for example, for phonographs and television -- not television -- radio and the recordings that they had made, and we had experts like Carlton Spriggs Smith [phonetic] and Lomax and others select recordings of folk music and American music and so forth. And as a matter of fact, I wanted to but didn't succeed in getting something that I feel very strongly about to this day, in the case of recordings, taking brilliant recordings by American orchestras of western music wherever it was done, trying to prove that we were a cultivated group of people. And Steuben glass had a lot of fancy glass, really sort of upper 5th Avenue --

MR. CUMMINGS: Fair --

MR. McCRAY: Fair -- storefronts in Guatemala City. Really very strange.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that's amazing. But now what -- you know, because this was the beginning of your international cultural adventures.

MR. McCRAY: Well, this was a job to be done, you see, that was overtaking you at a mile a minute. And then we did, after that, quite a number of educational expeditions that were done in multiple copies, let's say 100, and were done in the languages of Latin America, in Spanish --

MR. CUMMINGS: Now what would a theme be of one of these?

MR. McCRAY: Well, we did one because we were hoping to get to the common man, called Man and the Land, which was a marvelous photographic exhibition, panel exhibition, that used a great deal of the Farm Security Administration material on the abuse of the land and then great Ansel Adams and whatnot -- the materials were just fabulous at that time of the wild and virgin parts of our landscape. It was more or less an environmental show, when you think about it, pleading that people take care of their land and not follow the American way, letting -- devastating --

MR. CUMMINGS: Kind of a negative educational project.

MR. McCRAY: Then we did a series on history of American art, which was architecture, decorative arts, painting, sculpture. We did some small painting exhibitions that went down, of original works. We did exhibitions on well-designed objects and -- and some very little film was sent at that point.

MR. CUMMINGS: But where would you exhibit these now in various countries?

MR. McCRAY: Well, that depended. We had -- you see, everything was going at such a rate that we had not any comprehensive directory of what facilities were or where they existed or agencies that might carry out installations and things of this sort. And as experience developed, we found out that, as a matter of fact, there was not the know how, or the laws were antiquated and we would end up with stuff being held in customs for years, and all kinds of things. And we learned the hard way. But then gradually, people would go out and try to work these things out locally with local governments and so forth. I suppose, because we were after all a government agency, that we resorted most to the State Department representation. There was no USIS or [inaudible] information in Latin America, you see, at that time. And we built up over a period of time not a very satisfactory list of people because they simply didn't have the experience to handle these things. So that for example when we finally put together print shows from the WPA stuff, these were made as presentation sets and we explored sometimes by visiting and sometimes by consulting people here who were familiar with the local situation, or even with the embassy or with, in some cases, the directors of the existing institutions to find out what their facilities were, if they had collections of prints and drawings, if they have adequate place to show them and so forth and so on. And then we drew up rather careful instructions as to how they should be done. And they were all rather carefully matted properly, hinged properly and boxed properly and production for the show was already printed and they were sent off. And were given to the institution. That was --

MR. CUMMINGS: How successful do you think they were, the series of various exhibitions?

MR. McCRAY: It's very difficult to say. I think that the level of attainment at that time in general was rather low in Latin America. You have to except Mexico and Brazil and Cuba and a few places -- Argentina, where there was a good deal of activity. It was still -- I think that the main criticism may have been that it was too American in a sense. The criticism that was made by the European trips, that we were still doing illustrative art, that was, we were still doing -- I remember the French deploring Harper, for example, they called him a calendar artist, who just had no sense of making a transition of that kind of subject matter into an artistic expression. But in general, the materials that went down to the average institutions there, I think, were very gladly welcomed and formed an American section to their collections and so forth. And I think one important aspect of this is it generated

among the French and among the British -- not the Germans by then because they were pretty well knocked out -- it generated their supplying similar materials so that it helped them develop their holdings in this sphere at that time.

MR. CUMMINGS: I have often wondered why the cultural relationship with Central and South America has always been so vague in this country.

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think it's tragic that it has never been followed through. There are quite a number of things discovered, I think, in this brief program. If they had been followed up, we would have been further along than we are. I think that it fell back into the hands of [inaudible] at the Pan American Union who certainly was a man of great goodwill and great familiarity with what was being done.

MR. CUMMINGS: But it's all been so parochial, it's so --

MR. McCRAY: And the tragedy is that it is so parochial that there is no reciprocation on this side.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: That you could not bring exhibitions in. Now, we did bring an exhibition of paintings from Chile which was shone at the Toledo Museum and two or three other places. And it was regarded by most of the institutions that showed it as a gesture toward the war more than anything else. They were doing it to help the cause rather than any special --

MR. CUMMINGS: But just generally, one knows very little about the literature or the music.

MR. McCRAY: No, very little.

MR. CUMMINGS: One is attacked by the folk art all the time in a commercial boutique sense, but --

MR. McCRAY: I think in general, the sad thing is that the -- the quantity and quality of it is [inaudible] still. That's been --

MR. CUMMINGS: Somebody once said to me that cultures go around the world parallel, not up and down --

[End of Disk 2]

MR. CUMMINGS: -- cultures go around the world parallel, not up and down. And I --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think the situation might be culture as well as everything else that happens [inaudible] that it could be much further along, I don't know how much further.

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, I have always found in my experience of shipping art back and forth that I had in the early '60s, it was just unbelievable. I mean, the embassy would say one thing and then the customs people would say something else and then the shipper would say something else and this and that and mysterious charges would appear for mysterious bills and nobody seemed to know how to get anything done, what they were doing.

MR. McCRAY: For example, the impact example of the impact, for example, of something like the [inaudible] which was after all undertaken privately by the [inaudible] immense amounts of money were spent in creating really just over night a huge international and recurring exhibitions that were done in immensely grand style. I mean, [inaudible] huge building that was eventually turned over for the [inaudible]. And it was an awful lot of what had been regarded or is regarded as first rate art of that period sent to some Sao Paulo and a great many more or less of the intelligentsia from the Latin American countries visited those [inaudible]. Well, the majority of them had already visited Paris [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: But the general public --

MR. McCRAY: So the general public, except for the immediate Brazilian public, I mean the rest of Latin America, alas, the painters and so forth, did not or were not able to flock to this thing. After all, it's a pretty big place to get around in. It was rather incredible that it was sustained as one of the [inaudible] and it's still sustained. I don't know how it has been holding up lately. But it was extraordinary -- for example, I went down to the second [inaudible]. We had been asked to help with the first one and had not been able -- didn't have the money to do it and didn't do it. The request came at the last minute, anyhow. But in that first show, I mean the second one, there was a large -- we did the exhibition. There was a large [inaudible] exhibition and there was a large exhibition of a sampling of American contemporary painters at that point. But a large, large [inaudible] collection. The big [inaudible] went down on loan. The [inaudible] lent it to them, which we had the responsibility of getting down there and stretched and unstretched -- a terrifying experience. And they had a huge Picasso

exhibition, all in this show. And then thereafter, we took terribly impressive shows there. The Pollock show, it's difficult to think of now, but we took the Pollock show almost intact from the Museum of Modern Art show to Sao Paulo and then traveled it in Europe the whole year afterwards. And you can't dream of that happening nowadays.

MR. CUMMINGS: It would cost a fortune, for one thing.

MR. McCRAY: Pollock had just died at that point. We had already started preparing that show and were terribly criticized, of course, to be sending a dead painter who was not eligible for a prize. But it seemed to me like it was an appropriate time to put a statement on the record about Pollock, because it was not likely to be done later. And it really did have an impact. But outside of the Bienal, and much less effective things in Argentina and Mexico, there has never been any great activity. They send isolated things to the Pan American Union, even to this day, Gomez still works on and is sympathetic toward. But --

MR. CUMMINGS: Just a different cultural interest, this focus.

MR. McCRAY: It just hasn't attained the vigor that it must have --

MR. CUMMINGS: But now you spent about two years, '41 to '43 --

MR. McCRAY: I was doing that. I had -- this is rather personal, but when I came back from that exhibition in Guatemala, I stopped in Mexico for a rest of a week. And the first day, I was out, I went to [inaudible] the weekend and was having lunch when the news of Pearl Harbor was flashed in front of us -- not in front of us; over the radio. And I called immediately to see if I could get on a plain the next day, which I was able to. Pan American says, you have the last flight for two weeks.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, my goodness.

MR. McCRAY: And came back to Washington because at VMI, I had had a commission, which I knew would be activated shortly. And I knew General Marshal slightly and I knew [inaudible] the secretary of the general staff. Came back to Washington and said that I was ready to activate my commission and did they have any suggestions? And they said, we would like you to join a group of people that we are sending to Australia in intelligence. Well, in a matter of four or five days, I was ordered to Fort Meade, where we were being groomed for this job. And in two weeks we were to depart -- to depart. And I the day before was ordered to Walter Reed, where they discovered I had a lung fault which, at the time, was diagnosed as a spot. But any rate, then they cancelled my appointment and I lost my commission and became eligible for the draft, which I was then called up on five times. And it was just a constant leaving the office, going back to the office. Because after a few days, they would find these papers and say, well, why didn't you tell us? And I'd say, well, I did the first three times and you paid no attention to it, so I'd let you find out yourself. Any rate --

MR. CUMMINGS: So really, you were in Washington, still?

MR. McCRAY: I stayed on in Washington until this drafting thing recurred so frequently that I called Steve Galatti, who was the head of the American field service and asked him if there was a chance of getting in that. And said, oh, yes, we can deliver you in Europe in two weeks. And sure enough, on -- the end of the second week, I was on my way to --

[Telephone ringing.]

MR. McCRAY: Can you stop this a minute?

[Pause.]

MR. CUMMINGS: So you were delivered to where in the American Field Service?

MR. McCRAY: So, I was delivered to Naples and we joined the British army, since we could not go into the American army as volunteers. And we went up to [inaudible] immediately after learning how to drive in the parks of Naples in the dark on rainy -- dark, rainy winter nights, and went directly up to the front and coped with the Eighth Army's variety of colonial troops, everything from Indian Sikhs to New Zealanders to South Africans to --

MR. CUMMINGS: Everybody.

MR. McCRAY: Australians, Canadians and everything else. And remained there until the attack on Bologna, and we were moved over to Lovarno and put on a ship, sailed across to Marseilles and went up into France for the main drive into Germany. And we were dispersed. I was first dispersed into France in very rapid succession, in January and then finally to Holland, where I was attached to a -- one of the group of Toulon merchants and

sailors who had escaped when France fell and had been training in England, the commandos. It was fascinating, when I reached this assignment, it was on St. Philip's [inaudible] which had been isolated, they had destroyed the dikes around there, so you had to take a boat over to it. And I went in to report to the commanding officer who was a Frenchman, and his first remark was, I have seen you before. And we compared notes for a little bit and I said that I -- he said, have you -- do you frequent the area around Rockefeller Center? And I said, well, occasionally. And he had some contracts at the Museum of Modern Art, as a matter of fact, during the job in Washington. And he said, well, I was an intern at the Morgan Guaranty Trust. He was involved in -- I guess [inaudible] and this was a very strange introduction to my military career in Holland, but a very pleasant one.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you pick the American Field Service?

MR. McCRAY: Well, it was a way to get into action and to get into it, as I was inclined to want to, in pacifist areas. And I knew that they had been very [inaudible]. I had some other friends who had had physical disability that had been able to get into it. As a matter of fact, before I got into the American Field Service, I tried to get into the American Red Cross who, because of the physical disability, would not accept me. And it's interesting in retrospect that the person in charge of that program was John Rockefeller [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: In the Red Cross?

MR. McCRAY: In the Red Cross. And he was sitting in Washington, recruiting people for Red Cross.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you know, I have always been intrigued by the American Field Service. I guess because I have known several people who were involved with it. A couple of them are really rather eccentric.

MR. McCRAY: Oh, I think it goes further than that. There were a great many that were quite eccentric.

MR. CUMMINGS: And I often wonder how they survived. Circumstances [inaudible] organization --

MR. McCRAY: Well, it had the most tremendous esprit, and they were all volunteers; they were in it because they wanted to be. There was no compensation for being in it. You got seven dollars a month and you had to provide everything for yourself except food and the ambulance or the abandoned dwelling that you laid down your sleeping bag in. And it was an adventure really. By the time I went into the Field Service, my office, which was still in the Latin American program was housed in the National Gallery and I had to tell David Findley [phonetic] that I was planning to leave very quickly. And we sat down and talked most of the afternoon about this. Because David said, I had asked him [inaudible] two weeks and he said, that's awfully short notice. And I said, but I have an excellent assistant that I think could take over, who was Margaret Garrick [phonetic] who indeed was very able. And he said, well, I can understand this because my great regret in the First World War was that I never got involved in it, and I felt eliminated from the great experience of my generation.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: And I don't know whether that was in the back of my head too, or not. But I had also had a number of friends in the Field Service who, by then, three rather good friends had been killed in it, all of them Virginians whom I had known at Yale. And it was -- you are quite right, a group of the most eccentric people, marvelous people, I must say, many of them, and absolutely dedicated, some of them very able, some of them very disorganized. But immensely willing to do what they could.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what did you do? You drove an ambulance there?

MR. McCRAY: I just drove an ambulance. And you were rarely involved in anything except driving an ambulance. Interestingly enough, the first assignment -- on the first assignment, the first time on the front, we were at an advance dressing station, which is where this wounded were carried back by litter for temporary emergency treatment, then were given morphine or something and their dressings were disinfected and then they were put on an ambulance and moved as quickly as possible into a very minor field hospital. The first time that I carried a patient on my ambulance was right after we got up from Naples and we had been put on this with no experience, no behind-the-line experience. And suddenly we were right at the front, even under the trajectory of fire, the British, the Cold Stream Guards that we were attached to had their tanks behind us and we were in a kind of no man's land. And the roads had all been mined around us so that the only way that you could travel day or night was to travel between these white tapes that the sappers had laid down where they had hopefully explored the rest of the road for mines. And it was on a dark rainy night, most of the tapes had been muddied by the rain. And it was really one of the most tense situations I can remember existing in. But we went nevertheless through this, terrified that we would make the wrong turn, because the German lines were just a matter of three-eights of a mile or something from the road that we took in [inaudible] where the archbishop's palace had been made into this temporary hospital. And there had been a good deal of activity that night. So there were more casualties than the accommodation. And the accommodation was very simple anyhow. They just had horses and you put the stretchers right on the horses to make an operating table. And one of the doctors looked at me for a

minute and said -- and handed me a porcelain basin and said, get this for water and take these and cut off the dead flesh off -- this boy had had his leg blown off, his foot. And cut off this dead flesh. Well, in the first place, we had been told specifically that we should not do this thing, that we were not to do anything except drive. But on the other hand, you could see that they were desperate. So, I took these surgical things and clipped this burned flesh off his leg. And when the doctor came up and said that's fine, I went out side and was desperately ill. But I didn't collapse until after I had done my job. But it was quite an initiation, I might add. I never had to do it again, which was fortunate.

MR. CUMMINGS: Quite an experience. So you spent, what, two years or a year with them?

MR. McCRAY: Right after the confusion of the war, V-E Day, we were hustled across the Channel to Cardiff, those of us who had not served out our term of two years, and put on a Greek boat manned my an East Indian crew and set forth to India, to Bombay.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, my heavens.

MR. McCRAY: And, you know, that was in late July and we went through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea when it was so hot two people -- I don't know that they died from heat; there were some wounded people on board -- but by the time we got to Aden, we had two casualties on board. And the heat was so intense on the Red Sea that the captain had ordered everybody on the ship on the top two decks to sleep at night because it was so hot. But in Bombay, we were hustled off very quickly to Secunderabad, that was a great military -- the center of England's major military establishment in India. And were given some training to -- in jungle warfare, so that we could theoretically very shortly go off to Burma. And we were then moved to Madras, where we were to catch a boat. And the day or the day after -- we never did know -- that we were expecting to go, the atom bomb dropped, so of course that was all abandoned. And we sat there for some time. And then the English who, because you are a volunteer, had agreed to give you first priority on return home, the commanding general asked to talk with the Field Service and explained what was perfectly true, that they were totally done in by the traffic problems bringing all of the British Empire people from Japanese prison camps and all of the areas of Southwest Asia -- Southeast Asia, I should say, back to hospitals and back to their homes. And this included Australians, god knows, English, and everything else, Indians, Malaysians. So we agreed -- they said, if you will take -- if you will delay a month, we will give you a month's round trip ticket that you can use anywhere, a first class ticket on the railways anywhere in India. So this was quite a challenge to a lot of us and so we took advantage of it. And when we came back, they were still confronted by the same problem. So we ended up -- those of us asked for duty so that we would not absolutely rot waiting for this.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And a group of us went up to Calcutta to the repatriation center and helped with bringing incoming families and incoming people, prisoners of war -- Calcutta was just a mass, they had taken the Maidan, that immense park in the middle of the city, and covered it with Quonset huts, hospitals. And even though they had some assistance from the American Air Force, they were totally bogged down in getting those people through. And then there were an immense number of families that had just appeared out of nowhere. And in many instances, they had sat it out in India, or had come there a year before or longer, to the day when people would be coming back home again.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: And were really very -- given the great throne room, sort of ballroom of the old viceroy's palace in Calcutta as a working space for these hundreds, thousands of people milling around. And without any office supplies at all, we tried to set up a comparative index -- there were no manifests that ever came off the planes. The planes came and we listed people as they came off the plane, it was that mad.

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible].

MR. McCRAY: Well, we continued to do that up until Thanksgiving and then started our way home again. Stopping along the way --

MR. CUMMINGS: Here and there?

MR. McCRAY: -- with a plane that didn't promise to ever get us there. Had to stop in Tel-Aviv for four days to have a motor rebuilt and in Benghazi to do the same thing, in Marseilles to do the same thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: But this is an English airplane?

MR. McCRAY: And it was a bomber. It didn't have any --

MR. CUMMINGS: Accoutrements?

MR. McCRAY: Didn't have any windows. We were inside.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you like being attached to the British army?

MR. McCRAY: Well, very much. I really admired the British, incredibly during the war. They were so -- in contrast to our own people, they were incredibly disciplined and they had been through a lot longer struggle than we had. But their discipline was simply extraordinary and their spirit was amazing. There were an awful lot of unhappy Americans, particularly in the Italian campaigning.

MR. CUMMINGS: In what way?

MR. McCRAY: Well, they were tired and wanted to go home. As if everybody else didn't want to.

MR. CUMMINGS: And they lacked discipline --

MR. McCRAY: They lacked discipline. The Army, partly -- I mean, they are little things. But the Army may have in time had to accept it, but for example, the British army every morning came on duty shaved, with his shoes shined and his uniform cleaned, washed or something. And the Americans would go as long as a week without shaving and then would be issued a new uniform. So they did nothing about their -- and that was reflected in their behavior, I must say.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: And it was something that I don't know whether the Army found this was the only solution they could make or whether it was just a lack of discipline to begin with. It was very strange the way it worked, though. But they were very slow about gathering themselves together and were very pesky about Red Cross privileges in the most out-of-the-way places. The English had their little Cadbury bar of chocolate issued once a week, ate the most ungodly food and ate rancid butter from Australia of two years' duration. I mean, they endured a great deal, maybe which they shouldn't have. But it nevertheless showed a concentration on something more than just personal comfort. And there was an awful lot of bellyaching among the Americans, and just about those insignificant things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, they were accustomed to those.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: So anyway, in 1945, you came back to where, to Washington, to New York?

MR. McCRAY: To New York. We were put on the Queen Elizabeth II -- or I, I guess it was.

MR. CUMMINGS: I, that was the old Queen.

MR. McCRAY: The old one, and sent to New York after waiting in London for a couple of weeks. And when we came into New York, there was a stevedore strike and we couldn't come to New York so we were in the late winter -- I mean, late fall, moved into Halifax, where there was some question of whether it would be frozen by the time we got there or not. And we finally landed in a terrifying wind that was pushing the old Elizabeth right against the pier in a scary sort of way. We were put on a very elegant Canadian National, given private staterooms all the way, arrived in New York. And coming through New York, I had a day to kill and I was going to the Museum of Modern Art, in the revolving door, I ran into Wally Harrison. And he said, where have you come from? He said, when you are straight -- I had, alas, acquired a severe case of amoebic dysentery in India and the doctor said I would have to be hospitalized for a while. So he said, when you are well again, come see me here in New York. And I did go back to Virginia where there was a war hospital, an Army hospital, and did go into hospital and stayed for several months there. And then came back to New York. And went to work with Wally Harrison [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that's how you got -- in the revolving door. That's incredible.

MR. McCRAY: I'm taking too much time on all of this.

MR. CUMMINGS: One other thing here, sort of going backwards, but you had mentioned about the National Gallery. Was that Inter-American program always housed in the national gallery in Washington?

MR. McCRAY: No.

MR. CUMMINGS: It had been moved there?

MR. McCRAY: Well, that's a good question, because the -- early in the game of the coordinator's office, Sumner Wells, who was the Under Secretary of State, and about -- he was older than Nelson, but he was a very brilliantly trained diplomat and competitive with Nelson in a way -- questioned the White House about the suitability of the political clout that a cultural program would have being in a war agency rather than under the direction of the State Department.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: And this little battle on rather friendly terms went on for some time. But eventually, Wells won out and had the appropriation, though it was already made to the coordinator's office, which was a war agency, had the part of the budget that provided for cultural exchange transferred back -- not back, but to the State Department. And the State Department, in order to make its -- to establish its identity -- it had no facilities for this office -- approached the National Gallery, which was very young in those days and had lots of empty space.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see.

MR. McCRAY: And asked David Finley if they would accommodate the office there. So we were moved into the National Gallery.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. It really had nothing to do with the gallery?

MR. McCRAY: No.

MR. CUMMINGS: You were just housed there.

MR. McCRAY: We were housed there. We were under the direction of David, however, Finley, instead of the State Department. The State Department, as a matter of fact, rarely if ever had anything to do with us.

MR. CUMMINGS: How long did that program continue?

MR. McCRAY: It was terminated, oh, about -- just a year before the war was over, I think. It was sloughed off very rapidly when the outcome of the war was becoming more evident.

MR. CUMMINGS: Was there any relationship between that and the Inter-American Fund at the Modern for acquisition of art from South America?

MR. McCRAY: No.

MR. CUMMINGS: It was just a coincidence of names and patrons and things like that?

MR. McCRAY: As a matter of fact, the Inter-American Fund at the Museum, I think, came after the war.

MR. CUMMINGS: It did. But it just seemed to be --

MR. McCRAY: It was a small amount of money that Nelson has replenished from time to time to buy works of art [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Right. Okay, well, why don't we stop --

[Pause of recording.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Side three, the 12th of September 1972, Paul Cummings talking to Porter McCray, in his apartment in New York City. I think the coincidence of running into Wally Harrison seems to have sort of opened up a whole series of events. But did you have any project in mind when you came out of the American Field Service? Did you have any specific direction, or were you just getting out and looking around?

MR. McCRAY: I had just gotten out that day and I was rather ill with amoebic dysentery, which I was hospitalized with upon return home for something like six months. And it was during that time that I thought [inaudible] planned to do. And it still was foremost in my mind that I would do architecture. So that it was logical when I came back to New York, having written Wally Harrison, that I went there to work for a while.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what did you do when you --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I was given a rather strange assignment, I think, because it was not a very realistic -- did not give me a very realistic impression of what architecture was. At the time, the site that now holds the U.N. Headquarters had been assembled by Bill Zeckendorf, the great manipulator of real estate in town at the time, and he had employed Wally Harrison along with a number of other experts in the city to draw up a -- to draw up

imaginary projects on how that site might be developed as television city. It was to become a rival to what --

MR. CUMMINGS: RCA?

MR. McCRAY: -- we sometimes called Radio City, which was Rockefeller Center. And it's rather significant in a way for that whole year I was the sort of liaison between Zeckendorf and the meetings that he held with prospective investors in that project. And Wally Harrison's office which each day, or every few days, tried to alter the presentation drawings to make it more nearly reflect what different interested parties might think they wanted on that site.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MR. McCRAY: And at that time, it was interesting that there was a new philharmonic hall projected for the area and possibly an opera house. And as you well know, that project after that year, very shortly after its first year, when the Karl Buzier [phonetic] report was submitted to the U.N. proposing that Westchester County be the site for the U.N. Headquarters, the city of New York became very busy and wanted it very much within the city. And Mr. Rockefeller, John D., Jr., accepted from Nelson and Wally Harrison primarily the recommendation that he purchase the site that Zeckendorf had been promoting for television city and offer it to the U.N. for a site within the city, and that is what was done. And in a weekend, the purchase was completed. Mr. Rockefeller, I think, paid seven and a half million dollars for it. And check for seven and a half million was delivered on Monday, I believe, following a terrific charrette that we had in the office, converting all of the drawings that had been done for television city to make it look like the U.N. And of course, incidentally, Mr. Rockefeller eliminated an interesting competitor from television city, Rockefeller Center.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's one of the subtleties of the culture.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: But, you know, why do you think -- was Nelson interested in it for obvious reasons?

MR. McCRAY: Well, obvious or not -- not obvious, necessarily. Nelson was, I think, the son who was most closely related to Wally Harrison. After all, he was a brother-in-law by marriage. And Mr. Rockefeller, Jr., John Jr., had a great affection for Wally Harrison. And he had been used by the family to carry out, for example -- complete the Rockefeller Center and to do most of the work that was done for the family on various houses and so forth that were built. And Nelson was very active at the Museum of Modern Art at that time. Right after the war, he had come back and pitched in and was very close to Wally Harrison who was on the board of the museum, and they were keenly interested in the same -- they were both interested in modern art. Even in those days, Wally Harrison painted a great deal, which he continues to do, and collected a little bit, Leger and the kind of art of the period that had especially appealed to architects. And Nelson at the same time was buying in that period. And they had a great deal in common and that, as you know, relationship continued right through the Albany Mall and to a slight extent the Metropolitan Opera House.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, you spent about a year working with them, right, '46-'47?

MR. McCRAY: Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Through that part. Why -- what happened, the switch to the Modern? How did that come about?

MR. McCRAY: Well, you remember in Washington I had worked for Wally Harrison in the coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, which Nelson was the coordinator. And the Museum of Modern Art, Ella DeCorter [phonetic] had directed a program of circulating exhibitions at the Museum during the war. And at the end of the war, she had married the illustrator, Bob Osborn, and had left the Museum or was going to leave the Museum and they were searching for someone to take that department. And also in Nelson's mind, he wanted them to expand it with international, overseas activity. And he and Wally and Rene d'Harnoncourt who by then was the director approached me and asked if I would do this, and I was persuaded to.

MR. CUMMINGS: I like the way you say that. What does that mean, though?

MR. McCRAY: Well, it's very difficult to analyze now. Because certainly I didn't at the time think that it would become as final a separation from architecture as it proved to be.

MR. CUMMINGS: What had you thought it might have been?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I had been fascinated by the whole international cultural exchange experience that I had had in Washington with the Inter-American office, the Inter-American -- the coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, and I'm afraid that it had gotten in my blood a little bit.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you were susceptible --

MR. McCRAY: I was susceptible to their persuasion because I did really -- I had observed the effectiveness of cultural activities in Latin America and I felt rather strongly that they, particularly in the postwar years, that they were a very important element in promoting less prejudiced -- I don't know if I can call it less prejudiced understanding, but greater understanding with both friends and enemies who knew so little about American culture. I had become aware, for example, in the Inter-American office how totally unaware countries were of any cultural tradition or any even cultural prospects that we had in this country. The European countries had certainly culturally dominated Latin America. The French -- French was still the second language there.

MR. CUMMINGS: Italians, French --

MR. McCRAY: And there were large German entrenchments in various places. And, oh, I don't know, there were Japanese and all kinds of people, Portuguese, of course, in Brazil. Were well entrenched there when we got into the war. And it was only through that coordinator's office that they -- and the ultimate development and demonstration of the power of the country as a political and warmaking factor that they came to look to the north, I think, to the States with sometimes a kind of respect, sometimes a kind of fear of the great power that was developing to the north.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, the unknown which is so often fearful, too.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you think that office accomplished in Washington, the Inter-American?

MR. McCRAY: Well, through its programs which were inspired by some quite intelligent people, the late Agnes Rindge, for example, ambassador, took leave and she was an advisor to that program, and she was an immensely brilliant and very imaginative and open-minded person. Phil Adams who later went to Columbus was a member of the committee. Grace Morley [phonetic] who was at the San Francisco Museum, Rene d'Harnoncourt, Blakemore Godwyn [phonetic] who was the director of the Toledo Museum at that point, and Dan Rich and many other people were involved in for the first time exploring the culture of Latin America by making visits there and establishing professional contacts with museum people and art historians and so forth. John McAndrew was one of the architectural historians who was very effective. George Kubler from Yale. What was his name, from the Pennsylvania museum -- University Museum in Philadelphia wrote the [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, the anthropologist?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah, the anthropologist, who died, unfortunately, during the war. But Don Collier, for example, at the [inaudible] museum and many people.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who do you think, though, directly benefited from all of that? I mean, the war came along, so the --

MR. McCRAY: Well, you have to --

MR. CUMMINGS: It changed, right?

MR. McCRAY: -- bear in mind that the ambitions of the cultural program were originally conceived before we were involved. It was not, remember, until 1941 that we were directly involved. And this office had been set up by [inaudible] I'd say two years before that or maybe earlier. I should check that for you. But --

[End of Disk 3.]

[Disk 4.]

MR. McCRAY: But the absence of involvement in the war in the beginning provided a rather open situation in which efforts could be made to encourage cultural exchange. And for example, what is now the New York City Ballet Company, when Lincoln Kerstein [phonetic] was supporting it largely, went on a grand tour and it was quite an eye opener to Argentina -- to BA and Rio and cities like that, and Chili, Santiago, and Lima and so on, that this form of expression had developed to that degree in this country. There was an important exhibition of American painting that was sent to the major museums all around Latin America with different rather well qualified people accompanying those exhibitions. Peggy Bernier [phonetic], for example, accompanied -- she and her -- she was then Peggy Riley and her husband, Lou Riley [phonetic], accompanied that exhibition through the Caribbean area and Mexico City. And others popped up along the way and [inaudible] part of the way and Grace Morley part of the way and so on. That invited return exhibitions, a few. For example, the Chileans sent a contemporary show, which they called God and the Sea.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yes, right. You talked about that.

MR. McCRAY: The Mexicans sent a beautiful Pasada [phonetic] show and what is the name of the beautiful landscapeist, nineteenth century Mexican -- Vasquez is it? -- which was sent to the Brooklyn Museum and then circulated to other -- it was -- a rapport was established for the first time.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you think the influence was equal, back and forth? Or was it more leaving the United States to affect people there than what came up here?

MR. McCRAY: I can't answer that, personally, really objectively.

MR. CUMMINGS: Hard to tell?

MR. McCRAY: I think that it was quite an eye opener to some of the Americans. You must remember also that Rene d'Harnoncourt had organized under different auspices that immense Mexican show that was arranged from pre-Columbian right up to modern Mexican art. And that made a great impact, I think partly because it was as big as it was and as extensive as it was and shown in New York in a still very controversial institution. I think that the individual projects that occurred in the countries were really quite significant events, really. And I think that the truth was, which was if you go back to the situation in this country also at that time, the program was -- the exchange program was begun on a fairly broad scale where large exhibitions were sent to capitals and the same was true with the things that were sent here. And it became evident as we developed our program, particularly as our funds diminished, we could no longer undertake big ones, but we felt the need of sending smaller exhibitions to secondary cities, so that the influence that had been generated in the capitals and about which some of the people had read --

MR. CUMMINGS: Filtering down, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: -- could then gradually filter into other areas. It was just -- it's difficult to believe but it was also the period that I think still the Museum of Modern Art was doing a real missionary job in exporting modern art throughout this country to small museums and universities and things of that sort. That you can't claim is the -- that was exclusively the Museum of Modern Art's role because the American Federation had been established with a Carnegie grant --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, for years.

MR. McCRAY: And had done some very brilliant work earlier. And the Smithsonian shortly had started its program.

MR. CUMMINGS: But anyway, you went into circulating exhibitions with all of this background and, you know, it is interesting that you had taken a course at Yale some years before that in museum --

MR. McCRAY: In museum, right.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now it comes around again.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Sometimes the persistence of certain elements is fascinating. So what did you -- did you start the international activities that began there? What happened?

MR. McCRAY: No, the Museum went -- between the time that I went to the Museum and the time that I left the Museum to go to Europe to work for the Marshall Plan for a year.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: The Museum came upon one of its not infrequent economic crises and the word went out that programs were to be -- the budgets had to be cut, that staff had to be reduced and so forth. And since this did not fulfill the expectations with which I had come to the museum, I offered to resign and the -- Rene d'Harnoncourt said, we would like to give you a leave of absence so that you can reconsider if we are able to obtain the funds for an international program that we anticipate will be coming. So that was the basis on which I went abroad.

MR. CUMMINGS: But that was in 1950. What happened in '47 when you began there?

MR. McCRAY: When what?

MR. CUMMINGS: At the Modern? What happened when you began in 1947?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I began by --

MR. CUMMINGS: What was there to work with?

MR. McCRAY: There was the program, the circulating exhibitions, that [inaudible] was retiring from.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right. But that was domestic, pretty much, wasn't it?

MR. McCRAY: Which was domestic, largely.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. However, thanks especially I think to Curt Valentin and the [inaudible], Curt had, you know, introduced a great many younger Europeans to the New York public, certainly, and the collecting public around the country. And also the Americans, a great many of them, had been abroad and had seen a great many things that many of them may not have had opportunity to see, had there not been a war. And there was a very interesting amount of interest germinating among the young in the art and cultures of other countries. It was building without -- I mean, it was dormant -- it was not dormant, but it was generating. You could see that it was a growing thing and really needed response and needed stimulation. And the programs that we did in the circulating exhibition, I think, reflected that. We were able to borrow more stuff from Europe and at that time, we had the most extensive circulating activities that any of the other organizations had.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did -- you know, it's kind of hard -- the continuity here, I guess we just have to jump. Because you were there from '47 to '50 and then you went to the -- to the Marshall Plan.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: And those three years, what was the Museum like as a place to work? And the people who were there and --

MR. McCRAY: It was still a very intimate institution. The Museum staff was still infinitely smaller than it is now, and there were a great many -- most of the positions at the Museum were still filled by people that had started the thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Dorothy Barr and Dorothy Miller and --

MR. McCRAY: Dorothy Barr and Dorothy Miller and Dorothy Dudley and Monroe Wheeler was not there originally but -- Dick Papita [phonetic] and people like that were still on hand.

MR. CUMMINGS: Was Sobe [phonetic] there yet at that point? Now --

MR. McCRAY: Sobe was never on the staff.

MR. CUMMINGS: No, but he was --

MR. McCRAY: Active, a very active trustee. And was chairman of the acquisition committee of the museum, yes. There had been -- there were beginning to be ruminations between some of the trustees and, as you know, Rene had come in and ultimately had replaced Rene -- I mean Alfred as the director of the museum. But Alfred was totally sustained by Rene in his role as director of collections.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, he was still the spirit behind the whole institution.

MR. McCRAY: Yes. And cared very much about the standards of the institution. And it was still a time where there were volunteers working at the Museum. After all, when the Museum started, it had a great many people who were volunteering their services. Which, of course, like any institution gave the impression that the operation could go on for much less money than it could as the institution became more profess ionized. And we were beginning to pass into that phase. It was -- also, the Museum's emphasis had been slightly changed by the war. And this, you see, was right after the war.

MR. CUMMINGS: How do you mean that?

MR. McCRAY: Well, the Museum offered its services to various government agencies, for example, there was a hemisphere postal competition that the Museum had that was paid for by the coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. There was the -- Stake [phonetic] was very active; he was not in the Museum at that point. He was a commander in the Navy -- a captain in the Navy, rather, and lighted on the Museum to do the exhibition on the war in the Pacific. And that exhibition, for example, became multiplied many times and the resources of the Museum had to be spent on large government contracts that prepared those exhibitions to go out.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why did he use the Modern -- why did he use the Museum of Modern Art for that?

MR. McCRAY: Well, because I think they had done exhibitions that more nearly fulfilled his expectations than any other place. There was an exhibition done on war housing that was of interest to Europeans and it was sent to England by the Office of War Information. And various exhibitions came to the attention of the Office of War Information or the coordinator of Inter-American Affairs or the Army or the Navy or whatever it was, so that the Museum sort of re-geared itself not only to carry on its New York program, but to provide these other special services during the emergency.

MR. CUMMINGS: But in those three years, the '47 to '50 --

MR. McCRAY: It caused, let me add, the contracts for example that came in from the government to execute for these things made economic provision for the employment of a much larger staff to carry them out, to which there had to be ultimately an adjustment when the government contracts were terminated. That's what I meant by saying that the Museum was affected to some extent by the war. The character of the exhibitions was dictated to some extent, that war in the Pacific and some of them [inaudible] --

MR. CUMMINGS: What did you do -- to sort of talk about the actual exhibitions you worked on in those three years, were there some in process that you came and picked up? Or --

MR. McCRAY: Oh, yes. There was always an accumulation of exhibitions and we added to that each year. We also -- the exhibitions [inaudible] circulating at the time I came to the Museum had one group of exhibitions which I personally did not totally subscribe to, because I never have believed in the use of color reproductions as a means of communicating any very profound understanding of art. And there had been quite a number of exhibitions that were in the program at that point --

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible] by Carnegie, I think, wasn't it?

MR. McCRAY: I think maybe that was done with --

MR. CUMMINGS: ASA had similar things, too, going at one time.

MR. McCRAY: Of course, it was nothing like that extraordinary project that Carnegie did for universities by giving them permanently sets of these things. But there were these that we were trying to revolve out of -- eventually out of service as soon as they could earn back the initial investment in them. And we also had learned a great deal during the war experience about the preparation of exhibitions that made their -- panel exhibitions, for example, architectural shows of that sort. The Museum had worked quite extensively with researchers and technicians and all kinds of [inaudible] and all kinds of new mountings and all kinds of things. For example, some that were sent out into the field to the Armed Services were made to withstand most anything. And some of that had been developed by technicians working -- technicians in studios and so forth, but working with someone guiding them in the Museum. And this meant that we could plan, for example, architectural exhibitions that would last longer, they would travel more durably and that sort of thing. It was a period during which a good deal was learned about -- it was also a period when we were refining the design of all the cases that we used so that there would be an absolute minimum amount of a chance of error in repacking. And that was considerably refined.

MR. CUMMINGS: What did you do about the ideas for exhibitions? Did you develop them? Did they come from your editorial staff, from outside sources?

MR. McCRAY: They came from everywhere. We had a question of trying to keep a balance in the areas in which the museum was interested and in which the collections were represented. At that time, though it has since been discontinued, there was a theater collection in the Museum, which has been incorporated -- the part of it that still remains in the Museum is incorporated now in the prints -- in the drawings section. But the forming of a program each year was based on what you had going.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: It was dictated to some extent by the kind of material that could be borrowed. Because we borrowed a great number of the pictures and prints that were in exhibitions from private sources, not from the museum. The print collections at the museum were always extensive enough to generate a great many print exhibitions but there were not enough paintings that were available for longer periods of time. The great problem of setting up exhibitions of original works of art was to get their loan for two years.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And that took an awful lot of work and persuasion.

MR. CUMMINGS: Worse now.

MR. McCRAY: Of course, it's much worse now.

MR. CUMMINGS: Almost impossible sometimes.

MR. McCRAY: And I will tell you an amusing incident that occurred, for example, in that role of particularly the color reproduction things. I come from a town near University of Virginia and at that time John Canaday was the head of the art history department.

MR. CUMMINGS: After the war, right, yes. Right.

MR. McCRAY: And as a nearby neighbor, and Charlie Smith, who was from my home town, having been a teacher there for many years, I was also a friend of the museum at the University of Virginia. Something like five dollars a year. And John Canaday used to come to New York once a year to arrange subscriptions to our exhibitions and others. And he usually called a week or so before he was coming. And I had been looking at the program at the University of Virginia from my own point of view, realized that Canaday for several years had taken nothing but color reproduction shows. And from the standpoint of a friend of the museum, I felt -- well, I was curious enough to tally the amount of money that was spent on the rentals and the transportation -- they were heavily framed and expensive to move -- and came up with a sum of several hundred dollars. And just out of curiosity before he arrived, I went over to Curt Valentin's office one day and said, Curt, I have I think it was $585 or something like that. What prints could I get for that amount of money here? He threw out a lot of prints, including Clays and Picassos and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah. In those days, you could buy everything.

MR. McCRAY: -- [inaudible]. So I selected a group of prints, rather handsome things, and took them back to the office. And when Canaday came in, I said, you know, as a -- looking at this from a friend's point of view, I thought it would be interesting for you to see what the museum could have acquired with the money that you spent on the color reproductions.

MR. CUMMINGS: What did he say to that?

MR. McCRAY: He was absolutely livid. And he said, this is meddling with my teaching procedures.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, he being an ex-Marine officer, I'm sure --

MR. McCRAY: He never really came back again. I lost a customer with that. But I thought it was very interesting in view of what later happened. That isn't for the record.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. But you know, the international aspects were just beginning. There was -- I'm trying to think. Had the Museum of Modern Art sent an exhibition to Europe in those early years, in the '40s?

MR. McCRAY: Well, in 1938 --

MR. CUMMINGS: No, in the '40s, I mean after the war?

MR. McCRAY: Well, we hadn't at that point, no. But in 1938, there was a show.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yes, I know.

MR. McCRAY: I think we mentioned. That did go to Paris. Then nothing went to -- went from the Museum, directly from the museum, as a museum exhibition, except rather interestingly, Alfred Frankfurter, you remember --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: Was the editor of the Art News. Was asked, I suppose, by the Grand Central Galleries to respond to the Venice Biennale's request for an American representation. And Alfred Frankfurter consulted with several people, including Alfred, usually.

MR. CUMMINGS: Barr, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And Jim Sweeney and I think Ann Rich and maybe Frances Taylor and others. And a few artists were selected and their works were assembled and money was raised privately and those representations were sent to the Biennale. The Museum had actually no direct official association with that, though some of them were collected at the Museum sometimes, not always.

MR. CUMMINGS: But how was the Museum in those days in terms of, you know, its day-to-day operations and its kind of scheme of how the months went? You know, the staff was much smaller then and came --

MR. McCRAY: The staff was much smaller and people worked like dogs because the institution, I suppose, was understaffed. And the Museum did have immense activity, particularly in 1939, which was just at the beginning of the war, they had come into a new building. And then had been immediately confronted by the war, so that a great deal had to be done with the art that was in this country rather than importing it. And you will remember one perfectly extraordinary exhibition that they had was the outcome of the war, when war was declared and the Italians were unwilling at that time to risk transporting those extraordinary pictures that had been shown at the World's Fair.

MR. CUMMINGS: The World's Fair, right. '39.

MR. McCRAY: The World's Fair in Chicago, wasn't it?

MR. CUMMINGS: Chicago.

MR. McCRAY: The Museum of Modern Art totally altered its objectives by showing the Donatellos and the Michelangelos and the Jatos [phonetic] and everything else. It was marvelous that they did. Because the Metropolitan actually declined the exhibition because it was lent by the Italian government. But that would never have happened if it hadn't been for the war and the detention of the pictures until they could get guaranteed safe passage home.

MR. CUMMINGS: But what about, you know, all the various people around the Museum? In circulating exhibitions, you work with everybody, I mean, all the departments. You know, what I am really trying to do is get some kind of verbal picture of what the times were like and some -- you know, insight into what people were doing.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Sources, ideas.

MR. McCRAY: Of course, it was a fascinating period because the Museum was feeling the impact, as the rest of the nation was, ultimately, of the effect of the war years on the American artist, where they had been thrown entirely on their own and they were generating new and exciting original ideas. And the Museum was responding to this. Again, this procedure was accented by the lack of flow of stuff from overseas. It was also a period, of course, of accelerated acquisition for Alfred and the other curators of various parts of the collection. It was also a period during which people like Elliot Noyes and Philip Johnson in the architecture and design activities of the Museum were changing the course of their careers. There was a -- there were two very brilliant young women who worked in those departments who succeeded those two people, Janet Hendricks and Ann -- I can't even remember -- a girl from Boston who was excellent. There were adjustments being made every day in the -- where the old order was breaking for the first time. Those other people had been around pretty nearly since the beginning. Philip had --

MR. CUMMINGS: Twenty years. Well, Philip not quite.

MR. McCRAY: Philip. And a new direction to [inaudible]. Peter Blake was there during part of that time as an assistant in the department of architecture before Drexler and those people were later employed. The one thing I think that should be remembered also, there was a refinement I think going on in the Museum --

MR. CUMMINGS: In terms of what?

MR. McCRAY: In terms of its publications, in terms of its installations, in terms of its innovations, for example, in the art education field that Victor DeMieto [phonetic] was developing at that point. Early -- well, that was a little bit later, but I think that the international program that followed was a very logical development of a growing concern for a much broader vision and a much broader involvement in more countries and more parts of the globe than the museum had originally conceived of in its -- for example, during the war years, Latin America for the first time was kind of brought into the fold of the Museum. And very early along, Nelson Rockefeller set up a purchase fund for Latin American art objects. While that fund has never been -- while that growth has never been especially vital to the Museum, it was evidence of the fact that the Museum's collections were broadening their base in terms of countries. Alfred was always curious about, in the international program, about possible artists that might be worth considering to add to the collections --

MR. CUMMINGS: He never went to South America, though, did he? Barr?

MR. McCRAY: I think they went to Mexico, but I don't think anywhere else. But he was quite keen about Africa and places like that. And, of course, made a trip to Russia himself in the early --

MR. CUMMINGS: [Inaudible.]

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, you had three years there and then you went to the Marshall Plan as a hiatus, I guess.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah, well --

MR. CUMMINGS: How did that appear as an activity to do, as an alternative? Because the --

MR. McCRAY: Well, it was a place where we could use a lot of the techniques that we had used at the Museum in presentation, certainly. There were whole trains of exhibitions organized.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, now, what were they? You know, because I don't remember. You know, the train of Europe --

MR. McCRAY: Well, it never went anywhere except in Europe.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And it went only to the Marshall country -- countries, the Marshall Plan countries. And a great caravan --

MR. CUMMINGS: What was in it, though?

MR. McCRAY: Well, it was a number of things. It showed -- the object, I suppose you would say, was to convince the various countries to, I think, the Marshall Plan did more than any single factor to ultimately bring about a kind of united -- united western Europe. And it was based on economic revival, it was based on rehabilitation of vast areas of destruction and so forth. And it made a visual appeal with all kinds of evidence of the circumstances that prevailed after the war of what could be done if they pulled together or what had been done by this country or what had been done by the other country to sort of lift themselves by their bootstraps. And what the Marshall Plan was adding to in terms of giving impetus to the individual programs and then the united Europe programs, showing how much more -- in much more dramatic form how collaboration among the countries was bringing the countries back economically much more rapidly than anyone dreamed they would. And the Marshall Plan was actually miraculous in that sense.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, it's influence is still apparent, I think, in some ways.

MR. McCRAY: There were occasional art programs even in that. I remember organizing an exhibition in Paris at the Musee de Tervuren, which was never finished at that time -- the building wasn't -- but we had children's art from all of the countries of Europe. And Rene Wies [phonetic] from the Louvre was the chairman of the jury. And it was like, I think it was a good children's art exhibition. Very much frowned upon, for example --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: My own institution, Museum of Modern Art, would not participate because Victor did not believe in children's competitions.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, Brooklyn did that for years.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that's fascinating. Now, did that entail you traveling a great deal in Europe? Or were you here?

MR. McCRAY: No, in Europe entirely.

MR. CUMMINGS: You were there entirely?

MR. McCRAY: You know, it was in Portugal or in Spain, or it was in Holland or it was in Belgium or it was in --

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you have a central office anyplace that you --

MR. McCRAY: Paris was the --

MR. CUMMINGS: Paris was the headquarters?

MR. McCRAY: We were on the -- right opposite the American embassy in that rather charming old l'Art Nouveau

little pavilion on the opposite side of the street.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah. Very nice.

MR. McCRAY: And Peter Honden [phonetic] was the director of that. I must say, he was an immensely imaginative and really hard-driving person.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you find going back to Europe a few years later under new circumstances?

MR. McCRAY: Well, pleasanter, certainly, than the last time. But --

MR. CUMMINGS: But it was very sparse living in those days.

MR. McCRAY: It was still, I was just going to say, Europe, though it is miraculous how Europe has recovered in the 30 years since the war, it was not an overnight change. For example, Paris was an absolutely filthy city.

MR. CUMMINGS: And empty.

MR. McCRAY: And empty to a large extent. And remember that there were not so many cars. There were --

MR. CUMMINGS: There were little, black cars.

MR. McCRAY: Tiny, little cars, the ones that were around. And petrol already was very expensive.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And people were behaving more or less the way they are coming to behave again with the fuel shortages. There were still food shortages. There were all kinds of -- rentals were still, of course, at sixes and sevens. The Americans felt that they were being -- which in many cases they were being -- taken great advantage of. Because Paris was absolutely alive with Americans. And the State Department or the government had set up rental allowances which were more than adequate and were of course regarded by the Parisians who felt some competition from these, that they were just preposterously overpaid.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, rent has always been cheap in Paris --

MR. McCRAY: Well, see, they were still under their First World War rent freeze, you realize --

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: In 1952.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I didn't know that.

MR. McCRAY: They had never lifted the First World War rent control.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I didn't know that. That's incredible.

MR. McCRAY: I, for example, took a sublet in a beautiful old house, one floor of it, on the [inaudible] from Heidi Weiborg [phonetic] who had had it since the First World War, when she was with the American Field Service and she had a floor and a half of a really magnificent house for which the rent was something like $87. Of course, the French did work out, although it was illegal for them to, adjusted rents for Americans. Because they had to go back to those rents if they could not -- if they had to offer them to French --

MR. CUMMINGS: French?

MR. McCRAY: French citizens. So there was obviously a great deal of scurrying about trying to get -- to liberate spaces from Frenchmen and let them to --

MR. CUMMINGS: Americans.

MR. McCRAY: Expensive rentals to Americans.

MR. CUMMINGS: I was yesterday just looking at some photographs I took in Paris in 1951 and realized how extraordinary the changes are. Absolutely amazing.

MR. McCRAY: The French, of course, very typically, the shops were -- the windows were very chic.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah, right away.

MR. McCRAY: Always, right away. Didn't lose that. But the exhibition -- as far as the museums are concerned, the exhibition facilities were totally abysmal. For example, when we later, after our program got started, as late as '54, '55, the Musee de Moderne --

MR. CUMMINGS: Hadn't painted their walls.

MR. McCRAY: -- hadn't painted their walls or washed them, nor had they ever removed the paint from the skylights that had been put on for the blackouts. I mean, that was almost 10 years later.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, they'd get around to it someday.

MR. McCRAY: So if you particularly understand what a shock the [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Which is already dusty and dirty. But now did you travel very much, or were you pretty much in Paris?

MR. McCRAY: I was in Paris the greater part of the time. And I didn't travel a great deal, except to go and inspect an installation or something like that. I was not able to go and stay long enough anywhere to supervise an installation because we had regular job captains to do that. But I was -- spent a great part of my time in Paris. Getting out these things was like any job of that sort. The production problem was excruciating. And while there were a great many Americans and others, English, a lot of English in Paris at that time, various nationalities, the talents of many people were involved in that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right. Well, you could draw on all the Marshall Plan people, couldn't you?

MR. McCRAY: Yes. George Bernier [phonetic], for example, who later started Lierre with David Bernier [phonetic], was the editor of the newspaper that was issued from the embassy on the plan.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really? I didn't know that.

MR. McCRAY: And there were all sorts of -- there were lots of people, also during that, people who -- during that period who were floundering a bit maybe. But it was so near to the war still that they hadn't really decided on the direction they would try --

MR. CUMMINGS: There was transitional activity for a lot of people.

MR. McCRAY: It was really a transitional period for a lot of people, still. There were a great many people just searching for something to do or testing themselves on whether that was what it was or not that they wanted to do.

MR. CUMMINGS: It must have been lively, though, wasn't it?

MR. McCRAY: It was very lively. The arts were rather slow reviving. There was still some tension in the -- it's quite interesting that even as late as that, there were some anti-Semitic demonstrations from time to time where conductors and things of that sort, or programs that were all by Jewish conductors -- Jewish composers were done as a sort of a compensation for the long period of time when all of it had been banned. And there were surprising sometimes [inaudible] demonstrations [inaudible]. All of the sort of, you know, top French artists by then were still peaking. Picasso was back and going great guns and [inaudible] and Leger and all the others were --

MR. CUMMINGS: Back working.

MR. McCRAY: Laying it on as hard as they could.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, somewhere in '51-'52, you took a tour, traveling around?

MR. McCRAY: Now, when I left the Marshall Plan, before the transfer of funds to the, you know, foundation -- you know, it takes time to finalize projects -- I decided to travel. I had a little Hillman and I set forth and traveled as far as it would take me, practically, through -- in and around Europe. Western Europe, at least.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, you must have seen -- because there were still lots of destroyed buildings and, you know, war sites and things. Did you go back to any of the areas you had been to during the war?

MR. McCRAY: Yes, I went down to -- to Italy particularly where I had spent most of a year. And I was in Naples, which was still an absolute shambles. And I went to Sicily where Palermo was still just really digging out from debris. There was -- the destruction of those great palaces and churches and so forth was perfectly tremendous and they were working hard at it. If you go back today, it's incredible how -- how well most European countries

have restored as much as they have and also built new cities in the process.

[End Disk 4.]

[Disk 5.]

MR. McCRAY: -- today, it's incredible how -- how well most European countries have restored as much as they have and also built new cities in the process.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MR. McCRAY: In Italy, for example, it was fascinating to see the amount of archeological research that the bombings had provided.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh.

MR. McCRAY: In some of the churches in Italy, the largest ones in many instances, where the Jesuits or other orders had been especially active, they had taken rather fine gothic structures which, in many instances, had immense great windows and had a great deal of rather good fresco painting, and had overlaid -- they had sealed the windows and had just left small circular windows in some instances, where the window would go maybe 35 feet high, only a window of maybe five feet in circumference was left at the top. The churches were made much darker inside, though they were painted, of course. And the frescoes were totally overlaid with all kinds of stucco and stuff like that. And the bombing, and in some instances the fire bombing, the heat had caused all that stuff -- not all of it but the surface of it particularly, to just peel off and drop in the middle --

[Telephone rings.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Of the building.

MR. McCRAY: Well, it had uncovered these marvelous frescoes which had been [inaudible] of course with where plaster had been applied over them. In many of the particularly grand buildings and churches in Naples, the fire bombing had melted down some of those great -- marble, gothic tombs that are in some of the churches there, due largely to a contractor who was obviously in government employ, I guess, who sandbagged the -- you know, some of those tombs would rise 35 or so feet, he sandbagged them, he was commissioned to sandbag them and put sandbags up as far as you could reach, and put straw bags above. So that the straw caught on fire and the marble was just turned to lime down to the level of the sandbags. But that's where they lost some of their great -- greatest of their gothic -- but many of those churches since have been restored to their earlier form as a result of that exposure.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's incredible. Did you have any particular reason for doing that trip or traveling or seeing things?

MR. McCRAY: No, I had some time and I had not been to some of the countries of Europe that I wanted to see. And one could not get into western Europe, you must remember, at that point -- I mean to eastern Europe -- at that point.

MR. CUMMINGS: Eastern Europe. Yeah, because of the Russian --

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. And I did get to Greece and all of western Europe in that period.

[Break in recording.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Side four. Anyway, so after your tour of those various countries, you came back to the Museum of Modern Art?

MR. McCRAY: To the Museum of Modern Art and the new chores.

MR. CUMMINGS: And the whole new world. And then that starts the 1950s, pretty much, with all of the international programs, the American art going abroad?

MR. McCRAY: Yes, we got that grant, it was the end of '52.

MR. CUMMINGS: Which grant?

MR. McCRAY: The JDR, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: No, I didn't know about which grant it was.

MR. McCRAY: Well, the international program grant.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see. Now what, when you came back, I mean, this must have been some kind of shift because you'd been there, you went away, you came back. It was starting all over again. Now, this was the beginning, really, of the big international exhibitions coming out of the Museum?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: How were they planned? Who sat down and figured out or took the ideas and expanded them?

MR. McCRAY: Well, it was done largely by committee. The programs were -- well, in the first place, when this thing was announced, you can't imagine how many requests we had for all kinds of things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: Which had to be qualified to some extent.

MR. CUMMINGS: For example, give me an idea of the response?

MR. McCRAY: There were people who wanted one-man exhibitions in Europe, who wanted Lipchitz and a lot of people wanted you to take on the cost of these things. And what I was very anxious to avoid was becoming just a financing --

MR. CUMMINGS: A warehouse --

MR. McCRAY: -- device for one-man shows. Because there was -- well, we felt that the commercial galleries and the representatives of these artists had other resources that they could use.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And we were also trying to avoid the impression that we were going to pay everything for things going everywhere. I mean, as it turned out in both this program and later in the JDR third program, we found that certain countries had resources, others didn't.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you would share costs?

MR. McCRAY: You would share or you would negotiate, really, is what it amounted to. Every time, you negotiated with the exhibiting government or the exhibiting institution to get the best. It could never be a hard bargain, as a rule, because there were certain standards you wanted to maintain. And if you negotiated on those and there was no give on them, you would ante up the difference to make it -- it would have been impossible on a strictly sharing basis. And it was always sort of custom built. There was no real formula. You learned a lot of constant things in the process. But --

MR. CUMMINGS: They were variable.

MR. McCRAY: They were all negotiated separately. But the coordinating committee was very active in the museum at that point and when we were confronted with this at that time with what was a considerable amount of money -- doesn't sound like anything now. I mean, take $125,000 and --

MR. CUMMINGS: It's just a one-shot show now --

MR. McCRAY: And do several. I mean, the [inaudible] Toulouse-Lautrec show today would probably cost at least half a million dollars and it was done along with two other or three other shows that year.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you think has caused the great increase in the costs?

MR. McCRAY: Well, escalation of everything, but particularly insurance. You must realize -- I'm getting ahead of myself but in the [inaudible] Toulouse Lautrec, that great Bathers [inaudible] museum and the Renoir Boating Party were the two most expensive pictures and they were valued at $100,000.

MR. CUMMINGS: My heavens.

MR. McCRAY: And insurance rates also were not as high as they are. And the whole business of -- I mean, the French attitude toward pictures of great value -- of course, those pictures in France were not worth what they were -- except when they were selling -- were not worth what they were valued in this country.

MR. CUMMINGS: Was it more or less in France?

MR. McCRAY: They were less. Much less.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that's fascinating.

MR. McCRAY: But the French -- you had to get terribly steamed up at the French in order for them to fulfill the security and the proper care requirements that your lenders imposed upon you. I'll never forget -- getting clear out of context now, but when we arrived in Paris, in Le Havre, for example, with that exhibition, I had accompanied it on the old America, the U.S.S. America, all the way, in March on a very rough sea. And had gone every day down to the hold to see if all of the ropes were holding. We were given an escort, a police escort and whatnot into the city. We arrived at the [inaudible] about eight o'clock at night and the arrangements had been made, we would have two armed guards and two regular museum guards there from the time the pictures arrived until it could be seen how much more we anticipated would be needed. And instead, there were no armed guards, and there was one old soldier who was boiling tea in the foyer to the museum. And he said, oh, yes, you can put these things in here. And I said, I can't, because our insurance doesn't cover it without these conditions. So I was fortunate in being able to reach Joe Sal [phonetic], who was the director of the Musee de France, at dinner at his own house. And I said, we are absolutely stuck, we can't unpack. And he had guards come over from the Louvre and stay there the rest of the night. But this is the kind of thing that was very casual in those days.

MR. CUMMINGS: I hear it's still that way at [inaudible].

MR. McCRAY: Yes, probably. But [inaudible] chapter and verse about some of those things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, [inaudible] in a more elaborate way because it's the beginning of a whole decade of -- of let's say the 1950s, just to stay in that 10-year period, where the economy was shifting, the art market was beginning to build, dealers were opening, museums were livening up around the country, all sorts of ferment was going on. Now, how did -- what kind of role did your department in the Museum of Modern Art play in all of this activity in terms of work that interested you, ideas that came across the table that you felt should be considered, passed on to the committees, developed?

MR. McCRAY: Well, for example, in the first year that we had our money, we were confronted -- we had anticipated that that following year, we would take over the preparation of one round of the Venice Biennale. In October of that year, the building was put up for sale and there were a number of bidders for it, contenders for it, not the building but the position was considered very desirable. So that it became crucial as to -- to cover ourselves for the exhibition the following year and the only way to do that was to buy the building from Grand Central Galleries who owned it. It was not a government owned building.

MR. CUMMINGS: They had owned it for years, hadn't they?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. So that we unexpectedly had to come buy the building and we had to do some -- we didn't do much -- renovation, but it was leaking and it had to be usable order. And I got Malveni, the architect in Milan, to do that on the spot, because it had to be done with the Italian bureaucracy and so forth. And he did it very well and did it very inexpensively. And it was really I think as pretty as it ever looked.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you find an architect in Italy to do something like that?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I had -- in the trip that I had made before had seen the beautiful, absolutely ravishing -- because it was just opened -- the Palazzo Bianco in Genoa had been revived as a museum. It was one of the great Genoa palaces that was badly damaged during the war. And he had taken the shell of it and the pictures when they were removed from their frames, the frames were left in the galleries and the fire bombs had set those on fire, so there were no frames left. And you see, it was quite interesting to me, several years later, to have Jim Sweeney put up the Guggenheim pictures without frames.

MR. CUMMINGS: No frames.

MR. McCRAY: But Malvini had done this. I mean, he had had --

MR. CUMMINGS: Out of necessity.

MR. McCRAY: Out of necessity. He had taped them very carefully and had done the most beautiful simple thing with these rather noble spaces in this big old palace. And it was for that that I remembered him and asked him if he would dare condescend to doing the Biennale. He was delighted to do it and he was going to do a new boulevard in Havana so he was coming to New York so he would be able to do it, to arrange it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Marvelous. Now, what happened as you started sending exhibitions abroad? Particularly, you know, not of European art going back to Europe, but of the American things that people hadn't seen, didn't know

about?

MR. McCRAY: Well, the -- as I said a while ago, the coordinating committee met very early on this and decided on the type of thing that might be the first effort. The French had already said they would like to have an exhibition of American artists. And it was decided to -- Andrew Ritchie was the head of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, and Alfred -- the coordinating committee was Rene, who was the chairman, Alfred Barr, Monore Wheeler, Andrew Ritchie and myself. And we were the only trustee members of the staff.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what does that mean, when you say the coordinating committee? What was [inaudible]?

MR. McCRAY: Well, the coordinating committee, I think, between you and me, was a device set up when Rene first came to the Museum -- the turmoil that went on in the art world about Alfred being put aside and Rene coming in who was not a modern art specialist, Rene, I think, with his usual skill and modesty in a way, said, well, we will run this by a body with Alfred represented on the body, and it will be considered by the people who have the greatest responsibility for it. And in the first place, it was not humiliating to Alfred. He was a part of the committee that was making the decisions. And it was a very skillful thing, I think, as it turned out. And it continued until that period of humiliation was over, as far as Alfred was concerned, I think.

MR. CUMMINGS: But now, did they make comments on all of the exhibitions or just the traveling exhibitions?

MR. McCRAY: Major exhibitions. Then, for example, when we discussed the kind of exhibition that would go to Paris, it was decided that we would send a sort of cross section of very American things in terms of Harper and even Albright and people like this up to Pollock and David Smith. And it was -- and Graves and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Twentieth century survey, yes.

MR. McCRAY: And that was discussed and decided as the first one that we would send abroad. It was going to Paris first. And then it went to Frankfurt and it went to London and it went to a number of cities, went to Rome and so on. I believe that one went to Brussels and it went to Amsterdam.

MR. CUMMINGS: How much would that committee affect, say, the actual content of an exhibition?

MR. McCRAY: Well, then the direction of the exhibition was given to -- was assigned to a person. Ideally, that person would be, if it were a painting show, would be in the department of painting and sculpture. The load, however, of those departments was already considerable. They had a full commitment to the New York program.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And we very soon brought in younger people who became assistants in a sense. They were in my department. Frank O'Hara and Kingston McShine [phonetic] and Ernie New [phonetic] and various people.

MR. CUMMINGS: Didn't Walter Rasmussen [phonetic] come in early there somewhere?

MR. McCRAY: Well, Walter didn't come in to do exhibitions. He came in as -- as an assistant in the overall operation. He was my assistant.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: And Walter certainly didn't figure in -- he was asked to express his feelings about it. But all of the mechanics of those exhibitions were done in my office. I mean, all of the contacts that were made for the loans and visits that were necessary to get extended loans and to reassure people that they would be safe and someone would be with them and would pick up and the letters of request and all of the insurance and everything was done with a voluminous correspondence that generated out of my office. And Walter was my assistant and was very busy doing that. But the other people, like frank, were -- in the beginning were helping Andrew or helping Peter Sells [phonetic] or helping Dorothy Miller get together the possibilities of loans, you know, getting together a show depends so much on what is available.

MR. CUMMINGS: What you can get and what you can't.

MR. McCRAY: And first choices were made and then second choices were made and so forth.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And that was all done, more or less, through discussion between Andrew, maybe sometimes with somebody else on the coordinating committee, or with me or with Frank directly. There was no absolute cut and dried procedure. But it was a collaborative thing. And the thing eventually came together and the exhibition was approved and then the letters of request went out -- all of the necessary -- and we even maintained our separate

registrar, Virginia Pearson, and set up special facilities. We were the ones who set up Santini in the art business.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: We took two floors over there and made them into registration area and into storage and into packing and so forth and designed all of our boxes and had our carpenters from the museum go there and had two of their people come and intern in the Museum on how to put boxes together and so forth.

MR. CUMMINGS: Stock boxes --

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. And since I was an architect, I fiddled around a little bit with the design of those. We were always trying to simplify them --

MR. CUMMINGS: Make them lighter, make them stronger.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. And this was the way it went. Now and then, obligations in the Museum of the regular museum curatory staff became so heavy that they would transfer responsibility to Frank or to somebody or other.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: Sometimes we also had people from outside who were acceptable to the curatorial province. Sometimes, we got into an especially pressing situation with [inaudible] and Frank O'Hara and myself made that selection. However, submitting it and discussing it with Alfred and Dorothy and Rene and others. We had every now and then areas of disagreement. Alfred maintained to some extent that there should be nothing sent abroad except by artists that were represented in the collections. Which I took early exception to, because there were a great many of the younger people that were coming into prominence and were of some appeal to the Europeans and were people of considerable stature that the Museum, with its very scanty funds -- I mean, the Museum could buy a Picasso or a Matisse or something expensive --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, they had people who would buy for them.

MR. McCRAY: But it was very difficult to buy these, in many instances, to buy the younger people as early as they might -- they should have been bought.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you think museums should, almost by definition, acquire younger artists like that?

MR. McCRAY: Depends on the nature and the objectives of the museum, I think. The Museum of Modern Art prided itself on being a very contemporary museum. And if you were -- the thing I think that was difficult in our program was the fact that we could not get enough of the staff of the Museum to appear at the Biennales or the Documenta to see what the form of those things was taking.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see.

MR. McCRAY: So that, for example, when we put I believe Bonnie Neumann and Hoffman were two and Joan Mitchell, three. Maybe [inaudible]. But when we put pictures of theirs into the show, we got a great deal of flack from the Museum itself because they were not --

MR. CUMMINGS: In the collection.

MR. McCRAY: -- in the collection.

MR. CUMMINGS: But by this time -- well, except for Mitchell -- they were pretty well known.

MR. McCRAY: They were very well known and later the Museum did a Hoffman show. But in some instances, I mean, Alfred, very early, bought Jasper Johns in quantity, you remember. And, for example, Rauschenberg, we put the Rauschenberg with the Coca-Cola bottles in that show as I recall. And Alfred didn't approve of that picture at all. But we finally sent it because we borrowed it from [inaudible] what's his name in Chicago?

MR. CUMMINGS: Marymount [phonetic].

MR. McCRAY: Marymount. And we had moments like this that arose.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, how would you resolve something like that?

MR. McCRAY: Well, by going in and talking to the person involved. To the point where they would concede or they would not concede and we would remove it. But I don't think we ever had anything removed. But it

distressed me that we ever had the contention about it.

MR. CUMMINGS: I'm curious about the --

MR. McCRAY: Because it was misinterpreted to a little extent, I think, in the Museum that I was trying to go contrary to the -- when I was really working in a framework different from the one that they were working in in New York. We were in a big international exhibition and the age levels and so forth were established and so on.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And some of these people were very good or some of them, for example, had been -- Barney Newman had been bought importantly by Basel Museum before he was bought by our museum. And people, when you would see them in New York, would say, why is Newman not in this show? Things like that. And they were factors that I felt some confidence to comment upon them because I had been on the spot and seen them. We had trouble, for example, with Liz Shaw [phonetic] all through our experience because Liz had never been to Europe in her life.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: She had never been to an international exhibition and she had no feeling for it.

MR. CUMMINGS: For what it was.

MR. McCRAY: So we had to redo all the press releases and things. And that, in itself, was just a hell of a job. Because if you started out with an exhibition and it went into eight countries, maybe it went into five languages, it meant that the catalogues had to be changed each time and reappear in a different language, it meant that all the background material on the Museum, on the person who collected the exhibition, on the exhibition itself, on the major artists if there were a few artists, all of that had to be done and had to be done into different languages each time. It meant that all the photographs had to be labeled in the different language of each of the places. I mean, the mechanics of it were really maddening.

MR. CUMMINGS: Incredible, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And we had no understanding -- I shouldn't say no understanding, but very little understanding of it in New York. Yes, Dorothy Miller and Rene and Arthur Drexler and Bill Lieberman, I believe, went with Rene when I was at the Biennale. We opened the Fifty Years of American Art in Paris. And Rene took the whole lot with him and they talk to this day about the excesses of that situation. But that was only one of hundreds.

MR. CUMMINGS: And typical.

MR. McCRAY: And we tried to get greater participation in the Museum but, oddly enough, they didn't take us up on it.

MR. CUMMINGS: I think it's also difficult for people on a day to day basis to all of a sudden think about what's happening in Milan or Paris or Zurich or something.

MR. McCRAY: The other thing, you see, that the Museum had no sense of because it's not an official institution, either American or certainly not a typical European one -- for example, in Paris or in Rome, there was a routine you had to go through. You had to be present for the minister or this, that and the other. And then there was another opening for the press, and then there was another public opening. All of these things they really -- I am exaggerating a little bit, but they really didn't comprehend the overall operation.

MR. CUMMINGS: The whole social structure was so different.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. And that part of it was distressing sometimes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, in the evolution of exhibitions, some of those are very large exhibitions and would take, what, a couple of years to organize from the inception --

MR. McCRAY: No, I don't think any of them ever had more than a year spent on them.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: Oddly enough, those very elaborate ones from a lending point of view, the French pictures, were done more quickly than some of the others, primarily because we very carefully put together a committee that represented the institutions from whom we got the greatest number of loans.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: So that they could sit at the table and swap agreements on what they'd lend and what they wouldn't lend, so that the exhibition took form very quickly because you knew what you had coming from them.

MR. CUMMINGS: The decisionmakers in the same room.

MR. McCRAY: You had 60 or 70 percent of the exhibition guaranteed. And then the problem for them was to speculate on what could be borrowed from private collectors that would fill in and make the thing a balanced exhibition. Now the drawing one was much more complicated, just because it contained so many more objects. But I mean, it was a nightmare dealing with a lot of museums and curators and drawing experts. Because every time they reviewed an exhibition -- I mean, Helen Frank, you know, performed perfect miracles because she organized those meetings. And at every meeting, there would be a revision of photographs for the committees to review of what had been chosen and what had been rejected and what was still available and so forth and so on. I think it was extraordinary. And the alternates, Helen kept a most exact account of. So the efficiency with which that was done was greatly accelerated by her. Extraordinary organizational --

MR. CUMMINGS: You know, there are a couple people I wanted to ask you about. One is Curt Valentin, who you mentioned here and there who, as I've done these interviews, seems to be a much more important character than most people have given him credit for. Did you know him well or briefly or --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I knew him briefly but I knew him quite well. From the time I met him, which was during the war and after until he died, I saw a great deal of him.

MR. CUMMINGS: What kind of a character was he? I can never get an image of him. I've seen photographs, I've seen a catalog, I once went to the gallery -- after he died, though -- talked to various people who worked for him. But I've never been able to get a kind of --

MR. McCRAY: Well, did you ever know Brummer, whom I did not know well?

MR. CUMMINGS: No, no.

MR. McCRAY: But I think that Curt was a twentieth century Brummer. And we had them very rarely. I don't know, I suppose, in some ways, Costelli is in some ways similar except --

MR. CUMMINGS: Really? In what way?

MR. McCRAY: Leo is very commercial.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: Curt Valentin, you know, who had been in the Buchholz Gallery in Berlin at its peak, I mean, he absolutely lived and breathed art. He knew a great deal about art, all art, and he had a great pride in -- he had beautiful taste in things. He had excellent contacts with artists. I mean, he was the one who introduced us to most of the major postwar figures, the early postwar [inaudible] and others and later Pierre Matisse did other things, obviously. But Curt, for example, brought Henry Moore and Sutherland and all of that young group of -- of most of the young group of English sculptors, Piper, Ben Nicholson. He also brought with him a terrific cache of European art that he had evidently gotten out of --

MR. CUMMINGS: Germany.

MR. McCRAY: -- Germany or else had acquired other places. But he -- you know, it was -- art was totally contagious when you were with him. And he published well, he -- I don't know whether you have ever seen those little catalogues that he always did.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. Yeah, right.

MR. McCRAY: All the facsimiles that he did occasionally of notebooks or sketchbooks or things like that.

MR. CUMMINGS: The Picasso one [inaudible] --

MR. McCRAY: Or, you know, he did a book on [inaudible] -- he published some early -- an early publication on Masson. He published those two [inaudible] portfolios on Clay. He was such an absolutely extraordinary personality, people loved him to begin with, whether they were collectors or whether they were students or whether they were museum curators or whatever. You couldn't resist his contagion of -- of showing you just -- I mean, the way he would -- he would not ever coerce you into anything. But --

MR. CUMMINGS: Just develop the enthusiasm?

MR. McCRAY: He would just seduce you, you know, before you knew it. But you came to respect this man's extraordinary taste. He didn't bother, you know, having in his gallery much junk. I suppose a certain amount of it came with purchases. But there was this marvelous, keen intellect that was always behind the hanging of a show, the juxtaposition of things that he showed. I mean, it was just a fabulous quality. I don't know of anybody we have around like him. And Brummer had very much the same quality --

MR. CUMMINGS: Flair, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And it was through Curt that I met Brummer.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: He took me over there one day. Of course, Brummer had the most tremendous eye and also great style for installation. I mean, it was Brummer who, my god, before the war was exhibiting those fine Romanesque pieces and so forth that are now in the Cloisters on steel poles rising out of the floor with a plate.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really? Oh, he started that?

MR. McCRAY: Sure.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I didn't know that.

MR. McCRAY: Really amazing [inaudible]. And it's too bad that both of them disappeared from the scene rather suddenly. And fairly -- I guess Brummer was older than Curt --

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, quite a bit.

MR. McCRAY: But Curt also was -- you know, Leo -- I don't mean this to be unkind -- Leo and most of the dealers today who attend all of the international exhibitions, you feel are there partly out of -- of business. Curt was there, you felt, at some of them -- I mean, he was not a victim of them at all. He would hear there was something good at one, he would go to see that. But it was --

MR. CUMMINGS: He was there because he liked it?

MR. McCRAY: He was also an extremely sociable person. He was extremely generous. He was a marvelous cook. He would ask you to come and give you the most excellent meal and always had, you know, half a dozen interesting people around, whether they were artists or -- Perry Rathbone you ought to talk to about --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah. Yes, I have.

MR. McCRAY: Or Jane Sbersky [phonetic] worked for Curt. And certainly Jane Wade [phonetic] also. Johnny Hornsbeam [phonetic] -- inaudible. But the Ritchies loved Curt. I don't know who didn't love him that knew him. And it was the same way abroad. You would run into him in Venice and he would, you know, ask ten people to go to Harry's Restaurant -- Bar out in Torchello and it would be a memorable afternoon of conversation with, you know, half a dozen marvelous artists and friends. He was just an extraordinary person.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah. Now, one gets the feeling too many of the current dealers are so calculating.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah, and Curt was living, you know. It was his life but he really lived it like he loved it. Really marvelous man.

MR. CUMMINGS: And he showed such a variety of people, you know, expressionists [inaudible] --

MR. McCRAY: And he was the one who introduced a great many of those people, really, to the market here.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: The other person who, of course, was doing marvelous things with a few of them, with Sheila [phonetic] and Clay particularly was J.B. Neumann.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, Neumann, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: But Neumann was not nearly as expansive or as broad in his interests or as committed as Curt was.

MR. CUMMINGS: Would he -- you know, if you talked to him about art, did he -- did he see in a different way from

most people, or was he -- some of the dealers now are very good anthologists in what they read and --

MR. McCRAY: Not at all. I think Curt was --

MR. CUMMINGS: He had his own point of view?

MR. McCRAY: He had his own point of view. And I think that conformed frequently with -- I mean, Herbert Reid was a good friend of Curt's. He was absolutely -- it was in his blood. It just was as natural as life itself.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's very unusual.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. As I say, I don't know anyone [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: You had also mentioned Frank O'Hara. Now, was he at the Museum when you came there?

MR. McCRAY: No, no.

MR. CUMMINGS: You hired him? He came along later?

MR. McCRAY: He was there. And when we got into the international program, he was at the front desk selling catalogues.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that's right.

MR. McCRAY: And he was a poet and an intelligent poet. I liked some of his poetry and had seen that. And had seen his working association with a lot of those young artists, particularly the Tibor de Nagy group.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, Larry Rivers and --

MR. McCRAY: Larry and Jane Frielicher and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right --

MR. McCRAY: And what's her name --

MR. CUMMINGS: Frankenthaler.

MR. McCRAY: Helen Frankenthaler. Innumerable ones. Leslie -- there were a large crowd of them going around. And de Kooning was close to Frank and to that group of people. And Frank, for example, did a play with that group downtown that de Kooning did, you know, the curtain and costumes for. That was another little world all by itself. Curt didn't have a great -- I suppose it was interest in American art as such, except just a few things. He loved [inaudible] Calder, he liked David Smith. He had very honest tastes about things, what he liked and didn't like --

MR. CUMMINGS: What was O'Hara like to work with in an administrative situation?

MR. McCRAY: He was quite good. He -- Frank had taken music at Harvard. He had a master's degree, I believe. And he had done a good deal of writing. He had -- before he came to us, he had been an art critic on the [inaudible] News. And had this large coterie of artists, poet friends, and was beginning to participate in the 8th Street Club discussions and things like that, and spent a great deal of time with Acita Barr [phonetic], with Franz Klein and de Kooning and Pollock and all the others.

MR. CUMMINGS: All the rest of them, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And had their respect. And he wrote quite well when he had to and he was very effective generally in dealing with lenders. He was quite good at his job, actually.

[End of Disk 5.]

[Disk 6.]

MR. McCRAY: Frank, sometimes, I got very cross with because he would be awfully late coming in on occasions. Not that I was a charlatan about that, but sometimes it got in the way of getting things done. His -- you know, his life was a very dispersed one too in many ways. And I didn't see much of Frank after I left the Museum. He did drink too much as he got further on. But he was the kind of -- well, as you can see, from the other stuff that appears on Frank, much of which, I think, deserves publication, he had quite a cult grow up around him.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And I was not -- those were not -- I at least -- I should say I was not as aware of the cult, being his boss, in a sense, in the early years, as it came to be later.

MR. CUMMINGS: No, no. I always found it rather strange. Because I never thought of him as being a kind of character who would support that adulation, but I guess he liked it.

MR. McCRAY: Well, I never understood it completely. But I -- as I said, I was never with it, either, at the level that the cult developed. That was among the younger group of painters and so forth and they adored him and that was fine and I liked Frank, too. But I didn't --

MR. CUMMINGS: You saw him in a different light.

MR. McCRAY: Didn't -- I mean, he was just an intelligent person with a good deal of taste and brains and a very useful person in the program.

MR. CUMMINGS: I want to ask more things about the history of the exhibitions. And, for example, in these fairly good sized shows, how many a year could you produce?

MR. McCRAY: Well, we did perhaps two super shows. If we did one big show and also -- I mean, a show that would go several places, and you see we were always caught in the early years of the program with the Biennales. There was the Venice Biennale every other year and in the intermediate years there was the Sao Paulo one. So you always had one great big --

MR. CUMMINGS: One Biennale.

MR. McCRAY: -- show and those shows were, indeed, a great effort because they were shows that were one-shot shows and quite big shows. The others were large shows, but they at least could then travel for six or eight times. In some instances, when the Paris Biennale started, we had, you know, two Biennales a year to cope with. And it led very early -- I don't know whether you have observed the pattern that we followed more or less, but we would do one Venice Biennale and then we would ask another museum, the Art Institute in Chicago was the first one we asked, and we paid half of the cost of doing it and they raised the other half. And Catherine Koo [phonetic] did that show for them. I don't think it was an appropriate show at all, because she --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, that was the city --

MR. McCRAY: -- very much against our will, even, made it a city show, a theme show, which is not -- doesn't conform to the structure of the Biennale. But she insisted and that's what it was. We also made the same arrangement with the Baltimore Museum. We also made the same arrangement with the Minneapolis Institute. And we were never totally relieved of those shows because, by the time they came along, we had a great deal of know how and we had to sort of lay out the organization. They chose the pictures and took the credit for it, but there was an awful lot of doing in the background that we had to do.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what would make those museums interested in participating in an exhibition like that? What did it mean to Chicago or Minneapolis?

MR. McCRAY: I think it was the prestige. It was identifying them with the contemporary scene. At that time, I think everyone was following that pitch.

MR. CUMMINGS: More and more, as the '50s and the '60s wore on. The '70s, I'm not so sure. But I can't -- don't remember if you yourself organized any exhibitions.

MR. McCRAY: You mean selected them?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yes, right.

MR. McCRAY: Well, the Documentas, as I said, Frank and I did. I did not actually, because Arthur Drexel is very particular to this day with his own staff [inaudible]. But there were many architectural shows that were generated in our department and were submitted to Arthur for alteration or suggestions. Because we did quite a number. We did a rather beautiful exhibition of Japanese architecture that was shown at the Museum and which really was the basis of a book that Arthur later did. We did -- we engaged Rudofsky to do perfectly beautiful shows on stairs, on architecture without architects was one of them. The show, for example, that was eventually done at the museum and then picked up by the international program was the architects engineering show, a big show at the museum. This show, the textiles and ornaments -- the textiles and ornaments of India, was an exhibition done in New York, which Ed Kauffman and Sandra Gerard [phonetic] worked on. It was done in the Museum and then -- it was done largely with loans. The Victoria and Albert Museum was remodeling and had closed the Asian wing and they lent us most of the textile collection. And that was -- I'm not claiming the authorship of them, but they were shows that we generated.

MR. CUMMINGS: Where would your ideas for the exhibitions evolve from? I mean, your own observations of the arts, fine arts, decorative arts?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah, I had followed those quite -- well, more completely, I think, than anybody else in the Museum from an international point of view, because --

MR. CUMMINGS: Followed in what way?

MR. McCRAY: I was always on the road and seeing what other nations were doing. And I was of the opinion, and I still am of the opinion sometimes, that the Museum does not make itself aware sufficiently of the activity around it. It is very self-centered, still is.

MR. CUMMINGS: Around it in what -- how broad?

MR. McCRAY: In the world.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, the big world --

MR. McCRAY: Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Rather than just New York?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I think that's true of almost every museum.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: They get so wound up in the rituals of daily life.

MR. McCRAY: It was very difficult. I mean, they would listen to you and be interested, but it wouldn't make much impact.

MR. CUMMINGS: But now, did you travel a great deal during the years you were involved with the international --

MR. McCRAY: Oh, I was constantly traveling.

MR. CUMMINGS: You would go to the museums in the various countries and make the arrangements?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. They had to be made with the governments, they had to be made with the specific museums. And I just can't go into the detail that that involved. The correspondence on all of that is voluminous, plus a great deal of direct supervision. I went to most of the openings and saw -- and did the installations and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: -- took with me sometimes -- I took Frank O'Hara sometimes or took Walter Rasmussen sometimes to help me. But when I stop to think that we never took more than two people and we usually took one. I would send -- eventually, after breaking in different people, would send them out with one show [inaudible] alone. We were trying to save as much money as we could.

MR. CUMMINGS: But would you do the installation, say you had a show that went for five cities in different countries, would you go and do each one of those?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. You would do it, Paul -- museums are various characters. The Museum of Modern Art never lets anybody install anything. On the other hand, museums around Europe, many of them had rather strong feelings about their installations.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's what I was going to ask --

MR. McCRAY: But they were very interested. For example, we always made our own labels and used them because European labeling was so awful. We took bundles of labels, all beveled edged and in the language of the particular country that had been carefully checked with the other country before we went. And they were all done on jumbo typewriter here and carried to the exhibition and where possible stuck on the wall. Sometimes, the museums insisted upon doing their own installations. But they were very -- we made it one of the stipulations of our shows that there should be collaboration with a representative of the Museum. And I suppose in more than half of them, we really had the responsibility. In some of them, you had a great deal more responsibility than just the installation. For example, in Belgrade, we were given just an immense, great exhibition hall that was made of yellow and black and white marble, veined marble, to put up Fifty Years of

American Art, which had a lot of new American painting and sculpture. And in that case -- I think I may have mentioned this before -- we had to really transform the interior. That's where my architecture training came in very well because you had to do a lot of mise en -- freestanding walls and in that case, we -- well, I spent many a whole night on my knees pleating curtains, which I had never done before, to hide the marble walls on which we could hang the pictures. And hanging a whole great sort of fishbowl of hideous windows draped heavily in cheesecloth, so that we had really rather beautiful diffused light for the sculpture garden. And then we had -- that exhibition went into three different museums and I did all of that myself.

MR. CUMMINGS: You know a lot of museums.

MR. McCRAY: Well, you had to. And you would alienate people. For example, in Belgrade, we were traveling with a perfectly tremendous exhibition of American architecture, with murals the size of this wall, literally, in sections. And there was no place in Belgrade where this could go except in their exhibition fresco museum. So the minister of culture ordered the frescoes removed. And it alienated a lot of the Yugoslavians when we took them down and put up architecture photographs in their place.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, that was their heritage and you were coming in with something that -- so a lot of diplomacy.

MR. McCRAY: An awful lot of diplomacy. And also in Belgrade, fascinating things would develop. For example, I would go -- when the workmen came in the morning, I was there. They came and I stayed. I usually would work lunch, something like that, but to leave somebody there while I was away. I would come in and I would take off my coat and I would roll up my sleeves and I would do the same things that they were doing. That absolutely flabbergasted these workmen. And then I remember there were three ambassadors in Belgrade that I had known in the U.N. or somewhere before.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: And they would come by because they were very curious. They were bored to death in Belgrade. And they came by to see what this exhibition was like and were quite fascinated and would stay and go in animated [inaudible]. And I would be standing there in my short sleeves and talking to them and then in the next minute say something to the workmen and the workmen were totally baffled by this.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, they had never had any --

MR. McCRAY: The whole class thing was just something they could not unravel.

MR. CUMMINGS: No.

MR. McCRAY: And they finally at the end said so, that they didn't understand. It was quite an insight into how strictly conscious they were of the order of the party and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Position, yeah. You know, as I think about what you've been saying, I sense a certain amount of competition between your department and some of the other departments at the Museum.

MR. McCRAY: Well, it did develop. And it's a long story. But sometime we could dwell on it. We haven't gotten at all into the international council, you see.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, no, that's later, now, isn't it?

MR. McCRAY: The council was created and was going on during part of these things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right. But that I'll start with in a later point. But didn't the -- you know, the international -- the response that you got by showing American art abroad, could you second guess it? Did you ever have an idea of what an exhibition would produce in a certain place after a while?

MR. McCRAY: Well, it depended on the place. But the exhibition would have immense impact on a great many artists. Some resisted it, of course, violently. Museum people would come and, same thing. They were either totally overwhelmed by it or very antagonistic. The critics in the beginning were -- well, I think of it almost in terms of what we do today. The early critics, the critics of the early exhibitions, were always looking for an interpretation of America in terms of their own art. Just for example, later when we did an exhibition of Japanese art or Spanish art or Polish art, Canaday always said it's a poor imitation of American art, instead of organizing it -- approaching it on its own terms.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, it would be hard, because he wouldn't know those terms except the fragment that was available.

MR. McCRAY: [Inaudible.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: I mean, it's the surest way to aggravate a nation is to say --

MR. CUMMINGS: Your art is second rate.

MR. McCRAY: You are second-rate sort of imitators.

MR. CUMMINGS: But now some of those exhibitions were rather controversial. New American Painting --

MR. McCRAY: Well, the New American Painting at the time was quite controversial. But on the other hand, that show had the greatest impact of any show we took.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: Oh, sure. Except the French ones in France. But it floored more people than any of the other exhibitions we took. The fifty years, which went earlier, due to its immense size and range, I think also impressed the Europeans. Because it for the first time gave them a glimpse of what American art was about. They didn't know, they didn't have any of it there.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, there is now growing interest in pre-1940 American art in Europe.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, it's taken 10 or 15 years to --

MR. McCRAY: But remember when we first took Harper in that [inaudible] American show, they just dismissed him totally as a calendar artist. And [inaudible] for some reason, they associated with Chagall and all of them, you know, were equated to something else.

MR. CUMMINGS: That was also, I think, the time when some of the dealers were doing those New York/Paris type -- Janice did one, and comparing Palco [phonetic] and Tobe [phonetic] or whoever and whoever, that sort of business, yes.

MR. McCRAY: Well, the contest got very, very severe sometimes. For example, in the Biennale in which we had time, Malreaux really did intervene in that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yes, you told me that before. Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: It caused some very unpleasant repercussions.

[Break in recording.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Now start side five. Paul Cummings talking to Porter McCray, 20th of September 1977. We're still talking about the circulating exhibitions, the Museum of Modern Art, mostly in the 1950s. Sao Paulo Biennale --

MR. McCRAY: They call it Biennial in Portuguese.

MR. CUMMINGS: Biennial, right, came along and you were back dealing with Latin America. Which seems to always be one of your sidelines or major lines or activities. You had mentioned that was funded pretty much by one family, wasn't it?

MR. McCRAY: Which?

MR. CUMMINGS: The Sao Paulo?

MR. McCRAY: Yes, at that time, it was funded largely by the Matarazzo family.

MR. CUMMINGS: Who were involved with what? Why did they -- do you know?

MR. McCRAY: Well, they were one of the richest of the great families in Sao Paulo and were obviously of Italian extraction and very concerned with the establishment of some identification in Brazil with contemporary art. You know, there had been other collectors who had helped with the general museum, art museum in Sao Paulo. And one of the newspaper publishers had been prominent in later establishing a museum of modern art in Rio. But the Matarazzos poured immense amounts of money into the organization that does Biennial because the kick-off

was, you know, on a great scale the first year.

MR. CUMMINGS: Everybody from all over --

MR. McCRAY: The second Biennial had a huge Picasso exhibition, I mean, just as one of its special exhibitions. Then representation from most of the European countries and Latin America countries, of course. And the Matarazzos were generous enough and savvy enough to realize that in inviting some of the Latin America countries, that they had to assist in the costs of bringing those people there. In most instances, the participating institutions were expected to pay the cost of assembling the exhibition and delivering it and taking it away. And -- which is what the international program in the Museum did. But what helped -- we forget how generous in those days, it was possible much more so than transatlantic shipping, Moore-McCormack Lines, every year that we participated in the Biennial gave free transportation to those immense exhibitions going down.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really? Why was that? Were they interested, or were they just --

MR. McCRAY: Well, they were interested and they were very accommodating and they did not suffer from some of the restrictions, I think, that existed in the Atlantic Conference which the British largely controlled at that time on giving free transportation to various things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: The French --

MR. CUMMINGS: Couldn't they do this on their own volition or was --

MR. McCRAY: No, there was an agreement among the large transatlantic shippers that they would give -- would have to give and I believe consult among themselves as to whether it was appropriate to give free transportation. Now, the French got around this as far as it was concerned with delivering an exhibition of French art or loans to an exhibition in this country because, after all, the line, the airline -- not the airline but the steamship line, the French line, was nationalized, you see.

MR. CUMMINGS: Government -- I see.

MR. McCRAY: So they did not have the same problem.

MR. CUMMINGS: So it was like the government shipping company that handled it.

MR. McCRAY: We succeeded in obtaining free transportation from the United States lines as a very special concession when those two exhibitions went to France -- in that case, French art going to France.

MR. CUMMINGS: The French do it again, don't they, in a round about way. Why would Moore-McCormack do that? Were they just -- was there somebody there who --

MR. McCRAY: I think it was public relations. I really don't know, because it became so easy, it spoiled us. We hoped that we could do it other places, and didn't as a matter of fact.

MR. CUMMINGS: But that's a huge amount of money involved, you know, shipping a big show and the crates --

MR. McCRAY: Thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars. Immensely.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's terrific. You know, we had talked briefly about the generation of ideas for exhibitions and how there were committees that they were discussed in. How long would it take from, say -- well, who would present an idea? Would you present an idea or would other members or how was that done? Because what I'm driving at is the whole evolution of the idea of the committee, the curator, the whole procedure involved in -- how did that whole operation function?

MR. McCRAY: Well, they were generated from a number of sources. We were, as you remember, I said, active in a number of international exhibitions. And those kept coming up almost faster than you could deal with them so that these had to be resolved and there was still no apparatus in government for doing this. And the other museums had rather stood off, just because of the cost of it. And the fact that we were fortunate enough to, at that time at least, have special funds earmarked for that purpose, we were able to respond. Exhibitions that were sent out on American art were generated after considerable discussion. For example, the first exhibition that went abroad, first American exhibition that went to Europe at least after the program got underway was an exhibition of 12 different painters and sculptors. And it was to represent more or less the major directions that were taking place in -- that were foremost in American painting at that time. And they ranged anywhere from even Albright or Hopper to Toby or Pollock, David Smith, or --

MR. CUMMINGS: But now --

MR. McCRAY: And the --

MR. CUMMINGS: Who would present the -- you know, would you take ideas from outside the Museum, or were these all ideas generated in the Museum?

MR. McCRAY: Both. The Museum generally determined its own -- the character of those exhibitions.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: Talking among the experts in the Museum itself, that first show was done by Andrew Ritchie who, at that time, was the head of painting and sculpture.

MR. CUMMINGS: Painting and sculpture, right.

MR. McCRAY: And I must say, Andrew was an immensely highly organized person who came up with good ideas and executed them promptly and effectively and he was a very good person to deal with. As the various types of exhibitions went abroad, of course, the plan was to supplement what had gone before. The next big show that went out was the Twelve Americans. And the next one was Fifty Years of American Art, which was a much, much bigger show, and which drew on the collections of the Museum extensively and even the -- the paintings and sculpture that were in the collectors of trustees -- in the collections of trustees and things of this sort. That was -- after that show, it was felt that we could particularize more or less as we chose, because they had had the whole scene, in painting and sculpture, in architecture, in prints and topography, in design, in film. It was an immense presentation. And it traveled around to quite a number of countries in Europe and served as a sort of background exhibition for whatever followed. And then such exhibitions as the New American Painting which came after that was presenting, which at that time, I think, one agreed was the dominant -- short-lived as it was in a sense -- every era seems to be dominated by --

MR. CUMMINGS: A group briefly, momentarily.

MR. McCRAY: One group, for a while, anyhow. And that --

MR. CUMMINGS: Now --

MR. McCRAY: -- show was undertaken, I think, just in time, shall we say, before the --

MR. CUMMINGS: But now I get the feeling that behind all of this is a sense of educating the public abroad. You know, showing the Europeans what America is about.

MR. McCRAY: Well, it was that, because Europeans had not seen anything from America to speak of. There were no American -- there was very little if any American art. I mean, you think that the national museums of France contained one picture which was the Whistler Mother, at the time our program began. Or that Russia to this day, I think, has only one picture which is a rather pretty Whistler landscape.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, there is Rockwell Kent in Russia.

MR. McCRAY: And, of course, now they have Rockwell Kent.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, there are a few American impressionists in French museums. But nothing new.

MR. McCRAY: Yes, but the museums in Paris have very, very little.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And there was a great curiosity. I mean, America had come to be considerably more interesting to Europeans after the war, this immensely powerful nation that had manifested itself.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: They were curious to see. I mean, it's even interesting that the Russians tolerated a really quite interesting American exhibition.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why do you say it that way? What --

MR. McCRAY: Well, during Khrushchev's brief regime, you remember the Russians were rather open in inviting an exhibition, which had -- a painting and sculpture exhibition that of course had that immense view of America in multiple projections and all kinds of things that Charlie Eames and George Nelson had put together largely.

The Family of Man was included in that exhibition from the museum. The exhibition that Edith Halperin was the curator of. She, being of Russian lineage and speaking Russian -- some -- and knowing the Russian character was tolerant to some extent of their reaction for a while, anyhow. And, I mean, nothing of that character has been invited to Russia since. It was a very interesting period. The Russians, for a moment, had a soft spot in their hearts. We had the same experience, multiplied many times in that exhibition, with the large book installation. Because the Russians did remove quantities of books which they regarded as subversive.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: And they were stolen, they were not officially removed. They just disappeared.

MR. CUMMINGS: Unknown hands --

MR. McCRAY: All kinds of books, like Bibles and things like that, were removed from the exhibition.

MR. CUMMINGS: Never to be seen again?

MR. McCRAY: Never to be seen again.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you think happened to them?

MR. McCRAY: Well, it was the general impression that they had been taken by the officials of the government. I'm not sure that that was always true. I think that there were a lot of very curious people who had an opportunity to lift a book now and then. And that some of them disappeared that way. We much later, in Yugoslavia, for example, had an exhibition of books, of museum publications and a few related books, books related to the exhibition, which we rather freely displayed on tables and asked people to examine them. And in one instance, in Belgrade, for example, a very short time before the uprising in Hungary, there had been an excursion boat that had come down from Budapest to Belgrade explicitly to see that exhibition. They got off the boat, they stayed in the exhibition until the boat took off again. And quite a number of the books vanished in that --

MR. CUMMINGS: Group?

MR. McCRAY: -- visit. And I think the guard, for example, in the exhibition was greatly exercised and wanted to call in the police. And I tried to paint a picture of what might happen if these were his own countrymen. And he was sympathetic and did not create any disturbance. And I said, if there are -- if there are any others who inquire about the availability of books, please give me their names and addresses and we will gladly send them these books. Well, it was not very long after that, of course, the uprising occurred and I then felt very sorry that we had in any way jeopardized the welfare of those people by having the books available that they could carry away, because they probably implicated them in some way. So you never know how to handle situations like that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Would you, in terms of the operations of an exhibition, just assume a certain amount of disappearance of publications?

MR. McCRAY: No, not as a rule.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: Not as a rule. Occasionally, a book would disappear.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you wouldn't send a crate of backup books just to replace?

MR. McCRAY: No, we started out with a set of books for each of the stops of the --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: We did not start out. They were sent ahead for each showing, directly through customs from shipments from the United States. But they -- the idea, of course, of those books also was to present them to a university or to a museum.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, so they'd stay there.

MR. McCRAY: In the country in which the exhibition was in, so there would be some library references in the country afterward.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, you know, in organizing -- oh, sorry -- how would you normally deal with a museum in

those countries? Would you go to the museum, to some international secretariat of the country or diplomatic source first and then to the museum? Or --

MR. McCRAY: It varied. For example, the Biennial had its full secretariat, so --

MR. CUMMINGS: No, I meant the traveling exhibitions.

MR. McCRAY: Yes, well, many governments have organizations. The organization that we dealt through in France was the Action d'Artistique of which, what's his name, was the director at that point, the novelist? I forget his name.

MR. CUMMINGS: Monroe?

MR. McCRAY: No. Erlanger, Philippe Erlanger. They had an apparatus and he had an excellent assistant by the name of Govan [phonetic] who was accustomed to all of the problems of international exhibition exchanges and he was immensely helpful. We consulted with them about the agents who would receive the shipment, for example, from our own agents in this country. At the same time, we frequently had our own embassy contact or in some instances we would contact ourselves directly the ministry of whatever it may be. It was sometimes the Ministry of Education, it was sometimes the ministry -- as in France, it was always the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education. In another government, it might be a ministry of education and culture. In some instances, they had separate ministries for culture as Yugoslavia did. As various governments have changed, I think the French have changed their policy again on this. But for example, a great deal of the detail was the responsibility for getting the publication of the catalogue going in France was undertaken by the Action d'Artistique. The museum that would be used for the exhibition would be discussed and we would mutually agree on acceptance of the institution that was chosen. I mean, sometimes -- this followed much more informally, you met at a Biennale or somewhere the director of a museum, he said that he would like to have an exhibition, and you began your correspondence directly with him, and he then channeled it through the appropriate organizations in his own government and it came to you different ways. There was never any real formula. You --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, depending on their own system.

MR. McCRAY: You got used to a formal procedure in each country in you dealt with often enough. But, for example, the first exhibition that we sent to the Biennial, the Matarazzos being private and the Biennial not being totally a national operation, we anticipated and we ran into even more difficulty than we expected with customs clearance.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, that's standard in South America, isn't it?

MR. McCRAY: And we always -- yeah, but we always assured lenders that we would not allow their pictures to be opened except under the supervision of a curator and to ship them into the institutions in which they were being shown. And we had a really serious impasse in the first shipment we made into -- the boat, Moore-McCormack landed in Rio and the shipment had to be transported from there overland to Sao Paulo. And in the first instance in which we had trouble, the customs -- it was pouring rain. And the customs insisted upon moving the cases under a very insufficient cover and keeping them there until the customs officials could open them and examine them and check them against the listings that we had provided. And, well, it was fortunate that one of the -- the second man in the Brazilian delegation at the U.N., I had known when he was here and he had been transferred to the Foreign Office in Brazil. And I had to say that we simply could not allow the customs to open things there and that we would, if we were forced to, return them to New York. And they did not bat an eye. They didn't seem to care whether we were taking them back or not. So I then got someone to call for me the ministry and we found this friend and he immediately obtained some official paper that made it possible and a messenger came with the document that made it -- gave us a sort of laisse passer to go to Sao Paulo. But that was a very exceptional occasion. And after that, we worked on the detailed preclearance of these things. Before we left New York, we had the paper in hand that guaranteed passage through. But so many of these things, you have to learn by experience, alas.

MR. CUMMINGS: Turns one into a diplomat.

MR. McCRAY: Well, sometimes gives you a lot of sleepless nights, too.

MR. CUMMINGS: But, you know, to go back again to the idea, as you described the exhibitions and their sequence, it seems to me that -- or I get the image of the museum saying we will do A exhibition, which is general, and then we will do B and C, which are more specific. And it sounds like a large program, but you obviously can't plan five-year programs or things like that. But sort of inherent in the thinking of the people of the committee is the constant educational activity. Is that so? Do you think that was there, a present factor? Like doing a big survey show and then the Twelve Americans and then --

MR. McCRAY: Do you think that was where?

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, in the minds of the committee over the years that were involved?

MR. McCRAY: The committee, the coordination committee, yes. And particularly in the minds of the curators in the museum of the collections affecting the materials that we were using. Alfred Barr was always very prominent in those decisions because, after all, he sat on the Museum collections. And the Museum collections, in most instances, made up the bulk of the exhibitions.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And once the Museum agreed to lend generously, other people would fall in line. And you could -- there was a good deal of bargaining that had to be done sometimes in getting pictures of important consequence. You would have to say that so-and-so and so-and-so -- never a stock letter would do the trick. You would have to always get people to join the bandwagon, so to speak.

[End of Disk 6.]

[Disk 7.]

MR. McCRAY: -- always get people to join the bandwagon, so to speak. Particularly when you --

MR. CUMMINGS: Because the rest of the [inaudible] --

MR. McCRAY: Yes, it really is one of the things you discover in borrowing pictures.

MR. CUMMINGS: But now what would you do in the case of -- as I know so often, collectors will say, well, I'll only loan you that picture for X months and you want it for twice as long?

MR. McCRAY: Well, in general, we would have to decline the offer. In rare instances, for example the Philadelphia Museum, the terms of the loan of the Aaronsburg things, you know, is for one showing and that has a time limit. And in some instances, the loan was accepted because we knew what the conditions were before we approached them. And it was borrowed for a Paris showing or something like that. Or sometimes they were immensely generous about conforming to their own regulation but at the same time, making another loan, but taking it home to fulfill the regulation.

MR. CUMMINGS: You mean shipping back and forth?

MR. McCRAY: Back and then again.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, my goodness.

MR. McCRAY: Not for everything.

MR. CUMMINGS: But an occasional piece.

MR. McCRAY: There were occasions when we were able to get the pictures back into a second showing out of six or something. I mean, they were very liberal and intelligent about it, I thought.

MR. CUMMINGS: Would you have occasion where somebody said, I'll lend you that picture if you give me something to fill up the blank space? Because I know that --

MR. McCRAY: Yes, that frequently was proposed. And the Museum fortunately, and unfortunately, had made a ruling, which the collection had requested from -- that the board itself legalize and they decided that they would not replace loans so that we could not use that as a device. That sometimes, of course, was very hard because we lost pictures of great importance that we would like to have exhibited.

MR. CUMMINGS: In organizing this interview and looking through the catalogues, it would just be impossible to organize some of those exhibitions now. People don't lend, the insurance would be incredible.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. Well, I mean, when we borrowed, as I think I mentioned, the great Renoir from Duncan Phillips, it was like absolutely wrenching his soul out of his body.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I'm sure.

MR. McCRAY: And he said, and he kept his word, he never lent it again. And it was, I think, only due to the fact that it was a great French picture that had been -- not been in France for a long time.

MR. CUMMINGS: For a long, long time.

MR. McCRAY: That finally persuaded him to let it go.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you think of the results of the exhibitions in terms of their sociopolitical influence?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think that, for example, to take the easiest one, the most flattering thing that we did to a government was to send its own art showing that it had been collected by the Americans. I mean, there was some mention in the French press that these should have not been allowed to leave the country.

MR. CUMMINGS: After the fact.

MR. McCRAY: After the fact. But in most instances, the reaction was one of immense gratitude for sharing these pictures and, in many instances, for having saved them because they might have [inaudible] happened to them. The availability of them was something for which they expressed immense gratitude. That was true of the Italians as well.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you find that the American works were rather controversial though in some of the exhibitions?

MR. McCRAY: Oh, very much so. And I think without question they did have a great impact on the young in most of the countries. They were pictures the like of which were not familiar to most of the European audience, and I suppose we were fortunate in this country in having seen them maybe 10 years before they were seen there, and we got somewhat the same reactions there that we got here when Pollock and people like that were first shown. But many of the young were terribly impressed by it. And many of the -- and many others, not necessarily the young and the old, were very opposed to what they felt was almost an invasion of these very --

MR. CUMMINGS: The new aggressive aesthetic?

MR. McCRAY: Aggressive, yes. Pictures that had been hung on their walls, the foremost thing in this country.

MR. CUMMINGS: You know, I was reading a Leger essay of, I don't know, 1911 or '13. And he said that one must realize the paintings in the twentieth century will get larger, get more abstract, more complex. And I thought, you know, in 1958, everybody was screaming and half a century earlier he knew what was going to happen

MR. McCRAY: Yes --

MR. CUMMINGS: So it was a rather marvelous thing.

MR. McCRAY: That sentiment has more or less continued. I think there is, as a matter of fact, more antagonism now than there was then.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: I mean, you know, you have acceptance and you have antagonism now as well as then.

MR. CUMMINGS: Antagonism where, though?

MR. McCRAY: There was an -- the artists, particularly, felt like an encroachment was being made on their territory.

MR. CUMMINGS: In Europe?

MR. McCRAY: A number of English artists, for example, individually protested. And, you know, two years ago they were still writing in the Observer on Sundays about the way that the American market for painting, which was so commercialized, had taken away from the sales of their own works in their own country. That many of their rich collectors were buying American rather than Britain and they simply did not accept the fact perhaps that the discriminating collector preferred the American and was willing to pay the difference.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right. Well, also, the difference in what influences a collector to part with X amount of money.

MR. McCRAY: Sure.

MR. CUMMINGS: Lots of elements. What was the Rothko exhibition like, which you were closely involved with? The Paris one.

MR. McCRAY: Well, the Rothko exhibition was just being conceived when I resigned from the Museum. And in Paris, which was its last showing, it had been scheduled to be shown in the Musee d'Moderne.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: Shortly before, very shortly before the exhibition was to arrive, Mr. Malraux [phonetic] canceled the exhibition.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: And I think it was during a period when Malraux did several really rather paranoid things about American art. He had already earlier telephoned the chairman of the jury in the Venice Biennale, for example, and expressed really appalling sentiments about the American exhibition at the Biennale and said that the prize must go to the French entry. And he saw -- I was led to believe -- did not want the Rothko show and gave the -- I mean, it was a real political act. He gave the exhibition to a very much less distinguished exhibition. And Rene d'Harnoncourt, who I think partly because he was a European, felt the slight quite strongly. And also it was not the best time for Mark, as a matter of fact, and felt that it would be absolutely a crushing blow for Mark after all of these years to be denied a major show in Paris.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah. Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: Particularly in Paris. So negotiations were undertaken to find another place at the last minute -- a place with some prestige. And the only thing that could be made available was the building, you know, oppose the entrance to the Musee d'Moderne, which is the Musee La Ville de Paris. And that museum at that time did not have the prestige of the one opposite. But we surveyed the situation there and found that the only place that they were offering was in the basement of that building in what was actually a storeroom.

MR. CUMMINGS: How astounding.

MR. McCRAY: Which had only one light in the center of the ceiling, and was raw building blocks or something of that sort. And it was, however, at the bottom of the main stairs as you directly came in, directly into the museum. So after a good deal of bickering and trying to get another place, we had to make a choice between canceling and I was on my way back from my world trip that I had made and was in Paris. And Rene at that point asked me if I could delay returning home and try to place the exhibition and see that it opened and so forth. So I was -- spent a day or two looking over the physical situation, which was very grave, and then got an architect in, a young architect, to plan what we could to remake this place and got the Museum to agree to a considerable budge so that we could --

MR. CUMMINGS: The Paris museum?

MR. McCRAY: No the --

MR. CUMMINGS: Modern?

MR. McCRAY: The Modern Museum, the program. And the -- I think the government, the French government by this point felt somewhat embarrassed and they were accommodating, but they were not --

MR. CUMMINGS: Cooperating?

MR. McCRAY: -- cooperating to any great degree. Any rate, we did remake this room and made a very elaborate and prominent entrance into it from the main floor. And put new light into the room and painted it and did the floor over and all kinds of things just in order to hang the exhibition. I never felt that the result was as happy as I would have liked it to have been, because the ceiling was too low to get a -- what we had planned to put was muslin over the ceiling to diffuse the light, because Mark's pictures always looked better and he preferred to have them in dim light rather than bright light. And I do not think that we managed to get a sufficiently flattering light for the pictures. But it came off. And it was very interesting that Mr. Malraux declined to attend the opening and the foreign minister declined to attend the opening. And it was only through [inaudible] interception, who is an American [inaudible] who was Ethel Woodward [phonetic] from here in New York, who was a member of the international council of the Museum of Modern Art, who asked friends of hers in Paris if they would have a lunch before the opening. Chip Bolon [phonetic] was our ambassador at that point. And he had agreed to open the exhibition for us. But there was a small luncheon held before the party and the surprise guest at the luncheon was Madame Pompidou who at that time -- this was during De Gaulle's presidency. And her husband at that time was in line for the presidency, shall we say. And she appeared at the luncheon and it was at the Rothschild's right across the street from the Palais de l'Elysee. And we went from that luncheon to the -- to the exhibition and just at the moment our ambassador arrived, he was greeted by the wife of the Prime Minister of France, who turned out to be considerably more prestigious than if Mr. Malraux had been there. [Laughter.] So we felt, diplomatically at least, we had --

MR. CUMMINGS: Something.

MR. McCRAY: -- won the day.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what about the international council? How did that whole thing began? Because you were involved with that?

MR. McCRAY: Well, in that whole program as such, started in '52 and the -- a year later, I should say first that Mrs. John Rockefeller was brought into the picture by Nelson who was president of the museum, who was very -- who had [inaudible] -- who was the one who had been instrumental in getting the grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to make the program possible. But Nelson's interest in making -- giving some continuity to the program, he was anxious to build into the program a group of people who would be interested in sustaining over a period beyond the granting period of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the kind of activity that we were undertaking. So he asked his sister-in-law, Mrs. Rockefeller, to work on the conception of a council, which she did. And the idea was that in the period of five years during which the initial grant was made, the council would grow in numbers and, hence, in contributions so that hopefully at the end of the five years, they would be the support of the program. This was undertaken and, as early as '53, the council was created in name. It had very, very few members. And the amounts of money that its dues produced had very little impact on the program at first, because they had to maintain a staff, a small staff, and pay that staff out of their own funds, and they invited George Kennan to give a rather important talk on art and international relations, which they published. They gave travel grants occasionally to people, scholars whom we might ask to go and lecture at opening -- in the opening week of an exhibition or something of the sort. People like Meyer Schapiro, for example, went to London and spoke at the opening of the exhibition of abstract expressionism. And, of course, did the brilliant thing that very few scholars might have done. He was invited to lecture at the Courtauld Institute and during that very short visit, and also at Oxford on -- one, on medieval manuscripts and the other -- first on the painting show, then on medieval manuscripts. And then his famous work on Da Vinci and Freud. And it was an awfully good investment. They did this sort of thing. And at the end of the five years, while their number had increased and their contributions had increased, it was not providing the kind of money that we needed. So the Rockefeller Brothers Fund was approached again and extended their grant for another five years on a diminishing basis. And at that time, entered into an agreement with the international council that at the end of the second five years, that they would be delivering $125,000. As it worked out, at the end of the 10 years, the museum was in the midst of its fundraising drive and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund again contributed $1 million, the council contributed another million dollars. And from that much endowment, plus the annual dues, to this day the international council has supported the program.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: But it was not the main support during those early years.

MR. CUMMINGS: So they really established a capital base at that point.

MR. McCRAY: Yes. Now, the council, as it grew in numbers and as it contributed to the operation, of course got much more interested in what was being done. And came in with some new ideas. We had been approached individually before the council was created by independent investors -- I mean, individual investors who wanted to borrow pictures for their embassies abroad and things of this sort. And this was undertaken before the office was set up in Washington, you remember, later in Smithsonian, Mrs. Kefauver. And before the beautiful collection of pictures was bought and lent by the Woodward Foundation. And some of the council members, I remember Mrs. Corrin Strong, particularly, who had been one of the -- as an ambassador's wife in Oslo, had benefited by one of the first collections of pictures that we put together for an embassy. In gratitude for that, made a considerable contribution to the program for -- expressly for this purpose. And then collections were put together for Bohn and for Yugoslavia when the Kennans were there, India when Galbraith was there and so forth. And that program has continued. Mexico and -- it has continued long after my time, and has reached quite a number of major embassies in the world. Even included, was to include, and preparation was done on the selection of pictures, even for the Chinese -- the American mission in China, Mainland China, when the Bruces were there.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yes.

MR. McCRAY: And then it was decided at the last minute, since the Bruces were returning, that it would not be undertaken. But it had gone that far by then.

MR. CUMMINGS: I am curious about several things here. One is several years ago, I was reading notes to various meetings at the Museum of Modern Art. And one thing that has struck me over and over and over is the, I guess, strong guiding hand of Nelson Rockefeller behind so many of the projects there. What do you think the Museum means to him in those situations, like the international council? He's able to vote in different situations. And I'm very curious, you know, it seems like it is a very usable institution from his point of view, just looking at the activities, in many different ways.

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think you have to remember that Nelson was one of the most active members of that family.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: In the early days, he was very close to his mother, whose baby it was.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And I think he had the Museum's interests and many ideas that fed it that were very good, and certainly supported it generously with his energies and other resources.

MR. CUMMINGS: But what do you think it was that came out of that, though?

MR. McCRAY: When he became governor, for example --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: -- he could no longer, you see, be a trustee, because the board is chartered by the Board of Regents of the state. And gradually, David, his brother, and Mrs. John Rockefeller became much more prominent in the institution. And Nelson's interests and energies became more and more directed in political directions.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And I think that they have lost a good deal in that process. But I think Nelson's -- the circumstances under which his career developed ultimately almost removed him from that. You have to also remember that during that period, he became interested in a much broader base of collecting.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And in working rather closely with Rene d'Harnoncourt and Bob Goldwater created the Plimpton [phonetic] Museum. And then when Michael was lost abroad, the concept of creating a memorial to him, and I think the prospect which -- I certainly am not the appropriate one to say this, but I think that the idea of creating and endowing a museum that was as personal as that collection had become, and particularly bearing his son's name, was something that Nelson felt he couldn't afford, actually, to do appropriately. And I think it must have been about that time that the gift to the Metropolitan was considered and finally made.

MR. CUMMINGS: But it always strikes me, particularly, as I have read more documents over the years and interviewed people associated with the Museum, is that the institution's international aspects seemed to be very much in the fore among the trustees, for example. They were very aware of being involved with -- you know, you can go to Patagonia, you know, and the Museum of Modern Art is well known in one way or another.

MR. McCRAY: I remember delivering some prints in Ethiopia. [Laughter].

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, you see, I think that -- and I think that, you know, the -- not the art but I'm talking about the methodologies the Museum has employed over the years to get its name abroad and to set itself as a benchmark or touchstone as sort of quality control above, I think, almost any museum in the world, certainly of twentieth century art or the last century, somehow seems more and more calculated to me, as I find out more about things. Is that so? Or is it just happenstance?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I don't think it was calculated within the Museum. I think that it grew out of so many circumstances. The Museum of Modern Art was almost unique in the world during the whole war period and the reconstruction period. It was the only museum in strength -- in collections and strength of its period. And with the resources to respond that had total continuity. The activity was not broken and it was a very professionalized operation, actually. And it came to be admired very much, and sought after by people who came here and saw it. I think that really is what was -- I think the institution won whatever recognition it had by appealing to -- the Europeans, for example, have, as time has gone on since the war, grabbed the palm in a sense and have done -- we've got the Pompidou in Paris, for example, and the activities, for example, in London have been much greater. The character [inaudible] participation in contemporary art has been greatly strengthened.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, the Hayward does a lot of --

MR. McCRAY: The Hayward Gallery does a lot of things. The facilities, you see, of many of those places did not exist or the precedent did not exist when the Museum was preeminent in its field, certainly internationally.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, I think a lot of that had to do with Alfred Barr.

MR. McCRAY: Sure. I mean, it had to do with the focus --

MR. CUMMINGS: The persona of Barr --

MR. McCRAY: -- of the people who were doing it and the quality of the -- of the production. Alfred Barr's writings had a great deal to do with it and the quality of the collection, the international collection of the museum, is still I think the best anywhere.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, there isn't anybody in Paris, London -- who else has any?

MR. McCRAY: No, the marvelous things in those collections. But if you think, for example, how brilliant Sandberg was in Amsterdam, all of that came after the war, you see, and considerably after.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And the Kroller Muller, all of those museums were either temporarily or had not -- temporarily handicapped by the war or aftermath of the war, or had not gotten to their full momentum at that point.

MR. CUMMINGS: But they hadn't done much before the war with contemporary art.

MR. McCRAY: I mean, now, for example, what has happened in many of the museums in Germany is terribly impressive.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: But a great deal of that energy, I think, has gone into recovering their own art, which they lost in such --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, they built up several enormous [inaudible] international collections since 1960.

MR. McCRAY: Sure.

MR. CUMMINGS: In Germany.

MR. McCRAY: I mean, you think of the American art that now has gone to Cologne, it's unbelievable.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you see that book they published in Germany last year listing the amount of American art in German museums?

MR. McCRAY: No, I didn't see that.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's incredible. It's just phenomenal. There are -- I would say there are twenty-some American artists. You cannot do a major show without German loans. You know, 20 of these, 30 of those, 50 works by that one. It's incredible.

MR. McCRAY: Well, it's fascinating with the international economics of countries like Italy, for example, or -- well, Italy particularly that there is an extremely important exhibition in Milan of American art of that period. Well, there was a lot of stuff bought in several collections in Belgium. It's just amazing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, Ponza buys a whole roomful at a time.

MR. McCRAY: Ponza, by the time we took that exhibition of Italian art to the Palazzo Reale in Milano, had a houseful of Kleins and Rothkos and that sort of thing. Amazing. And to think of what it's become now.

MR. CUMMINGS: You know, one thing that has come up several times in conversation is again kind of going back to the international council as a body, the political influence of the Museum of Modern Art exhibitions -- I don't know exactly what I'm driving at, but actually several of the trustees have said this is something somebody should talk about. And I don't know what they mean because they've never explained it -- [break in recording] -- Do you know what they mean? Do you know what they're talking about?

MR. McCRAY: About exactly what? The political?

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, the political implications of the international council and its effects, influence, whatever it was? I don't know.

MR. McCRAY: Well --

MR. CUMMINGS: Particularly in the early days.

MR. McCRAY: I don't know. The -- for example, the -- going back again to the French, the French exhibitions -- at the time the French exhibitions were done, the president of the museum was Bill Burden who, I think, at the same time was the president of the Franco-American Society in New York. And he, as you know, had close ties with France, continues to. And I don't think however that he figured sufficiently in the preparation or the selection or the borrowing process, doesn't seem to have had any real impact on it. Doug Dillon at the time was ambassador and was certainly sensitive enough a person to have made the most of this in a country like France with a handsome platter of goodies to feast their eyes upon for the whole summer, was not one to miss the opportunity to present this in the light of very sophisticated cultural event in this country of having originally assembled such things. But I really don't believe that there was any great -- any more political impact. I think we are diminishing the true effectiveness of art by saying that there was. I think it was the art that did the trick wherever an impact resulted. I think it was the artists that we have to thank for that. Obviously, there were political implications always, because the United States was a big government and a rich government and the anti-American feeling in Europe was, as the program got under way, mounted after the [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Those were the Cold War days, too.

MR. McCRAY: Cold War days, all of those things, made it more difficult to get ahead with just the normal procedure of putting up exhibitions. But they got done. And the exhibitions, the content of the exhibitions were the real factors, it seems to me, in whatever benefits resulted. I feel that -- which is contrary to the way you put the question -- that the international council today has -- that its membership has expanded considerably internationally, that it is almost equal to the American membership, which was a very late development.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's only in the last half or dozen years or so, isn't it?

MR. McCRAY: Or less, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And in that membership, there is a sprinkling of collectors, many oriented toward collecting American art. There are others who are, I suppose, in the process of inviting a rich contributing membership, that they have gone to the top, sort of, of the social and economic strata in those countries. You have the Agnellis and people like that on your -- on that council today. But as far as I have been able to observe them in operation, there is still not any especially political impact that enters into any of that activity.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why do people who live in Europe, say, join that council? What do they get out of it, if you live in France or Italy or England or wherever?

MR. McCRAY: Well, they get to New York a couple of times a year. An excuse to come to New York, I guess. Not that they need it, most of them. There is also a very fancy trip that is made by the council every year to some -- it was to Australia two years ago, it was to Japan, it was last year to -- this past spring to Switzerland and Paris and it was to Germany, I think, the time before that. It is very useful to the council members wherever they may be from, because they have access to practically everything. They have museums opened specially for them, they have special exhibitions put up, they have elaborate entertaining that is laid on sometimes by the government, sometimes by the council members from those countries. It is an awfully good party, so to speak.

MR. CUMMINGS: So it's a very good social --

MR. McCRAY: It is a very socially rewarding experience. And also an immensely --

[Break in recording.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Side six -- say this is side six.

MR. McCRAY: It was really in relation to this that in the early beginnings of the council, they encountered some resistance from me, the council did, as far as becoming a large body of people. I said I would much -- be much happier -- and I thought anyone -- this was at the point I was considering leaving the Museum -- that I thought that the program would be much more effectively run if it had to cope with fewer people. And ideally, that those people should be chosen because of their commitment to the essence of international cultural exchange.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And perhaps it would be better to seek 10 people who would give $10,000 a year rather than 100 people who would give $1,000 a year.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: So in the first place, I was being quite selfish about it, coping with 100 people as opposed to 10 for

one thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, 10 can take up as much time.

MR. McCRAY: And then I made a very unkind, probably, reference to the fact. I said it is worth $1,000 or more to this person or that person who will join the council, who can later say when he returns home to some spot wherever it may be, oh, yes, I have just come back from New York where I had dinner with Mrs. Rockefeller, or this or that or the other. I said, we are throwing it away, so to speak.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, absolutely.

MR. McCRAY: And if you're really going to try to involve these people, they should be involved deeply and make that really more serious commitment on their own part to support and be in this thing, and not be in it for the extracurricular activities and pleasantries of the thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: But sometimes --

MR. McCRAY: That can be a part of it, but it should not dominate.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah. Now, from '55 to '66, you were a trustee of the Museum of Modern Art, right?

MR. McCRAY: '50 -- when was it?

MR. CUMMINGS: '55, or was it later?

MR. McCRAY: Remember when I became -- through into the '60s.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, it was about a decade.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: You have it probably correct. I had it on that thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: On that page, right. How did that happen? And was it useful? Because you were involved with the international council or --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think it grew out of that situation that I think I described that followed Rene's --

MR. CUMMINGS: Of the committee --

MR. McCRAY: -- as director, as director.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: He, I think, was anxious to have a few key people in the institution understand how the board worked, understand what his problems and pleasures were in working with the board. That also the members of the staff who were on the board could contribute to the meetings of the board in the discussion of certain aspects of museum activity and programs.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MR. McCRAY: And I think that was the reason. I regret to say that, since Rene's death, that the board has not revived that custom of appointing members of the board -- members of the staff, executive staff, to the board. I think it was a very important asset, really, that there was that contact at the board table, actually.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right. Well, how did -- how do you think that affected your ability to go back and work with your staff? I mean, did they feel that they had -- if they had a problem they wanted brought to the board, could they tell you and feel it would go or that you would bring back whatever the information the board had on a certain topic? Was it a closer relationship? Or was it just a difficult one because --

MR. McCRAY: I think you have to understand that the board meetings of the Museum were very formal occasions and there were very carefully prepared agendas on which complaints or ideas or whatever they may be were carefully reviewed by the director's office and the coordinating committee, as long as that lasted, before they got on to the agenda.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And the board always did ask other members, particularly the curatorial staff, to attend meetings from time to time, to explain new acquisitions when the question of acquisitions came up. They liked to have a slight review by the curators of those divisions of the collections to present their arguments for approval or disapproval of the acquisition committee's recommendation. I think that the -- your own staff felt good about the fact that they had some representation on the board, just in principle.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you could define the kind of daily operations that, say, an outside trustee would never observe or wouldn't really know about?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you think it presented any problems in terms of the staff and day-to-day operations, your being on the board like that?

[End of Disk 7.]

[Disk 8.]

MR. McCRAY: I think there were certain -- not mine more than anybody else's, I hope. I think there was, as time went on, an annoyance, perhaps, that some of the other directors of departments were not on the board.

MR. CUMMINGS: So it was competition on another level?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. That it was a more or less petty thing and --

MR. CUMMINGS: But was it an advantage, for example, when you were organizing exhibitions, to be a trustee as well as the head of a department?

MR. McCRAY: It perhaps helped in dealing with collectors and things of that sort, and lenders. I think that they maybe were more responsive. I don't know, because that never was an express part of any dealing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because I know it's very ambiguous. Some institutions like staff people on and some don't. I just -- but you felt generally that it was a positive?

MR. McCRAY: I think it was a contribution, really. I admit that I was looking at it from a prejudiced point of view. But the other point of view is very strong, though, in -- if you look at museums across the country or foundation boards and things of that sort, it absolutely astonishes me that there is not some more representation that is generally characteristic on the boards. It depends -- it's unfair to criticize unless you know how they conduct their meetings. They might invite a lot of staff people into situations or they may not. Sometimes they don't, though.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And while there are institutions where even the director of an institution is not -- he may be an ex officio member, but he's not a voting member. And it's very odd, I think.

MR. CUMMINGS: I think that's very difficult because it means that you're really not fully behind the director. Time moved along. You decided, what about the Museum? You were planning to leave, go somewhere else, do something else? What happened in those --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I had no future plan when I left the Museum. Except that I felt the program, the support of the program which was at that moment terminating as far as the foundation was concerned, the fund, the Brothers Fund, that we would be contracting our operation, you see. And I don't know how old I was -- I was in my fifties by then -- I didn't really feel like I wanted to do a diminishing amount of activity rather than more.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And particularly, as I explained earlier, with a great many more points of view being expressed which are not in [inaudible] --

[Telephone ringing.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Was there a period between the Museum of Modern Art and the JDR Fund? That seemed to have started in '63 and the Modern was in '62? Or how did --

MR. McCRAY: Well, that is only a technicality. I resigned from the Museum in '61 and I decided -- at about the same time that I decided to leave, I was offered by Phil Coombs and Joe Slater [phonetic] who, at that time, were

-- Coombs was the assistant secretary of state for cultural affairs in the Kennedy administration -- if I were going to be free, a ticket around the world to quite a number of places where I wanted to visit, which I had not visited before. I had never except for a brief visit in India in the Field Service during the war been in Asia, nor in Africa. So I planned a trip in Asia and Africa extending over about 15 months and announced this to the Museum in my resignation. And Rene asked me if I would permit myself to be on -- what did he call it? -- leave of absence or something of that status and bring back to the Museum at the end of that time some recommendations for ongoing activity of the program.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: And that's how that extra year or so has been added to my affiliation with the Museum.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what did you actually do? I mean, you left the Modern and you traveled?

MR. McCRAY: I traveled.

MR. CUMMINGS: To all those countries.

MR. McCRAY: To all those countries, yes. A year almost in Asia and a few months in Africa. And they were immensely rewarding year -- months, I must say.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what was your exact purpose? I mean, you just didn't go for --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I was -- actually, as the State Department gradually formulated what they would -- they were going to give me a ticket and I was to support the trip otherwise, which I did. I was going into many of the countries on both of those continents, almost all of them, and was to explore the conditions of the arts, whether it was visual or performing.

MR. CUMMINGS: What does that mean?

MR. McCRAY: I arrived -- well, I became familiar with the institutions, whether they were museums or whether they were universities with art departments or whether they were art schools or colleges and normal schools teaching teachers in art. Or whether they were dance and music schools. I visited god knows how many hundreds of them, and met the personnel and conversed with them at some length and was introduced to quite a number of painters and the chief performers, the heads of -- the great problem was -- in the beginning, particularly, was to try and reach the lower echelon of young people. Because you would always meet the principal or you would meet the head of the academy of dance or something like that. And the point was to meet the performers, which I finally learned as I went along how to manipulate this. I also took a good deal of time visiting the monuments of the countries to which I was traveling, which had determined to some extent the places that I was going. I had never been in the Middle East before -- well, I had been in very little of that part of the world before and I had always wanted to establish in my own mind a kind of continuity to the development of art, and it was fascinating to see the -- the art of Asia particularly in depth, or even Africa.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, going to these various countries, there was obviously a certain sense of direction. I mean, you weren't just accumulating raw information.

MR. McCRAY: Well, I was looking at it in terms of what I thought the government might do. I looked at libraries. I looked at what was on -- I would go through the sections of libraries in universities and national libraries and things, public libraries and things of that sort, to see what kind of representation they had not just of American art but of art in -- of all kinds. And I was making a very quick, when you consider the space I was covering, survey of needs really. Well, not needs -- yes, needs in some cases -- benefits we might derive in others from bringing some of those people here or bringing individuals to strengthen the faculties of some of the institutions. In so many instances, to provide books, to provide the most rudimentary teaching materials. Looking also out for possibilities of exhibitions for exchange and things of this sort.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: Some of those things, international exhibitions that have followed, I hope have come out of some of the recommendations we made.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, who did you make the recommendations to? To the State Department or the Museum or --

MR. McCRAY: I made them to the State Department and to the Museum. I regret to say, the State Department was at that time -- Kennedy had -- Coombs had left and there was no continuity, really, to that operation much. And there was not much interest in what I was saying, sorry to say.

MR. CUMMINGS: They just said, thank you very much, and filed it away.

MR. McCRAY: They said, please don't make a long report; we haven't got time to read it. Please keep it to two or three pages. Well, I mean --

MR. CUMMINGS: You're kidding. For all that? All those countries?

MR. McCRAY: You cover Asia and India, it's rather -- and Africa, it's rather difficult. But I did give a long report and participated in geographical -- and have since -- participated in different geographical committees in the Museum of Modern Art in programming abroad. And I was not returning as a director or as an employee of the Museum. I was still a trustee.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yes, right. Right. But how did you plan this travel?

MR. McCRAY: Well --

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, did you have specific cities and make lists from books or talk to people?

MR. McCRAY: Oh, I talked to innumerable people and I got out my World of Learning and got out the UNESCO book on museums and --

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, you can't just go down and buy a ticket and leave the next day on a project like this?

MR. McCRAY: No, I did an awful lot of work. I got the addresses of people. I visited -- through friends in England who worked in the British consul, I got letters of introduction to the British consuls in most of those countries, I got the stars of our own -- I was supplied with the most incredible load of paper giving me the personnel, the ambassador and the PAO and the cultural affairs officer and the exhibition officers and so forth in our operations in all the countries that I was visiting. I took from the World of Learning the names of the institutions that read to be interesting or people who had been there recommended as being the better ones. I looked in a lot of publications and periodicals to see what had been published on the art of various -- particularly the new art of various countries. It was a very laborious procedure and took months of gathering together. And I promptly lost the first book of those notes. Left them when I got as far as Honolulu. And the cab driver, he knew that I was going to the airport in two hours, because I had told him. And the cab driver had the decency to bring that thing back to the hotel and put it in my hand just as I was leaving for the airport. Greatest luck in my life, really.

MR. CUMMINGS: But now what -- you know, what did that lead to? Because obviously you then go into JDR and again its international activities and a lot of Asian culture activities. What was there about those countries that appealed to you? Why did you want to go there? One always wants to go where one hasn't been, I guess.

MR. McCRAY: Well, I have immense curiosity -- [laughter] -- about places and about people, to begin with. And the quality of the monuments and things of that sort were of very special attraction to me. And also I guess to some extent the war. While I was not in military service, I was in, you know, an ambulance corps. But there was so much contact with people from all parts of the world during the war. For example, in Europe and later in India, the whole British Commonwealth was spread before you. Plus in the countries that you visited, the impact of the war was -- had rather thrown the Europeans into the arms of a lot of Americans who were interested in their things. I remember during the war, for example, finding out about what film activity was being done in Brussels and Paris and things of that sort. Just out of curiosity; I really had an outrageous curiosity about things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, it keeps things exciting.

MR. McCRAY: And I suppose it was this kind of thing generated -- whetted my appetite, really, for delving further and further. And I must say, it proved to be very -- well, obviously very revealing in areas that I had not been. It also gave me very good perspective on the areas in which I had dealt much more extensively.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, how did the Asians perceive you? Because you were what? A State Department representative?

MR. McCRAY: No, no, I did not have a special passport. I was traveling as a tourist.

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, most tourists don't go to libraries and say, I want to see what you have in your library.

MR. McCRAY: No, but see the cultural offices in most instances laid on the first programs.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see.

MR. McCRAY: And then as you met people, you asked them -- I was not, as I have had to ever since, run like I was fleeing from a fire or something. I was taking time. I took a year to do this. And it meant I could be much more deliberate. I didn't have to go on a given date. I could change my dates, cable or write and say, I'm not going to be in your city until some much later date. I did not allow myself to be pushed out of a place before I

felt I had gotten a good deal out of it. And that was a very important part of it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, how were you received, though? Because you must then have been really a private citizen?

MR. McCRAY: I was just a private citizen, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Looking at all these things. But yet you were --

MR. McCRAY: They were delighted that someone was interested in seeing. I daresay they had not had very many people from outside --

MR. CUMMINGS: I'm sure very few in some cases --

MR. McCRAY: -- curious enough to look. They were flattered, I think, that someone, it didn't matter who it was, who spoke their lingo, more or less, who understood their problems. It is true that they thought I was going to be able to solve all their problems.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: Which I spent a great deal of time, trying to dissuade them of that notion. But it was understandable that they were looking for someone and they had had contact with so few people. And still, the reputation of this country and the money that was here and the demonstration that the war had impressed upon them that you could move mountains just made them ask for the most preposterous things.

MR. CUMMINGS: For example?

MR. McCRAY: Well, they wanted -- obviously, wanted new university buildings and they wanted all sorts of things to begin with. In many -- I suppose it's understandable. We have the same inclination, maybe, at home to begin with buildings instead of beginning with quality of content. And this was characteristic, I'm afraid. Some of the countries had been -- you realize that in Africa that the transition of power at that time was taking place as far as the British empire was concerned, the Commonwealth, and the French Union. In some instances, the French had just departed and in some cases the British were in the process of departing. India had just recently become an independent country. Just a very short time before I got into Iraq there had been the assassination of the king and the dictator, military dictator, which was the most harassing experience I had. Because --

MR. CUMMINGS: In what way?

MR. McCRAY: The attitude toward an American as such.

MR. CUMMINGS: Manifested how?

MR. McCRAY: And the severe regulations they had about the curfews and so on. And the interesting circumstances Hugh Auchincloss [phonetic], whom I knew slightly, and I happened to be in Baghdad at the same time. And he was there raising money for the American University in Beirut. I was there as a citizen. But the fact that he was Jackie Kennedy's half brother I guess, caused the Iraqi government to be very nervous so that if we ever, as we occasionally did, go out in the evening to dinner or something like that, to various parties, to various places, we were always accompanied by Jeeps or Land Rovers with machine guns on the back of them -- at your back, I regret to say -- who would just appear out of the bushes without any announcement that they were going to accompany you. And they would have their lights on until you arrived at your destination and then all the lights went out and total silence when you got out and you were greeted by your host. And then when you got ready to leave, after you got in the car, all of these things came alive again and they followed you back to the hotel. And I think Hugh inquired what this was. And it was said it was for his security. But I, for example, went out to Tesseba [phonetic] one day with a taxi driver which happened to have been, unbeknownst to me, about four miles outside of the limit. And I was hauled up the next day and severely questioned and humiliated as much as possible for having broken their regulations. And I had only a simple passport. It was really very uneasy making. I didn't have to -- fortunately, I knew the ambassador and I was hoping to get some help there if necessary, but it worked out after all.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what did -- you know, going from country to country, following a certain program, adding up all this information, seeing all these people, what -- you know, what did you arrive at in terms of as you went along, actually the evolution of this? Did you change your plans a lot? Did you follow pretty much what you decided?

MR. McCRAY: I followed my itinerary almost as I had laid it out.

MR. CUMMINGS: What did -- at the end of the tour --

MR. McCRAY: I changed, for example, my itinerary for Africa and Israel. I went -- I omitted Israel on the way from the Middle East to Africa and I went all the way back to Israel at the end, because I did not want to jeopardize my passport, you see.

MR. CUMMINGS: You have problems with the Arab countries in those days.

MR. McCRAY: Visa problems.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MR. McCRAY: And at that time, Syria was being very sticky. And I had wanted always to go to Aleppo and Palmyra and places like that [inaudible] other places down further. And it seemed a better part of valor just to go to Egypt -- go to Israel afterward. And at that time, of course, Jerusalem was still a divided city, which was -- so I did Jerusalem. Very curiously, I did the Arab part of Jerusalem and then I went all the way through Africa and then came back for the other half of the same city.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah, very curious.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's strange, seeing it from two sides with a lot in between.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. And then the Congo difficulty had arisen by the time I got there and I couldn't do anything but stop over in Leopoldville with the flight.

MR. CUMMINGS: But now what -- you know, what did you intend to do with all this accumulation of --

MR. McCRAY: I didn't know at that time at all. I thought it would -- some of it would be useful. But it had been a perfectly fascinating experience.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you get along with the languages and the cultures and all the different?

MR. McCRAY: Well, there were problems. But the languages, oddly enough, from the Middle East, from India on, English was the best single language I could have. And I had just enough French to get by with in some of the French speaking lands in Africa. And you realize, the Middle East, there was a good deal of English spoken then there. And certainly, as in all of East and South Africa all the way down, English was the language after all, official language. Also in India, remember, English is still the language, the only universally spoken language in India practically, even though Hindi is the official language. The -- I really was fundamentally taking this trip for pleasure and for information and for perhaps ultimate use. I thought that the State Department, at least being interested in having asked me to do this, that there might be something that would later be -- and I had been approached during the years of the international program when I was functioning in Europe if I would like to go into the USIS, the USIA, which I had declined because we had had some rather rough times with them.

MR. CUMMINGS: Everybody seems to have problems with that department. Well, so, after all this travel, you came back to New York. To do what?

MR. McCRAY: Sit on my hands. Put together the notes that I had taken and that sort of thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right. Right.

MR. McCRAY: And was really quite uneasy. Because I had no independent means and I was dependent upon getting a new job of some kind fairly quickly. So that it was -- the generosity of friends who would let me use their apartments and things like that that got me through this rather difficult period until, I think as I described, I was very suddenly employed by Mr. Rockefeller --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, how did that happen? Because we haven't gotten up to that point, actually.

MR. McCRAY: Well, he had been apparently looking for -- had had in the back of his mind for some time setting up a small fund which would attempt to encourage cultural exchange with Asia. And if you remember, Paul, in the years shortly after the war, Mr. Rockefeller had supported the big Japanese show that came in, the Korean show that came in, and the Thai show that came in. And he had this very much on his mind. And he had had an organization -- he had already, before setting up the fund, had set up Population Council and an organization that has now become the Agricultural Development Council. But that organization in its original manifestation also intended to do some cultural activity. And they found that it didn't work together so it was then that he decided to set up a separate --

MR. CUMMINGS: But now Asia House and all of that had been set up before this, wasn't it?

MR. McCRAY: Asia House was in existence, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because that came out of the war.

MR. McCRAY: By then.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And -- well, and so had his support of those exhibitions.

MR. CUMMINGS: Exhibitions, right.

MR. McCRAY: And the Japan Society had been revived, and all those things were already under way. But I think John felt the need of the exchange of people and he felt that the Asia Society -- I feel he still does to a major extent -- that the Asia Society and the Japan Society were program activities and were not organizations to dole out money for scholarships and things of that sort.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see.

MR. McCRAY: That they should depend on others for their support. And while he undertook originally to support those in their creation or their revival, he did totally support them at first. His idea was to broaden the bases for them, so that ultimately they would have an ongoing support not dependent upon him.

MR. CUMMINGS: That seems to be their standard procedure.

MR. McCRAY: And it works in some cases and sometimes it doesn't. And I think that, in many instances, they have -- in spite of professing this sort of pattern of operation, that they have been generous and intelligent, actually, about extending the period during which the calculated --

MR. CUMMINGS: Risk, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: Risk, you know, beyond the initial period, as they did, for example, in the international program. They punched it another five years and then they gave a million dollars in the end to --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, they've got a lot of experience and they know.

MR. McCRAY: Yes, they're very skillful.

MR. CUMMINGS: How things go on. But anyway, what happened? Did you -- did you set up JDR third or did he?

MR. McCRAY: I was called in by the lawyer in John's office, Don McLane [phonetic] who has since become the head of the Lay [phonetic] Clinic in Boston and has now retired. Question about whether I -- the question first about ideas that might be built into the kind of thing that John was thinking of. And then I was -- appointments were made with me for lunch with John for one day and the end of that lunch, John said, well, I've found this interesting, can we have -- this was in August, when he was not so busy. And he said, could you have lunch tomorrow? So we continued our conversation. And when we finished lunch he said, maybe we could come to some conclusion tomorrow, if you're free for lunch. So we had our lunches. And at the end of the third lunch he said, well, I think we can do business together. Can you start? I said, when do you expect me to start? He said, with a sort of twinkle in his eye, well, tomorrow, of course. [Laughter.]

MR. CUMMINGS: The next day, right?

MR. McCRAY: Yes. And, as a matter of fact, I said, well, I would like to go down and visit my mother and perhaps in a couple of weeks, I could begin. Which I did.

MR. CUMMINGS: So now what did --

MR. McCRAY: And I set up shop immediately to -- adjacent to his office and started writing out ideas for a program.

MR. CUMMINGS: So now what --

MR. McCRAY: Just guidelines for what you would like to accomplish.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did he have particular points of view in mind? Or was he just --

MR. McCRAY: Well, his letter of appointment was -- I don't know where that letter is, but it's beautifully brief in saying, you are to be responsible for a program for the international exchange of the visual and performing arts,

period.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, was the JDR set up at this time?

MR. McCRAY: No. It was then created. Don McLane, who was immensely skillful at getting corporations established and tax exemption statuses established both in Washington and in Albany put these things in order before. I started working really before they were in order and I was on John's personal payroll until --

MR. CUMMINGS: All the legal --

MR. McCRAY: The papers were put in order. And we started out with a very, very -- I had a secretary and that was all. Or I didn't have a secretary for a while. Shared a secretary with someone. And gradually added a few more people and we have operated to this day with a very small staff.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what -- you know, what did you do those first few weeks when you were making up ideas and creating projects and programs?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I was formulating a sort of structured proposal of what we would attempt to do. Not in specific projects, as in general ideas, general objectives of the program?

MR. CUMMINGS: For example? I mean, I don't --

MR. McCRAY: Well, we wanted, for example, to -- a program that would increase western appreciation of the Asian arts in the United States, which meant the exchange of companies or exhibitions or things of that sort. Another one was to do the exact opposite, to send American things there. We wanted to offer scholarships and projects that would make it -- to increase the expertise of young and inexperienced candidates, some who were already prominent in their museums, to give them a view of what procedures were in cultural institutions in this country, everything from theater management to conservation in museums or educational projects in museums or film training of archival materials, training of individuals to document the arts of the Asian countries themselves. We brought, for example, later teams of young promising musicians and dancers and so forth to this country and put them into institutes like the Institute of Ethnomusicology at UCLA, where they learned the latest techniques of making elaborate documentation of what their great traditions were. And the idea was that they would have this, but also the American universities and other institutions would benefit by acquiring the materials that were a result of those projects. Teams went out from this country there and did research work, generally advanced degree work. Or architects came into schools here to learn modern methods of building and so forth. Or art historians came here and looked at the collections of this country public and private and we were rather generous among foundations, I think, and always -- not always insisting, but encouraging scholars where they could to visit Europe on their way with coming and going.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because it was around the world, more or less.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah, it could be covered by the same ticket. And as we had greater experience, we could program them with specific people in those institutions in Europe and recommend to them what they should see. This is one of the values of my trip. Because I knew of institutions here, there and everywhere and had some idea of what the quality of them were -- was. And this has proven beneficial ever since. And there were people that I had met on that trip that were useful to me in the program.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, they became your resource.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah, they really became essential resources because we very early tried to set up the most dependable expertise that we could among the Asians themselves to advise us on what we were doing. People that were good and so forth.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right. Right. How did you find people? Because I know in going through the annual reports, you know, there would be a list of seven people from India under this subject or twelve from Thailand or three from here or there. Was it through the contacts that you evolved from the grand tour that --

MR. McCRAY: To some extent, some of them were. Certainly, many of the advisors were. And then I traveled in my 12 years at the Fund a great deal to those countries, met with these older contacts and was always making new ones, and again visiting institutions, seeing what was being done, seeing the work that was being done by this person or that person, looking at museums, seeing what was happening in them.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you constantly renewed your first person contacts.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: But now what -- you know, in your initial organization of all of this, there you were at a desk with

a piece of paper, right?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Where did you start? What indications did you have from Mr. Rockefeller as to where to go, what he was interested in? I mean, you had to have some sense of direction.

MR. McCRAY: We had a number of conversations about what his areas of interest were and he had some very useful contacts. I started working through the Asia Society and Japan Society in furthering my familiarity with their programs and the people that they dealt with. When the creation of the fund was announced in New York Times and other places, we began immediately receiving applications for all kinds of wild ideas, some very good ones and some ridiculous ones. And we immediately became bogged down, really, in sorting these things out. In the beginning, the operation of the like of ours, you had to be careful about -- one tried to be careful about the precedents that you were establishing not only in making grants but in declining grants. We would always be caught later by someone who said, you did this for that person, you didn't do it for the other.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: So you had to define the categories in which you were going to work, the levels at which you were going to work, the balance that you felt you could get in visual performing, the balance you could get in India versus China versus Japan and so forth. And it has been a constant balancing act in that respect. In many instances, in the beginning, it was very easy, for example, to work with the Japanese because it was before the Japan Foundation was created and a great many Japanese were bursting to get out of Japan to undertake their favorite projects in this country. Mr. Rockefeller had a particular interest in the Japanese, but he did not want that to dictate the choice of programs. He wanted a balance to be established and we ended up realizing that India, with its immense population and with its very poor economy, needed more help proportionate to many of the other countries we were dealing with. And even though at times, particularly toward the end, it became increasingly difficult to maintain satisfactory reciprocity with the Indians --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: -- we did continue to operate.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why?

MR. McCRAY: Well, they became much stickier about allowing Americans in to do research, graduate work and things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really? For what reason?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think it sprang from the early abuses of the CIA activity there, probably. We had to live with that. I mean, the fact that you are always subject to that accusation that you are really an agent disguising as a cultural vulture, I've always had that hanging over me from time to time almost anywhere.

MR. CUMMINGS: When did that start, that accusation?

MR. McCRAY: Well, it started -- it was planted, I think, during the Cold War.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, so it goes back?

MR. McCRAY: It goes way back. And in India, the noticeable change came when we sided with -- quite the contrary -- with Pakistan in the Bangladesh business. That's when India really clamped down.

[End of Disk 8.]

[Disk 9.]

MR. McCRAY: We could not get -- at that time, India established a lot of very rigid regulations about doing research in that country. It had to be done in association with a university under a specific faculty supervisor. In many instances we had very expertly trained people here who could not find a counterpart in India and they were blocked.

MR. CUMMINGS: Just couldn't do anything?

MR. McCRAY: Because they were not willing to take a less than satisfactory supervisor. And, oh, it got awfully messy because the implication was that they should not only work under the university but the person had to be -- the grant had to be increased so the person could register and matriculate in the university and do so many

credits and so forth and so on.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: And it got so complex that we dropped most every case.

MR. CUMMINGS: But you could still get people from India to come here?

MR. McCRAY: Oh, yes. There was no decrease in that flow at all.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because I know I keep running into them these days, here and there. You know, one thing that has always interested me about the JDR Fund because I think it has been one of the more public but yet a very personal foundation, I've always gotten the feeling from reading the reports and kind of seeing what they've done and kind of talking to people that Mr. Rockefeller really knew where it was going, what it was doing. You know, you and the other people there were quite aware of his presence. It's not like some foundations that seem rather distant from the donor. Is that so?

MR. McCRAY: Well, yes. You know, we were small. We were a rather intimate operation. Mr. Rockefeller is, you know, involved in lots of things. And he did not want to be bothered by much detail. There were formal museum meetings done with quite extensive docket memoranda made for everything that was proposed and Mr. Rockefeller is one who reads every last word, you know, in those and asked questions himself at the meetings and before the meetings, I think, consulted by telephone a lot of the trustees. So he came to the board meetings quite well informed and almost invariably favoring the proposals that came up. He gave us the most extraordinary cooperation. I look back on it, in the 12 years, we never had a significant turndown on a proposed project.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: Because they were carefully evaluated before being recommended. I had an area of discretion, of course.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: Certain small grants, I could make at my own discretion and simply report to the board and get their formal approval after the fact.

MR. CUMMINGS: But you know, in talking to him before the foundation was set up and then afterwards, what do you think his purpose was in doing this?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think it's very simple. I think that John's really very human respect for other people as demonstrated I think particularly in his experience in Japan. He had --

MR. CUMMINGS: You mean before the war?

MR. McCRAY: He had apparently been very impressed by the Japanese.

MR. CUMMINGS: In the '30s?

MR. McCRAY: In the '30s. And even during the period of negotiations for the peace, I think that he felt that the -- that the horrors of the war and the atomic bomb and all of these things called for a total reconciliation of some kind, and that the cultural exchange was a very important channel for communication in this task. And I think he has been very consistent about it. The fact that he came back and established the Japan Society along these lines, I think that perhaps the Japan Society has grown more practical lately in terms of economic and political cooperation things [inaudible]. But the Asia Society originally was set up along very much the same lines to encourage really a deeper and more sympathetic understanding of these -- of a [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you think his mother's influence -- well, on all those boys -- is so strong?

MR. McCRAY: I do. And the father's; the father was a great humanitarian.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, but I mean in kind of cultural ways --

MR. McCRAY: Perhaps, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: And I notice that all their interest in Oriental things. They still have, you know, her things spread around different apartments and things like that. And the presence seems there, you know?

MR. McCRAY: His mother was a marvelous woman.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: I wish I had known her better [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: I really feel that so many people that I run into in the cultural world, for example, that that woman still is running all of these activities, you know?

MR. McCRAY: She did have a terrific impact on a great many people in her genuine interest in -- and she was an acquisitor, too.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MR. McCRAY: She bought extensively in the -- did you ever see that Japanese garden, for example, that they did up in Maine?

MR. CUMMINGS: No, no.

MR. McCRAY: Well, they tore that house down when the property was given as a park. But they did retain this beautiful formal Japanese garden which was done after the initial visit there.

MR. CUMMINGS: But it's --

MR. McCRAY: And it's amazing, you know, today to see that, for the Metropolitan, John and David and Nelson -- I don't know about Lawrence or Winthrop. But all of them have beautiful things from almost a cross section of art. But from the Oriental point of view, they all have beautiful early porcelains and pots from Chinese and Japanese collections.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, a lot from their mother.

MR. McCRAY: And it came from their mother's. The initial part of -- the kernel of it seemed to have sprung from pieces that they acquired from her estate.

MR. CUMMINGS: It is fascinating.

[Break in recording.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Okay, this is side seven. It's the fourth of October 1977, Paul Cummings talking to Porter McCray in New York City.

MR. McCRAY: [Inaudible] JDR [inaudible]. [Laughter.]

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: JDR thought he had chosen well at that point.

MR. CUMMINGS: Anyway, you described before the organization, your discussions with Mr. Rockefeller in the beginning of being in one office with one secretary and the inundation of requests and that sort of thing. What did you do? I mean, you had been traveling, you had been involved with all sorts of administrative activities. How did you evolve a program? Who did you talk to, what did you think about? You just couldn't pull things out of nowhere?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I had, you remember, just a short time come back from spending a year in Asia.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And it gave me an awful lot -- in that time, I believe I mentioned in our last meeting that I had interviewed a lot of people and a lot of institutions and sort of surveyed the cultural resources, the obvious ones, of many countries in Asia. And this gave me an opportunity to go to specialists in the field --

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: -- and make pointed requests for reactions and suggestions from them in the light of what I had found. It gave me a talking point with them. And then the fact that I had already, in the Museum, conducted a program of international cultural exchange.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MR. McCRAY: It was sort of the wedding of those two things that gave me a -- some advantage in beginning to look for structure and program, so to speak.

MR. CUMMINGS: But was this based, would you say, mostly on your sensibility of what you felt these people were interested in? Or kind of a statistical anthology of what they had said to you during this Oriental trip? And you said, well, there is X percentage interest in the visual arts, X percent dance, a certain amount music, architecture. Was it really just what your feeling was?

MR. McCRAY: No, no, I don't work that way. There weren't many statistics involved in it. They were impressions and I hope some sensitivity to the great needs that existed there were the things that always strike you and even shock you as you encounter the state of so many things. The condition of what they have saved or the striking awareness of how much better in some instances the things that had been saved or not saved, in many instances taken away and then saved by Western Civilization, that you realize that so much of the best has been fortunately very well preserved in the West, but no longer available to them.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why do you think it is? Because it always astounds me when I read about Fenalosa [phonetic] preserving the Japanese treasures, as if the Japanese really couldn't care particularly about a lot of these things or didn't up to that point. Was it pretty much in lower Asia the same attitude?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think that -- I can't say correctly about that. But I would think that the -- the religious aspect of art is, in a sense, much stronger in South Asia. It's much more significant, in a way, to their lives than a great deal of the art, I would think, in -- as far as it has great significance to the Japanese. The scholars in Japan, of course, have immense knowledge and respect and now the collectors do. But I think the public awareness of this is something that has probably been generated in recent times. It was, for example, interesting that the recurring wearing away or rotting away of the great Ise Shrine, that there was not any -- it's rather interesting, the solution that was made in the eighteenth century, that a decree was issued that thereafter, every 20 years, the Ise Shrine --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, they rebuild it, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: -- would be rebuilt. But until then, they had not, I suppose, rebuilt until the thing collapsed. And whether the rebuilt exactly as previously is another question.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: That no one seems to be able to answer.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, there is not much to go on.

MR. McCRAY: No.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because wood just disappears.

MR. McCRAY: But I think that -- the Japanese, on the other hand, have -- you can't look at what has been preserved in Japan and not realize that they have great respect for not only what their own culture was producing but what the culture particularly of China had been up until then. Acquisitions by the Japanese had been rather early of Chinese things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And so that there was a -- the individual, for example, pattern of collecting which was broader in Japan and continues to be perhaps than it does in other countries.

MR. CUMMINGS: But now, you know, what did you do? Because you had mentioned that you got lots of requests. How did you evaluate requests?

MR. McCRAY: Well, a good many of those came from people that I had observed or I had seen. A good many of them, of course, came from out of the blue and there was nothing that we could do about them. I mean, by responding immediately to the choice [inaudible] in many instances, it was possible and extremely gratifying, I must say, to find the helpfulness of scholars and museum people and people who had traveled in those areas or had business in those areas, or people who had served in embassies or cultural centers, how willing they were to help you qualify. They were very generous with time in discussing a proposition that was made, in discussing the possible refinements that you would suggest that might make it better, and whether there was value or whether there was not value, what its relationship was, for example, to other ideas that experts who knew the field might have on the subject. Which way to spend your money first was sort of the great confrontation.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you make those decisions?

MR. McCRAY: Well, just by this. You had to make some very dramatic and lone decisions in the thing. On the other hand, you attempted to -- to base your decision on a sort of analysis of what you had gotten from others, what you would be getting. When you traveled there -- I depended a great deal on my own intuition.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you know if the projects that came in, say over the transom [inaudible], were many of those interesting?

MR. McCRAY: Were many what?

MR. CUMMINGS: Were many of them interesting, provocative? Or --

MR. McCRAY: The applications?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, I mean, the ones that came out of the blue.

MR. McCRAY: Some of them were. Not wildly, though. They -- in a way, it's quite interesting and this continued to be true, that you would get played back to you requests for things that you had discussed as things that might be useful to them when you visited them originally.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: They, in other words, bought your idea and played it back to you.

MR. CUMMINGS: Hoping that you would support yourself.

MR. McCRAY: Of course. And there's nothing more flattering. And I suppose it was a very good way to get at the root of the thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what was Mr. Rockefeller's role in all of this? Was he involved with the decisions or --

MR. McCRAY: Well, like I'm sure everything that he's ever touched, he is very anxious to get down in a very concise way, on two sheets of paper, maybe, the points that you wanted to stress in something like that. He wanted a few examples of the kind of things that you were going to do. But it was the categories of activity that he was most interested in.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right. How were they arrived at?

MR. McCRAY: Well, just by sitting in an office and sort of thinking it through. And the categories ended up being purposely rather broadly stated so that we could interpret them fairly freely as circumstances arose. For example, you can embrace an awful lot in the objective of assisting in the preservation of the culture of Asian countries, or something like that. That covered a multitude of things, from museum conservation to conservation of -- the preservation, really, of oral traditions, whether it was poetry or music or visual documentation of dance and all of those things. And we did give, I think, a good deal of impetus to some of the activity that's continued in Asia by -- with relatively small amounts of money and with the sending out of experts in the field who knew how to use fairly sophisticated equipment, began the documentation of their dances and their music and that kind of thing. And we generally made a point of depositing copies of that material in a suitable institution in the country from which it came, as well as an institution here, where students and scholars had access to it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why do you think it seems to have required outside stimulus for these countries to do this sort of thing?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think it was economic, essentially. They just didn't have the money to -- in many instances, they didn't have the money, most instances they didn't have the money. I'm not speaking of Japan necessarily. Japan had the money but Japan, in some instances, had not spent the money in that field.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MR. McCRAY: The -- just the possibility that they could now get some equipment to do it, the fact that we had sent people in to do it and they had their eyes opened to the possibilities and became very responsive. Of course, we were absolutely submerged in requests for technical equipment and with the name Rockefeller, we also suffered from the fact that everybody who wanted a Naga [phonetic] recorder, which in those days was about a $1,000, which is since now many times off, but everyone thought that all they had to do was ask for one of these things.

MR. CUMMINGS: That it would appear.

MR. McCRAY: Take for granted that it would appear. And when you started restricting it to institutional gifts, it

was rather sticky for a while. But, for example, if we had someone working in this country, a dancer or a musician or a student, one of these things, and would provide them with equipment during their stay, they were required when they returned to deposit that equipment with the institution which they represented when they came back.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: So that it would become an institutional resource, rather than just an individual one, which the individual would then have the mystery of the universe and jeopardize the advance of his colleagues sometimes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: This has been difficult to control.

MR. CUMMINGS: I'm sure.

MR. McCRAY: In going back to the field, you sometimes see where the equipment was not properly surrendered. It was surrendered in name, in some instances, where we got receipt back from the institution. But the person who -- I was grateful to the fact that the person who knew how to run it kept it rather close to him, but it wasn't meant that he wouldn't teach somebody else to use it eventually.

MR. CUMMINGS: It became his lifetime career. Well, how did the programs evolve? Because it must have taken, what, how much in terms of time to get the first flow of monies and people and so you could begin to see something happen?

MR. McCRAY: Well, when the word got around that we were giving scholarships, and that we were interested in cultural exchange, there were organizations always on the brink of trying to negotiate tours to Asia or Asian tours to the United States. The Asia Society already had a performing arts program, which was limping along at this point. And we were very shortly afterward able to assist them in continuing their program, but also to evaluate the program for future. And it was after the evaluation the program changed a good bit. And ongoing money was sought and secured, fortunately.

MR. CUMMINGS: But you had been involved with Asia House since about 1960, right? On the gallery committee?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I was on the original committee that was set up to talk about the requirements of the building that Johnson did. I shouldn't say "originally," because there was an earlier design for Asia House developed by Harmon Goldstone, which was completed and which was then not constructed. But they then went to a second architect, to Philip Johnson and he was given the job after considerable adjustment was made, just between the two professional architects. And then the idea of the gallery, which had been incorporated into the design of the building. The point then was to find a suitable director with a very -- at the beginning of the program, its budget was extremely infinitesimal for this activity. And it was then that George Montgomery was found and who, I think, did a very remarkable job with the resources he had. But that was, yes, in the -- in the early '60s. Before, as a matter of fact, I went to the Fund that started.

MR. CUMMINGS: I'm always intrigued by the interweavings of all of these organizations, you know.

MR. McCRAY: It is funny, isn't it, the way it comes out.

MR. CUMMINGS: Sometimes it's like a plot, you know, one his here and one is there. But, I don't know, it's sometimes just serendipitous.

MR. McCRAY: I suppose.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, how did you like that? Because in 1960, you were still involved with the Museum of Modern Art, right?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I was leaving the Museum in '61.

MR. CUMMINGS: You were leaving, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And at that time, I suppose the connection there was that Mrs. Rockefeller, John's wife, was -- had been the chairman or the president, rather, of the international council of the Museum of Modern Art, which our program, you see, was integrated with. And --

MR. CUMMINGS: Now you mean which program?

MR. McCRAY: The international program at the Museum.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And Mrs. Rockefeller was asked by her husband to seek what advice she could in connection with the formulation of the new gallery at the Asia Society. That's where that thing occurred. It was really her who put the gallery committee together.

MR. CUMMINGS: It's often intrigued me about the number of museums the Rockefellers have founded or been involved with.

MR. McCRAY: Well, they have -- you know them, I am sure, from the little one down in -- it's interesting that the Folk Art Museum, for example, in Williamsburg -- this is getting off track. But I don't know whether you know the sequence of events. Dorothy Miller's husband, Eddie Cahill, who used to be remember of the WPA art project, was one of the chief advisors to Mrs. John D., Jr., in the acquisition of those superb folk art pieces that she had bought.

MR. CUMMINGS: A great deal from Edith Halperin.

MR. McCRAY: And Edith Halperin had also advised on this. There was some competitiveness, certainly, between Edith and Eddie Cahill. But I do think that Edith supplied the things, I guess, and Eddie provided the advice in the beginning. Though Edith has talked about this, and did not -- I did not ever feel was very gracious about Eddie's participation. At any rate, those pieces, you realize, were placed in the Museum of Modern Art, that great eagle and [inaudible] and a number of those pieces, when Mrs. Rockefeller died, or maybe before. And they remained at the Museum until the Museum entered into its agreement with the Metropolitan. And the pieces were then sent to the Metropolitan to join the American collections there. And then Mrs. Rockefeller died, or had died by then, and Mr. Rockefeller, Jr., in his great interest in the Metropolitan and so forth observed in the intervening years after these pieces were given to them -- this is a real diversion -- but he observed that they were very, very seldom on view. And he indicated that the idea of setting up a folk art museum in Williamsburg was generating and that perhaps he would buy them from the Metropolitan, to which they had been given, and present them there. Whereupon, the Metropolitan made the gesture of transferring them to Williamsburg.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh.

MR. McCRAY: So it was a rather interesting career for the folk art.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: It's sad in a way, because here we are still struggling with a very -- now, I gather, up and coming prospect of having an adequate folk art museum here in the city.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really, because they seem to be having so much trouble all the time. Or is it --

MR. McCRAY: Well, the new man seems to think that he is going to -- I believe he has money of his own and he intends to raise large money to move out of the --

MR. CUMMINGS: That little brownstone?

MR. McCRAY: The little place they have to build or acquire a new building. It's a splendid project for some of the houses we are trying other save in New York to be given something less elaborate than the Cooper Hewitt one, perhaps. But think of the --

MR. CUMMINGS: Some of those big limestones around town would be marvelous.

MR. McCRAY: I, for example, when Mr. Rockefeller was talking originally about giving his own Asia collection, I was asked to explore the possibilities -- and if I'm going too far off, tell me this.

MR. CUMMINGS: No, go ahead.

MR. McCRAY: -- what the possibilities would be of setting up -- I don't think he actually mentioned the exact words -- a situation similar to the Freer Gallery for his art collection. And my very strong advice was that he encourage the -- for a number of reasons -- that he encourage the establishment of a branch of the Metropolitan. I said, your father, it seems to me, has given a very good lead in the Cloisters. If an Oriental museum could be set up under the general administration of the Metropolitan, you would not have to think of all the multiple services that have to be created in a museum or libraries or conservation or all of this sort of thing. But it would be marvelous to take the old -- it happened to be [inaudible] Cooper Hewitt, the old Cohn [phonetic] house, which was a handsome house, which the Catholic -- one of the Catholic orders, I think, now has. It would be marvelous to save some of those great houses by making them into specialized museums. I mean, this was not a new idea by any means; it's what the Europeans have done. But I pointed out that the -- apart from the fact

that I personally didn't feel that the Asia Society was an appropriate locale for a museum, because of its interest in politics and economics and everything else, and also from a practical point of view. I said, John, I have explored the endowments for the Freer and, though at the time they were given they were regarded as timeless practically and adequate forever, they are now no longer adequate to run the institution.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: And the same would perhaps be true of anything that you might do. It would take an immense endowment and it would have to include ongoing purchase funds, publication funds, professional staff and so forth. However, he did finally give it to the Asia Society, which is now looking for a home.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yes, what's happened to that?

MR. McCRAY: Well, they haven't resolved a site yet.

MR. CUMMINGS: So they are still looking?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. I'm sorry to have gotten off the theme.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's all right; it's all a part of -- I mean, anything that you've been involved with is appropriate. Now, did you travel much once you got things going for the JDR?

MR. McCRAY: I traveled, yes. Sometimes up to two months at a stretch, and sometimes -- in Asia, a year. And I always went to Asia once every year or generally twice within 18 months.

MR. CUMMINGS: So you really became a commuter.

MR. McCRAY: And I did not stay more than five or six weeks most times. But I also moved awfully fast. Because, it is after all a whale of a lot of countries, that whole part of the continent.

MR. CUMMINGS: But still, I guess that still takes a certain amount of time and wear and tear.

MR. McCRAY: Well, it did, indeed. It also took a certain amount of time to --

MR. CUMMINGS: Prepare for it.

MR. McCRAY: -- gain the confidence of some of the professional people there, that we were not just encroachers, you see, on their own business. But --

MR. CUMMINGS: What were the kind of things that they were most interested in beyond technical equipment? Were there certain kinds of restorers or historians or, you know, various skilled people that they were interested in? Or did they really want to use their own nationals?

MR. McCRAY: They wanted first to, and understandably so, to find out, I think, what the situation was here in the beginning, almost exclusively with interns of their own culture. It was very difficult, but I persisted about this and it worked sometimes and sometimes didn't, to get them to, for example, when they were returned via Europe, which we normally did, to get them to look at other great world cultures. I mean, a great point of their visiting the British Museum or the Louvre or the Berlin Museum or this, that or the other, to impress them with the great -- we tried to get them to stop in Athens, to get the impact of some of the other great civilizations. Not that we were trying to create any kind of inferiority complex, but to break down this idea that it was a totally unique thing as opposed to what they found in the United States, showing somewhat the roots of some of our -- our culture and so forth.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what was their attitude towards this?

MR. McCRAY: They were very interested to begin with to come and see who had Indian sculpture, who had Japanese art, who had Japanese or Chinese porcelains.

MR. CUMMINGS: So how interested were they in going to Berlin and looking at other things and --

MR. McCRAY: If -- as there is now in Berlin, there is the Indian Art Museum. They were, of course, very interested in going to it. But that did not exist until very few years ago. They knew Dr. Hertle [phonetic] and they sometimes stopped in Berlin and talked with him, and I'm sure saw some of the reserve interiors, but all of that is now new, most of it. But I do think that this was of immense value. I can almost confirm that it has broadened the -- the vision of a lot of the Asian historians. I mean, we have the same problem here. We have young kids in the institute here in New York or Harvard or whatever who get into such a narrow groove --

MR. CUMMINGS: So quickly.

MR. McCRAY: Very quickly, before they do tour as art historians, that they sometimes lose sight of the fact that there was a great deal more communication, a great deal more awareness, a great deal more universality in art at a very early age than they dream of, I think. For example, you would be surprised how often we have had to almost force people to stop in Afghanistan to see the great Bamiyan Valley there, where the extraordinary caves and outdoor figures are. But in every instance, you get the most marvelous letters back. You know, it was a great eye-opener to a great many. And this was one of the things that, as gently as we could, we almost imposed on them. Some of them would not do it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: They had a certain amount of time they wanted to devote to their own thing and we conceded to that. But the majority of them wanted to see -- the majority of them wanted to see where their own things were, the quantities that they existed in, the quality that they existed in, the historical -- what historical value that they may have to their own search or something of that sort. Or they increasingly, I think, as they became aware of these accumulations here and in Europe, there was an increasing amount of resentment, actually, of as much as did exist among our private collectors, particularly. They maintained a very different -- not totally different -- but two degrees of reaction to what was in private collections and what was in public collections. Because they felt that public collections were in a way a possible means of projecting their own culture in the West. And the private collections were --

MR. CUMMINGS: Tenuous.

MR. McCRAY: -- really for the delectation of the individual, to a great extent. And this still persists. Understandably, I suppose.

MR. CUMMINGS: What was their attitude towards dealers, then?

MR. McCRAY: Very, very -- generally very antagonistic. Because the dealers, I must say -- it's a little dangerous to generalize. Because when you talk about this, I am talking largely about India. Which is awfully big and which was -- and has an immense amount of art and was beginning to be collected on a larger scale than it ever had been before, partly because of increasing awareness of Asian art in this country. But also because the dealers in India had become or had been persuaded by Western dealers to get much more into the game of spiriting fine objects out of the country that had either been in private or -- in private hands or collections.

MR. CUMMINGS: Even sometimes in public situations.

MR. McCRAY: Sometimes, even in public.

MR. CUMMINGS: I know a dealer who was -- a late dealer who was forbidden to go back to India at one point because of --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I do, too, and very understandably.

MR. CUMMINGS: -- attempts to ship half a temple out and the incredible adventures.

MR. McCRAY: I mean, the means, for example, there were some of the most superb Khmer pieces brought out through Thailand by a dealer that we know in New York, who very boastfully talked about having brought these out in helicopter. One wondered whether it was an Army helicopter or something else.

MR. CUMMINGS: I know.

MR. McCRAY: And flown it all the way down to Bangkok where it was sent out of the country. To do it all, it would have been across the Cambodian border and it makes up some of the finest material of that culture that's around in private collections here, even in public collections.

MR. McCRAY: Do you think that the UNESCO agreement --

MR. CUMMINGS: That particular case is very sad, because there was never any revelation of the price spot, of what was found with those objects or --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really.

MR. McCRAY: All of this part was just obliterated forever from archeological history. And this is why I think the Asians, particularly, and certainly our own archeologists feel so strongly about the illicit export of art. Even though Mr. Rockefeller himself was acquiring a great many things, he took rather careful pains to be certain that

in most instances they were acquired from previous collections or something like that, so that they were not hot goods, so to speak.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: We did manage to assist ICOM by paying for the research that was necessary to publish that handbook on the existing laws in UNESCO member states on the protection of works of art. And however it affected exported works of art.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because I know once the United States signed that UNESCO agreement, several dealers just disappeared within two months or so.

MR. McCRAY: Well, it's not under control now. But the Indians themselves -- here I go, referring to India. But you realize that all of Indochina by then had no -- by the time we came on the scene, had little or no control over what was taken in or out.

[Break in recording.]

MR. McCRAY: I got involved during the Vietnam war with a rather prominent radio announcer who had been in the Far East and who had acquired, while there, a great deal -- I should say a great deal -- a whole album full of photographs of objects of the Cham culture. And he was planning, and I assume did send out all of that stuff through Hong Kong, either for personal collection or for sale, and it -- still, no one knows actually how severe the looting was that accounted for some of those pieces, whether they were museum pieces or palace pieces or whatever they may have been. And the -- I was trying my best to persuade him not to be the guilty one of taking these things out. He said, if I don't, someone else will. And I said, well, that still doesn't relieve you of the moral obligation.

MR. CUMMINGS: And it must have been profitable.

MR. McCRAY: And it probably was profitable. This was a man, though, that did not need that.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, but still, you know, there are sometimes the ones who get a little more.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, how did you function as an executive when you were traveling so much? Lots of cablegrams and --

MR. McCRAY: I had, for the great part of a duration of the program, I was on the telephone to the office, and they were in constant communication with me, more so than I with them. But I had two excellent people. I had a young woman, Betsy Glazer [phonetic] she is now, Betsy Baine [phonetic] she had been, who was absolutely phenomenal in learning more or less the way you did everything and the way you thought. She was amazingly instinctive, a young woman, very bright person. And later, I added Allen Campbell [phonetic] as the associate director, when Betsy had decided to have a child and could not be as constantly there as she had been. And Allen was an able, trained administrator in the Foreign Service, and had had some -- he was a graduate of Princeton and had excellent languages and had served in the Foreign Service in Vietnam and Laos and in Europe, so that he brought a good deal of administrative know how to things. And then toward the end, the boy who succeeded me, Richard Lanier. Three years, around the time that Betsy left, came in and Allen who had wanted for some time to go into private business decided to do that. Before I retired.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really? So he's not involved anymore?

MR. McCRAY: No, he retired before I did.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, what does he do then now?

MR. McCRAY: He has a very beautiful shop of custom fabrics that are of his own design and other commercial sources.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I didn't know that.

MR. McCRAY: Beautiful shop, right next block. I just had lunch with Allen.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what -- you know, what kind of response did you get from, I guess, the political sectors in these various countries? Were they interested in your appearance and your adding their cultural activities?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I operated with a fairly low profile if possible, because that was the great advantage we had

of being a private institution.

MR. CUMMINGS: But still, you were associated with --

MR. McCRAY: And being able to deal directly with people, rather than governments. Because the danger, I suppose in all governments to some extent, but it seemed a slight threat in some places that we were working in Asia, we were trying to avoid -- we were trying to maintain our right of selection. And since visas -- not visas but passports were issued and since permissions were given to -- all museum people, you must realize, in India and most of the Asian countries are in civil service. So in order to get those people, the people that you want, out, you have to get the government to agree to release them from their jobs and also to give them a leave of absence, with or without pay, but allow them a passport that will permit them to complete their assignment. And with those elements of control, they were accustomed in some instances to naming their own man.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see.

MR. McCRAY: And there was a danger of these people becoming political oriented -- not oriented, but politically chosen, rather than getting the most professionally qualified --

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you circumvent that?

MR. McCRAY: Well, by -- just as I said, by operating a very low profile and not by dealing through, as some of these programs have been, through our own embassy to their government, but to go right to the institution or the individual and propose something. You see, for example, it's against the law in India for an Indian to apply directly to a private foundation for a grant.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: But you could go to him if you knew --

MR. McCRAY: I joined the club rather quickly and would seek out the people that we would know and would consult the local people, experts, whose recommendations guided us in our choice. I mean, people who were not looking at it from a political point of view. And would then invite the person to come, you see.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see, which was acceptable.

MR. McCRAY: And in most instances, it worked. In one very significant case, it did not work in India for almost two years to get the director of the Madras Museum on leave of absence to come to the States to study his special area of interest. We got a denial of the request from the Federal Government of India, Delhi, and an approval from the Tamil government, which is the provincial government. And as you know, the Tamil government and the central government were in a great controversy and particularly under Mrs. Gandhi, the Tamils or the South Indians refused to accept the government request -- the federal government requirement that Hindi be inaugurated as the official language. Tamil was the older Hindu language, and the Tamils were not willing to give that up. So they proceeded along two fairly parallel lines, with very little overlapping, so that it was almost invariably to be expected that if one approved one and the other -- that the other one would disapprove. And the director of the museum, [inaudible], got caught between these two fires and he could not get out, he could not get his passport. Then if he got his passport from the federal government, the provincial government would not give him leave of absence from his job. So --

MR. CUMMINGS: One way or another.

MR. McCRAY: It took almost two years to get him out. That was the most difficult case we had.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why -- why was there a law in India where people couldn't apply to a foundation? Do you have any idea?

MR. McCRAY: Well, they were trying to hold down on the brain drain for one thing, understandably. And they felt that it was just the appropriate channel to deal through one government to the other rather than an individual foundation coming in and dealing with a citizen. A lot of -- I must say, the Indians particularly have accommodated a great deal within the regulations that they have to operate under.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, how many of your people that came here on grants have stayed here, percentage wise, do you think? Very many?

MR. McCRAY: Well, some have. We had a quite good -- quite low average. We had, I guess, more Koreans than any others, which I think reflects the instability of that situation, particularly a few years ago when it was more

unstable than it is now, even. Some Indians. And then when the Marcos regime came into the Philippines, it had a very marked effect on -- we seemed to have quite unintentionally, or being unaware of what the events that would follow would be, selected a great many people that were absolute tops in their field or came to be very quickly, some of them, who then became very prominent in opposing Marcos, so that they have become political refugees or temporarily restrained to return home, because of the fear of being apprehended. For example, two young Filipinos that we had, brilliant this young man was who was studying music at Yale, was taking his doctorate at Yale, he already had the doctor -- he was a doctor of medicine -- was just finishing his degree work when the Marcos takeover occurred, marshal law, and he was in one of the student demonstrations against the government, the second day or so, and was photographed. And was advised that he would be prosecuted if he returned home, so he has never returned home. And there were quite a number that were in this category. Some, I think, decided to say because of -- I'm speaking of the Philippines particularly now, because some who had no immediate fear, I suppose, of political retribution of any kind nevertheless felt that their own generation of people were not going back and stayed on, and it made -- we have three musicians who have unnecessarily remained here because they had a much greater opportunity to. They were good musicians. They have all gotten into local orchestras around the country and just have done --

MR. CUMMINGS: How do you think that that affects this country? These people who come here, some stay here? Your bringing them over to look and meet and work with people here, do you think there is -- something rubs off, that there is influence --

MR. McCRAY: You mean their influence here?

MR. CUMMINGS: Yes.

MR. McCRAY: Oh, I think so. I think that it's a very broadening experience for most of the Americans that encounter those people. It works both ways. And we have always made a great effort to make it work both ways. The great danger, I think, for a program as small as it, such as ours, is that you set yourself up as, you know, the great white father that is going to allow you to become Americanized as quickly as possible, and learn to do things and respect things American and nothing else. I think that we have been reasonably successful in, for example, exposing our people to pretty nearly all of the aspects of American cultural life. I mean, we've had kids here, or younger people, who were in theater or who were in painting or who were in museums who were encouraged to go to Broadway or the Metropolitan Opera or the dance companies or to La Mama or some of the extreme antiwar theatrical productions that were quite prominent at the beginning of our program, so that they got --

[End of Disk 9.]

[Disk 10.]

MR. McCRAY: -- without exception. I've had Asians ask me the question, I don't understand why you have made a point of our seeing these things, but I do think that this country is incredible because it can accommodate all of this and you're not afraid of it. So I felt that we had won that way. That not concealing anything was the important thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, so much Oriental thought and action seems to be involving concealment, kind of ritualistic --

MR. McCRAY: So I think apart from whatever professional benefits that they had -- that has dropped off, maybe. But they dwell on this point, that it is perfectly extraordinary how free you are in this country. And it's -- I must say, when they observe it and conclude themselves that's what it is, it's very [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah. I wonder what that will do as it accumulates in their own country, as more people come and they talk about it and think about it?

MR. McCRAY: I sometimes have some concern about the possibility of some of these young people who come and get their new ideas and go home again do not totally understand that -- the difficult position that they put themselves in by trying to act as if they were in America. In some countries, it's perfectly all right and they can get away with it and in some they can't.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you function with -- were there other foundations working over there in the same area, or government programs that you'd not --

MR. McCRAY: Well, there were government programs and I think we mentioned in the beginning the value to us of the experience of the Asia Foundation, which had some cultural activities. And they had the great advantage of having a representative there at all times and could play [inaudible] extremely sensitive [inaudible]. And they were very kind to us in sharing that experience. Some of our government programs had been very intelligent.

The USIS Fulbright program, I suppose within the limitations of government sponsored organizations, were --

MR. CUMMINGS: Now did they ever call upon you for advice or consultation or things --

MR. McCRAY: I always called on them when I visited their cities and they would sometimes make suggestions which I was grateful for in some instances. There was a distinct -- in limited instances, there was the mistaken idea that we would take the rejects. And it made you very cautious at first in dealing with them. There were people --

MR. CUMMINGS: Why that attitude, though?

MR. McCRAY: Well, they had just so many slots that they were given and they had the three or four others that you have in any situation that you think deserved a grant, too. And then we would have those people recommended to us. And I must say, it makes you a little cautious about sometimes, I think, prejudice in examining the recommendations that they had made. But this was the one thing -- not one thing, but one of the things that you had to -- that I was at least conscious of.

MR. CUMMINGS: But was there any interest, say in your programs in Washington, as far as working in their same countries where they were interested in or --

MR. McCRAY: Not in concert, certainly. Quite a number of cultural affairs officers flattered me to the extent that when you saw them, they'd say, we don't understand how you can come here five days a year and pick the best people that we have in these fields, because you've taken some of the people that we have later realized were quite significant in the community in these various individual foreign powers. That was partly luck and partly the fact that I had spent my life dealing with people like this and had a better sense of judgment, maybe, than they who had to make their decisions within a certain framework.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, but you were also looking at it from maybe a different point of view.

MR. McCRAY: Well, that had something to do with it.

MR. CUMMINGS: You know?

MR. McCRAY: But we did, without any sense of competing, get some of the better people.

MR. CUMMINGS: How did you accomplish that? Being in New York and thinking about X number of thousand potential musicians in India, how do you narrow it down --

MR. McCRAY: Well, we weren't thinking in that quantity, I'm glad to say.

MR. CUMMINGS: No, but I mean you had to narrow it down. There were, if you looked at the broad scheme, several thousand people, but you narrowed it down to six or four. How did you --

MR. McCRAY: Well, we had very good local resources. For example, Narina Menin [phonetic], who is one of the great dance and music experts in India, is I suppose my closest friend in India. And we have always been totally frank with one another, and confidential in the process, about clearing the traffic both ways of people that we think would be people that they would send that would be useful here, people who we could send and where they [inaudible]. Narina was the head of the National Academy of -- well, in English, the Academy of Music and Dance. Then he later became the secretary general of All India Radio, which was concerned with music particularly. He was western educated in England in western music and served, still does, as the president of -- the international president of the International Council of Music. And has been the advisor, was for a long time, advisor to the Edinburgh Festival on the Asian components that they incorporated in their festivals and so forth. He's a very close, intimate friend of the former head of that -- what's his name -- Lord -- the son of the former Princess Mary, you remember --

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh --

MR. McCRAY: I forget his name.

MR. CUMMINGS: I don't remember.

MR. McCRAY: He has since divorced and it has been slightly messy. But he is a marvelous musician. And we had people who -- Grace Morley was the director for a long period of the National Museum and Votid Chandra [phonetic], those people I know just happened to -- cultivated them and knew them very well, and would discuss almost anything with them pertaining to anything that they were expert with. Or Owasti [phonetic], who is the head of the -- who succeeded -- so we had Narina and when he moved we knew the next man, so that that worked just as well. And the head of the national theater is Alkhazi, who is also a close friend. It just ended up

that you knew most of the people in whom you could place greatest confidence.

MR. CUMMINGS: So your correspondence would keep things going.

MR. McCRAY: Yes, and I always saw them, I had dinner with them or something when we were there, and when they were here. And we sometimes brought some of those people here to important conferences or sent them to important international conferences in Asia or Europe or wherever. I mean, it was a very comfortable relationship where we were grateful for what they had done and in some instances gave them an opportunity to gain the same knowledge and familiarity with the scene in this country and in Europe.

[Break in recording.]

MR. McCRAY: -- assisted him in bringing quite a number of Indian scholars to Los Angeles. They have since invited the participations on the American side to India to participate in theirs. We have assisted in some cases with that. And just last week, I think five of them came to see me here, who had just been in Los Angeles for a second symposium on Indian painting.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, what's his name again?

MR. McCRAY: Pal, P-A-L.

MR. CUMMINGS: So your investments are very visible in many cases, I mean the results.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. It's gratifying, isn't it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah. Now, how did -- you know, as things went along, you had mentioned several times you maintained a fairly small staff all the time. And just listening to your descriptions of this, I get the feeling that a lot of the decisions were ultimately yours in terms of where a program would develop or where it wouldn't develop and what kind of things it went into now.

MR. McCRAY: Well, they were mine only in terms of -- subject, let's say, to the advice of experts whose opinions I respected. And I think I did say, too, that we had immensely good luck with our own board in endorsing the recommendations submitted to them.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, you have had very interesting people on that board.

MR. McCRAY: Yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: As well as I think there are trustees who are very international.

MR. McCRAY: Well, yes. Some of them are quite --

MR. CUMMINGS: Yes. Which really leads me into something else. And that is the various other foundations or institutions that you've been a trustee of, you were a trustee of the Modern for a while, eleven years. But what about something like Cintas is a totally unrelated activity to my special fields of interest, I guess. The Cintas Foundation is a foundation, a small foundation that resulted from an amount of money left by -- I think his name was Charles Cintas or Carlos Cintas, a rich Cuban, who had his -- some resources, obviously, in the Chase Bank here when Castro took over, and had quite an important art collection. And the Chase Bank simply wanted someone -- two people, they asked Ted Rousseau [phonetic] and myself -- two museums here in the city, to sit on that board in connection particularly with the objectives of his will, which were to preserve the collection ultimately for the Cuban people. And secondly to give assistance to people of Cuban origin in the pursuit of their studies in the arts, deserving younger people, in visual and performing arts. This gives I think up to 14 or so scholarships a year. Small, but I think it has helped a number of poets and playwrights and architects and painters and sculptors. And my great interest has been, to be certain -- I should have long ago left the foundation, because it's really unrelated to what I'm doing, except for the fact that I want to be certain that the pictures are held in trust until -- you see, it is -- until our governments are again on some kind of an exchange basis, an official one. So the real objectives, I feel very strongly about Cintas today maybe might still feel the way he did before, but he died before one realized that Castro was going to survive as long as he has. But I feel very strongly that those pictures must be held and ultimately returned to Cuba, not just given to the Cubans in Miami. And also that the Cubans in Cuba should have access to the scholarships and that's the reason that I persisted on that board. Because the bank has a less --

MR. CUMMINGS: Cultural attitude?

MR. McCRAY: -- intimate sense of responsibility for those two objectives. They would -- I'm not saying they would, but they have considered, for example, liquidating the collection to increase the scholarship program. And I just feel --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, also, it must be an expense. It's got to be warehoused or something.

MR. McCRAY: It's on loan now to museums. But it's the kind of collection that would be very difficult to reassemble. And a good deal of it is Spanish in origin or it's related to Cuba --

MR. CUMMINGS: So it's important that it eventually appear there.

MR. McCRAY: And it would be difficult to assemble it again. And it is the collection of a Cuban. Whose house, incidentally, two adjoining houses, have been made into a decorative arts museum by the present regime.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really? That's fascinating.

MR. McCRAY: But he is interesting that he did have the paintings in New York in storage.

MR. CUMMINGS: I wonder if he had premonitions or something? What about the Museum of African Art, where you were a trustee for five years?

MR. McCRAY: Well, that was a brief and very inactive period of my life. It came out of my early experience with Warren Robbins [phonetic] who is the director. Warren was a cultural officer -- I don't think he was a cultural affairs officer -- in Bohn many years ago when we were, from the Museum of Modern Art, sending important exhibitions into Germany. And there is a case, another case in point where Warren, I'm glad to say, I think respected me. But we certainly did have areas of serious disagreement in the beginning because I was insisting that the presentation of those exhibitions of American art not take on any political implications. And Warren felt that I was being very sticky about that. But afterwards, he left the Foreign Service and started collecting African art and started that museum. Because he did become very strongly convinced that cultural objects -- and Warren was also interested in the civil rights movement later.

MR. CUMMINGS: What got him interested in African art?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think that -- I don't know. The tiniest little thing can sometimes be the kickoff to something like that.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's true.

MR. McCRAY: He may have acquired two or three pieces.

MR. CUMMINGS: Responded to it or something.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah. And he then I think was interested in the black and white problem here at home. And the two may be combined. That museum, you know, was started very simply at first [inaudible] and then he eventually built it into a very strong, financially and politically powerful core --

MR. CUMMINGS: Because it was very ambiguous at one point whether it would continue or not.

MR. McCRAY: Yes. And those of us who were simply sort of serving as advisors, is really what it was. I also led Warren, early in my career in the JDR 3rd Fund, to some money in the Rockefeller Brothers Fund that assisted -- was one of the first grants that he got for the museum. I suppose that I have -- my heart is pure from this point of view about this next point, but it is very curious to be working in a foundation or an institution -- not curious, but I think it's totally natural, but some people think it's curious -- that you would assist in the raising of money for other institutions while you were involved with a second one. But I never have seen any conflict in that myself.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because some people won't give to what you're doing.

MR. McCRAY: Exactly, that's the whole point.

MR. CUMMINGS: And they might to something else.

MR. McCRAY: They will give to other good causes and -- [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Absolutely. Absolutely. I know that a couple of foundations I'm involved with, institutions, actually, people say, well, you know, how can you not give all the money to one? Well, these people have no interest, you know, but they'll support the other one, so that's fine.

MR. McCRAY: Sure.

MR. CUMMINGS: You know one thing, JDR sort of didn't really do much in Africa, did it?

MR. McCRAY: Not directly. Except the foundation was very active in Africa. You have to remember that the things that John has done -- that he has initiated at least, were not the emphases in the programs of the other family foundations at the time he did them.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right, right.

MR. McCRAY: Now, he has brought -- he started the Population Council, he started the Agricultural Development Council which later depended for immense support from the Rockefeller Foundation and from the Ford Foundation. But his initiation -- the initiation of those things was totally his own responsibility. And I think that he has used this as a deliberate means of irritating some of the large foundations into coming into line with something that he thinks is of primary importance.

MR. CUMMINGS: Because he has a lot of influence.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Sure. Sure.

MR. McCRAY: Well, and he sticks with it long enough to prove his point. That they become involved then because they see that it's a good idea.

MR. CUMMINGS: Going back to the trusteeships, what about Clarion Music?

MR. McCRAY: Well, Clarion Music, I suppose, springs from the fact that I went to school with Newell Jenkins a thousand years ago. He was in music at Yale at the same time I was in architecture, and he just asked me to come on the board.

MR. CUMMINGS: Did you have a great interest in music?

MR. McCRAY: I have an interest in music; I wouldn't say a considerable one. I am not that musical. I go to a lot of music, but don't have any musical education.

MR. CUMMINGS: And Breezewood?

MR. McCRAY: Breezewood is a small foundation near Baltimore that a friend of mine has that is concerned almost exclusively with giving assistance to projects relating to the art history of Southeast Asia, particularly Thailand and, to some extent, Burma. And it was with that foundation, as a matter of fact, that we collaborated on the publication of the Burma -- three-volume history of Pagan, which I think is almost a unique publication in that field. They paid for the research and travel and so forth and we paid for the publication.

MR. CUMMINGS: And Woodrow Wilson?

MR. McCRAY: That's what's his name -- I mean, Breezewood is Alex -- oh, he used to be in the Baltimore Museum. What was the other question?

MR. CUMMINGS: The Woodrow Wilson Foundation.

MR. McCRAY: Well, I am from Staunton, which is the birthplace of Woodrow Wilson. It is just one of those things that you get on --

MR. CUMMINGS: Do they normally have somebody from there on it?

MR. McCRAY: Well, the board is -- I don't know, David Bruce is the honorary president. And it has a fairly national sort of membership. Except they have -- the greater number of people are from Staunton. I was not in Staunton when I was put on it; I was put on it while I have lived here in New York. And I think it was one of those things that happen in foundationese, where I was able to assist the board in its approaches to fundraising efforts here in New York because of my familiarity with the scene.

MR. CUMMINGS: That world, the procedures and its rituals.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And the founder of that foundation was also a very close -- a woman who I immensely admired, who was one of the -- the woman who, for example, was responsible for restoring the rotunda at the University of Virginia and the gardens there. She was at one time the -- the president of the National Garden Club. She was an

amazing --

MR. CUMMINGS: What was her name?

MR. McCRAY: Mrs. Geldon [phonetic] Smith, who had great drive, accomplished marvelous things in the state of Virginia. She was one of the earliest and most active people in the whole preservation scene in Virginia. And she was the one who saved the Woodrow Wilson manse before the national --

MR. CUMMINGS: What about ICOM which seems to have come around?

MR. McCRAY: Well, because of the fact that I was dealing with the international scene, especially in Asia and Latin America during the Museum days, I was, I think, more aware than most of the people in the Museum were of what the importance of contact with the European and particularly as it was maturing -- not maturing, but recovering from the war --

MR. CUMMINGS: The war.

MR. McCRAY: And Rene d'Harnoncourt, who was director of the Museum, with Julian Huxley [phonetic], you remember had been one of the formulators of UNESCO. And it was very useful, I suppose, to me to belong to ICOM, because it gave me a chance to meet that immense world, particularly of European museum people, at an early stage when we did not have that kind of contact. We were just enough removed. And it has been one of my great regrets, for example, of the Museum of Modern Art, until very recently, that the Museum did not cultivate more the other museums of Asia -- I mean of Europe. And as now, it has grown, thanks to Tom Messer's being president of the Modern Museum Association, particularly, and this great wave of important, imported exhibitions that we have had in recent years from Europe and vice versa, comes out of, number one, I think that we helped in the beginning by offering something that they wanted in the contemporary field, and it established a sense of colleague-ism, sort of, between -- not that the Metropolitan or the National Gallery or the Boston Museum do not maintain their professional relations with the European museums. That's not the point. But as far as exhibition exchanges were concerned, that was something that has come out of that postwar experience, I think.

MR. CUMMINGS: I know at the Whitney now they are just getting into international exhibitions and it was a whole brand new thing to them, and their curators haven't traveled that much many of them and they don't know people.

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think that the United States, you see -- I'm jumping way back now, but the United States certainly did enjoy a unique position. We in the Museum of Modern Art occupied a unique position right after the war when we were absolutely the unique institution of its kind. And it was looked upon and admired by all. And I think that museums can very easily get -- you know, be lulled into their sense of security that they think this circumstance will continue --

MR. CUMMINGS: Continue, yeah.

MR. McCRAY: -- continue indefinitely --

[End of Disk 10.]

[Disk 11.]

MR. McCRAY: -- it is something that is a living thing. It has to be worked at constantly. And I think that -- I don't mean to be critical of the Museum especially, except that I do think that the Museum rested a little too much on its laurels in not --

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: -- showing interest a little bit earlier than it did in the accomplishments of some of the European museums.

[Telephone ringing.]

MR. CUMMINGS: One thing I have observed about the Modern, I guess, looking at it from another point of view -- and many corporations suffer from this -- which is where several strong personalities develop something, they rarely train people to succeed them. And I think, you know, the Museum had suffered a great deal from that. There were several unique personalities there, which would be very hard to replace in kind.

MR. McCRAY: Sure.

MR. CUMMINGS: But you could get, hopefully, develop somebody.

MR. McCRAY: [Inaudible.]

MR. CUMMINGS: And I think that was never thought of. It's too bad.

MR. McCRAY: I think Renee was thinking in those directions, but I don't think the curatorial part of the museum was sufficiently. But that was again partly due to the fact that I think the museum felt secure in the fact that it could always attract the top man, you see, which is not true.

MR. CUMMINGS: I know for years, people used to say to me, oh, I want to work at the Modern for two years, because then it means I can get a job anyplace.

MR. McCRAY: Sure.

MR. CUMMINGS: They were interested in it not of itself but as leverage to something else. For years, I think all through the '60s you heard that. Anyway, to continue the trusteeship business, what about the International Theater Institute?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I really should have gotten a little bit further into ICOM maybe, because the ICOM Foundation, which I am a trustee of, has grown out of the need for ICOM in Paris, its office, to get greater financial support. And I never was as dramatically aware of this before as I became when, after several years of support by the fund of the Asian agency of ICOM, in Delhi, that it was so difficult to find ongoing support from other sources to continue that activity.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really?

MR. McCRAY: Now, the Empress of Iran has done it two or three times. I hope it will be this year. But that office, which is the first of the regional agencies that they've attempted, is still struggling for its life. So when I was asked to go on, we -- having supported it, you see, we to Varine-Bohan, who was the head of ICOM, asked me to go onto that board primarily to help them provide what we could no longer provide as a foundation, because we did not want to take on the endless continuity of such a thing.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah.

MR. McCRAY: And it was for that reason that I came on.

MR. CUMMINGS: Why isn't it possible to, you know, get money in India? There's lots of money in India.

MR. McCRAY: Not dollars.

MR. CUMMINGS: No, not dollars.

MR. McCRAY: Well, the cost of that, to have an international body, you -- person who -- who would receive a large part of her salary or his salary in international currency -- convertible currency, you see. A person who could travel all over Asia, which is what we provided, and a person who could plan conferences bringing people from all parts of Asia together in various countries without any --

MR. CUMMINGS: So the Indian currency, you would have a problem?

MR. McCRAY: Indian currency was just not useful. It took three or four years before the Indian government was even willing to give them their quarters rent free.

MR. CUMMINGS: Really? So ICOM then, what, is a growing institution on an international level?

MR. McCRAY: Well, it certainly -- it's the international organization, the only one, that exists and it's too big, I think. But it is the international organization that compares to our own Association of Museum Directors or whatever. It is tragic that ICOM does have to operate on such an infinitesimal budget, both the big central office -- not big, but the central office, and the regional offices. ICOM, of course, receives a relatively large contribution from this country, both indirectly through something like the Rome Center in -- Observation Center in Rome, and through the maintenance of the office, and the activities of the program in Europe. But I think that it has only been recently and in that case only to a limited extent that the Americans feel any strong affiliation with this. Whereas, in Europe it is extremely strong because the communication is so simple and so inexpensive. ICOM has its meetings, it's quite an undertaking for people to go to the States for meetings.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah, because they don't have the money, for one thing.

MR. McCRAY: No, they don't have the money. And the amount of investment is too great. The same is true of the Asians. So everything is centered in Paris.

MR. CUMMINGS: No, it's interesting. For years, people would say to me, oh, ICOM, that's that French organization. You know, no real interest or didn't seem to touch their normal activities at museums.

MR. McCRAY: And the tragedy, it still is, to me, that our own museum association does not permit technically Americans to belong to ICOM without joining the American Association of Museums first. And then deducting a certain amount of that for membership in the American organization and transmitting the remainder to ICOM.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. So it's like a poor cousin sort of situation.

MR. McCRAY: I have heard the Americans many times discuss how outrageous it was that the Russian government handles all of its -- the memberships, the individual memberships through ICOM. I said, well, you have exactly the same setup right here at home.

MR. CUMMINGS: So I didn't know. So if one is an institution here, your membership really goes to the Museum Association?

MR. McCRAY: Yes, to join the ICOM, you have to join the American one. And then you add the difference to get the money transmitted to the other. So we do take a pound of flesh, it seems to me, in the transfer. And this has been one of my great beefs on the international -- on the ICOM foundation, because the members of the international foundation are other nationalities of Europe, Russia and Japan and Latin America. And in that instance, they do not have to. They can join directly into the Swiss bank, the Swiss corporation for the foundation. It's quite improper, I think, the way we've tied that up.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, do individuals belong to that or museums, institutions?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I guess it was in the Copenhagen meeting of ICOM, must have been maybe six years ago now, the bylaws were changed which permitted individual memberships who were properly identified with museums. I've always -- not always, but almost since the beginning, have been a personal member of ICOM because I had a museum affiliation.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: But I was one of the very few people in the Museum that ever went to the meetings. But felt justified in it because I was involved in that business.

MR. CUMMINGS: Yeah. Yeah. What about International Theater?

MR. McCRAY: Well, International Theater Institute, I was invited to come on about four years ago, I guess, by Rosamond Gilder [phonetic], who was the founder of it, and who was at that time the international president of the international organization. And again, it's rather interesting that this sprang from my assistance to Rosamond in securing the first foundation gifts that she obtained, not from us but from other foundations that I helped her approach. And that is the reason that I remained with her. It's another -- you see, it is the ICOM of the theater.

MR. CUMMINGS: Of the theater, right.

MR. McCRAY: And it is always in the same situation, too, of not having enough money to run it.

MR. CUMMINGS: But then you've gotten something much more flamboyant which is Robert Wilson -- in some ways.

MR. McCRAY: Not flamboyant, necessarily. I just am interested in avant-garde things in general [inaudible]. I think it was a perfectly logical outgrowth of my Museum of Modern Art days, where I was not just interested in museum painting and sculptures but --

MR. CUMMINGS: All the other manifestations. How did you get involved with him, then?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I didn't get involved with him. I just went to several of the things and saw him. And Nenal Carveiss [phonetic] who just recently died, and various people who were interested in it, and Robert was interested in getting an older, unoccupied person, I guess, sort of sitting on the board. Because he had originally been set up with the members only of the company as the board and they were changing the character of the board. And it was just about the moment I was retiring he asked me --

MR. CUMMINGS: How do you find the experience of being involved with all these diversified institutions on a

trustee level?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I am aware, I suppose now even more than I was before I retired, that they do take a great deal of time. And in retirement, the diversity of them is a rather pleasant involvement because it keeps me attuned to lots of things that are going on, sort of life-giving things in a way. And I enjoy them for that reason, though they are quite demanding sometimes, in time.

MR. CUMMINGS: That's true. That's true. Well, to continue the committees, you have served on so many committees.

MR. McCRAY: I shouldn't have put all those things down. I never knew that I would have to [inaudible] --

MR. CUMMINGS: Dug some of them up, you know. I mean, there are things like the acquisitions committee and prints of the Museum of Modern Art which you have been part of. Are you still on that committee?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: So it's 10 years of that. Is that active?

MR. McCRAY: Oh, very active.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you have monthly meetings or twice a year or --

MR. McCRAY: They have, oh, every -- there is no precise, regular [inaudible]. They don't usually -- well, as a matter of fact, they did this summer. The [inaudible] show is one of that department's activities, so we met a little more frequently prior to that. But it meets, I would think, maybe eight times a year.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, fairly frequently during the season?

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: Now, do you -- is that a committee where you really act or is it an advisory committee?

MR. McCRAY: No, it's the -- the selection of things is made by the staff and they are submitted. The committee then recommends, authorizes the purchase subject to trustee approval.

MR. CUMMINGS: I see. I see. Does the committee make suggestions towards things?

MR. McCRAY: Yes, different ones participate to different degrees in that department. But the committee is a very good, active one. It makes suggestions and does a lot of scouting around for new talents and things of that sort.

MR. CUMMINGS: So that keeps you very involved in seeing new visual art?

MR. McCRAY: It should. My getting around has affected that, recently.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, I mean the committee meetings, you at least can review --

MR. McCRAY: You have a marvelous opportunity to see what's going on.

MR. CUMMINGS: You know, somebody else did the spade work, brings you the choice goodies. Do you think a committee like that of acquisitions, an acquisition committee, has influences beyond saying yes or no to given works of art in an institution? Or is it hard to say?

MR. McCRAY: Well, the committee, you see, is made up --

MR. CUMMINGS: Mostly trustees?

MR. McCRAY: Mostly trustees or younger people interested in collecting. Or a few people who are interested, actually, in contributions for the purchase of prints and things of this sort. I think that there is a certain liveliness to the diversity of the interests of the various people on this thing that's valuable maybe to the staff. I hope the membership of the committee does not necessarily influence the -- I mean beyond practical purposes of the income that may come to them, as far as the -- and I don't think it does at all, affects the functioning of the staff in surveying and recommending whatever they choose. I don't know. You know, it depends so much on the personalities of the committee and it varies from year to year, as to how effectively the whole thing works. It's a good committee, I think, as it's functioned in the last several years.

MR. CUMMINGS: What about the advisory group at the Institute of Fine Arts? Is that --

MR. McCRAY: Well, so many of these things are an outgrowth of your major occupation

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: I hope that no one will ever think that I was buying my way into these things -- [laughter] -- but in the case of the institute, because it is one of the leading institutions in the land in giving high graduate degrees in the history of Asian art, or western art for that matter, because we have had Asians come here and Americans going from there to study in Asia, we became very dependent on the Institute [inaudible] and Craig Smythe [phonetic] and now Jonathan Brown [phonetic], very dependent on their advice on various things. And we also through that came to be aware of some of the problems that confronted the Institute. Again, largely financial. And at one point, we for example took over, which we have continued to support, the most distinguished journal on Asian art in the country, one of the world journals, the [inaudible], which has been consistently supported by the Fund and unfortunately now, as its costs have increased, has been supported by other donors. Also, the advisory aspect of it was again in relation to where to seek funds from other foundations and so forth. And it became quite acute, especially in the last few years, where New York University was suffering so terribly economically that they threatened to apply the principal of -- what do you call it when a person retires and they're not replaced?

MR. CUMMINGS: The attrition?

MR. McCRAY: Attrition aspect of reducing the staff. And the two most distinguished Asian professors were up for retirement. They were the oldest people on staff, two of the oldest. And the prospect was that one day the institute would wake up and have lost its -- the top Chinese scholar perhaps in the country and the top Indian scholar in the country. So that there has been a great effort, to which I alas have not been able to contribute as much time as I would like to, particularly in the last year, I was not able to attend the meetings. But this has been a great crisis in the institute and it was an area in which I was interested and also associated with through grants to them and to their students and so on.

MR. CUMMINGS: And trusteeship now seems to be fairly similar problems, patterns, everywhere you go, whatever the institution.

MR. McCRAY: Yeah.

MR. CUMMINGS: It starts with the money and ends with the bottom line. Do you find, though, that the information or the experience of one aids you in solving problems of another? Or is that pretty much --

MR. McCRAY: Sometimes but I think they all have their more or less particular -- oh, there is a great deal of similarity in the crunch for money everywhere.

MR. CUMMINGS: But don't you think the --

MR. McCRAY: Each one has its, you know, different --

MR. CUMMINGS: Appeals.

MR. McCRAY: -- appeals. And each one has a different -- not necessarily different but there is a good deal of overlapping but they are also very particular sources that can apply to some that don't to others. So that you have to scratch all the time to find appropriate ones.

MR. CUMMINGS: Do you find that the private patronage now is getting increasingly difficult? I mean, the person who might have given X thousands of dollars now either split or reduced his funds or doesn't give and it's hard to replace somebody like that?

MR. McCRAY: You know, I think there are still immense contributions made. There are not as many, though, I would think, without having any statistical knowledge of it, of the large -- the numerous large grants that used to be made to institutions. Younger people are not giving great hunks of money, though in many instances earlier, I think, by the time you had gotten into your forties -- and there are people in their forties now who are considerable contributors. But not on the scale that they used to be perhaps in number or in level of contribution. I think that also the demand for money has increased so.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, enormously.

MR. McCRAY: The diversion of activity, museums and the new aspects have arisen in terms of social and medical and all kinds of problems. As far as the arts are concerned, it has invaded some of their sources of support. In other cases, there have been new sources of support also for artistic endeavors. But I think that there is, alas, a growing tendency among some to begin to fear the day that tax exemption pattern will change so drastically that they will no longer be able to --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, the laws affecting foundations have changed a great deal in the last half a dozen years.

MR. McCRAY: Yes, but they haven't really affected the money very much.

MR. CUMMINGS: No?

MR. McCRAY: The money is still there and --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, but new foundations and the medium size and smaller ones seem to have been having --

MR. McCRAY: From my little experience with foundations, I think most of the things that had happened in foundations have been understandable and are primarily to increase the usefulness and integrity of foundations that foundations were very out of hand. A great many of them were. And the ones that weren't were suffering from the reputations of the others. There was very little conscience about dispensing tax-exempt funds. And the fact now that theoretically tax-exempt funds have to be authorized by corporate members rather than family members -- in families, after all, the theory of tax deduction, to give your money away in place of tax so it is not your money you are giving away -- you are giving your money to something and benefiting from the identification of it.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: But actually, you are not paying the equivalent of tax.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, but it's also capital protection situations, too, in many ways.

MR. McCRAY: To some extent.

MR. CUMMINGS: Sure, absolutely.

MR. McCRAY: So the benefits of the individual gift have not only [inaudible] it was the abuse though by individuals, I think, frequently that have brought the tax reforms that have come on. And I think most of them are justified. Where they go next is another point.

MR. CUMMINGS: What do you mean?

MR. McCRAY: Well, I mean, if they remove the high deductible brackets that we have.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

MR. McCRAY: The government will simply have to change its whole attitude toward the scale of giving support --

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, what do you think of the increased federal support for cultural activities? Do you think that's going to maintain itself?

MR. McCRAY: Well, it will have to grow if it's going to work at all.

MR. CUMMINGS: But it seems now there is a shift from a rather more sophisticated attitude to one catering to, you know, a much lower level, much less grand idea. I was just told the other day that the state of California has reorganized their arts council, specifically not to give grants to fine arts but to the craftsmen who might sell on Washington Square Outdoor show, and extraordinary levels that they reduced the whole development --

MR. McCRAY: Well, I think it is part of the phase that we are going through. The same thing is applying to education [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: Funding in the future -- since you've been an observer in the funding business. Do you think that there will be more corporate patronage, for example, as opposed to the private foundations?

MR. McCRAY: Oh, I think that that -- corporate patronage is bound to rise because only one or two of the companies have reached their allowability, even. And my feeling about the sort of deluxe patronage that we get now from Exxon and Mobil Oil or something like that, that it's the cheapest advertising that they can possibly get. And that they will be encouraged to give beyond the allowable deduction, almost call it public relations or something else, I don't know what. I think it is a pity in a way, of course, that so much of that corporate patronage goes to the gilt edged things.

MR. CUMMINGS: Well, that's the safest.

MR. McCRAY: It's the safest one. But it puts the foundations and so forth somewhat down, and they have to make the -- they have to take the chances, when they haven't necessarily [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: But I think corporate people find it difficult even giving fairly safe grants, unless it's Mobil, who is very sophisticated about it. They get very nervous.

MR. McCRAY: Xerox, I think, has been among the more imaginative ones.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: They have a mind of their own.

MR. CUMMINGS: Good. Now you, what, you retired from JDR 3rd, when?

MR. McCRAY: Just -- I didn't leave until October but technically it was the end of August, our fiscal year.

MR. CUMMINGS: Of --

MR. McCRAY: 1st of September, 31st of August.

MR. CUMMINGS: What year?

MR. McCRAY: '75, yes.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really, '75?

MR. McCRAY: '75, yes, to '76 --

MR. CUMMINGS: Two years, almost?

MR. McCRAY: And a year later, I went to hospital and it's been a year since then, two years. I'm now 69. And we had obligatory retirement at 65, subject to two --

MR. CUMMINGS: Additional --

MR. McCRAY: -- separate years at the discretion of the board, which I took.

MR. CUMMINGS: So how do you find things -- so you now have all these committees and all these other things, and you're still busy?

MR. McCRAY: Of course.

MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, it seems as if you're busier now than you were flying around all the time.

MR. McCRAY: Well, I have been awfully busy winding up that 12-year report on the [inaudible] fund. And busy with the Archives of American Art --

MR. CUMMINGS: AFA --

MR. McCRAY: I'm not on any advisory [inaudible]. And I am now a consultant to Japan Society, which is a slight source of income, fortunately. And --

MR. CUMMINGS: Yes, that's a problem in the culture world.

MR. McCRAY: Certainly is.

MR. CUMMINGS: Maintaining an income that will --

MR. McCRAY: Particularly, if you remember that two years ago, three years ago, that so many of the pension systems and investments --

MR. CUMMINGS: Disintegrated almost.

MR. McCRAY: Foundations took such an absolute --

MR. CUMMINGS: Beating in the market.

MR. McCRAY: Absolute beating. I woke up one day and I was getting near retirement and just thought I would politely inquire about what my savings plan, for example, had produced. And at that moment that I questioned it, it was worth less than what I had put into it, much less what the donor had. It was built up again to some extent, but it really was quite a shock. Because there was no time then to work -- there was not sufficient time to [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: -- haven't talked about?

MR. McCRAY: I don't know, unless you want to go back to some of the international program things. I don't know how well --

MR. CUMMINGS: I think the general ideas we've covered. It would then be very specific.

MR. McCRAY: Well, it was quite varied [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: The what?

MR. McCRAY: That program was quite varied. I think we mentioned the embassy program.

MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

MR. McCRAY: We also --

MR. CUMMINGS: Were you involved with the Woodwards when that started, when Mrs. Woodward started?

MR. McCRAY: Yes, they came to me, as a matter of fact, for advice. Not the Woodwards, but the brother-in-law who was the assistant secretary of state at that time came and studied our program [inaudible], particularly the -- the arts and embassies [inaudible].

MR. CUMMINGS: I can't think who it was, either.

MR. McCRAY: But getting back to your question about ICOM, oddly enough, my implication with ICOM in the early days did implicate me terribly in New York with visiting Europeans. One of the activities of the international program, very demanding ones, became helping those people in the program at that time who were coming to the States for the first time, or for the first time since the war.

MR. CUMMINGS: Where to go and who to see and what to do?

MR. McCRAY: Where to go, who to see. And we did an awful lot to make appointments for them or to advise them, to get them to private collections. God knows, we were absolutely standing on our heads most of the time.

MR. CUMMINGS: How many languages have you picked up over the years?

MR. McCRAY: None, really.

MR. CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

MR. McCRAY: There's never been time enough to pick up anything on the way. I wish I had a mastery of several European languages. It would certainly be useful. Asia, of course, unless you have Japanese, you have to use English in Japan, which is not very satisfactory. But it's the best single language you can use there. And English or French work -- mostly English, in the rest of Asia. Certainly in China.

MR. CUMMINGS: Okay, well --

[End of Disk 11.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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