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Oral history interview with A. Hyatt Mayor,
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Transcript

Interview

PC: PAUL CUMMINGS

HM: A. HYATT MAYOR

PC: March 21. Paul Cummings talking with A. Hyatt Mayor. What is the initial for?

HM: Alpheus. My grandfather was Alpheus Hyatt, my uncle was Alpheus Hyatt, my great-grandfather was Alpheus Hyatt. And his father was one of a number of sons in Baltimore and my grandmother used to say that they were called Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego and all died and Alpheus came along and he survived. But I don't use it because, when I was born, there was my grandfather Ally and there was my uncle Alph, so that kind of used up that name. I always thought that it was a classical name, the Alpheus and Eurydice and so forth. But, when I went to Mt. Athos, the monks would ask me my name. It was no use saying Hyatt or Mayor, so I would say Alpheus. And they would say "very apostolic." Sure enough, there are two Alpheuses in the New Testament: the brother of Zebedee and somebody else.

PC: Well, what is your family background? Is it all American for a long, long time?

HM: Yes. My great, great, great grandfather or something like that, Christian Mayor, came from Ulm in Wurtemberg as the Consul from Wurtemberg in the 1780's.

He settled in Baltimore and the family has been there ever since. My mother's mother came from Kinderhook in upstate New York. And the rest of them all came from Baltimore. The whole batch of them. My grandfather Hyatt was the son of the sort of Park & Tilford's of Baltimore, the very rich grocers. He was sent to Harvard just before the Civil War. The only letter of introduction he had was to the leading wine merchant of Boston. And he absolutely appalled his family by becoming a paleontologist. They didn't expect *that*. They'd much rather see him come back a drunkard, I think. I don't know. My grandfather Mayor also went North. He went to be educated at Stevens Tech where he later taught. He worked with Edison on the phonograph and the telephone and, in their house in Maplewood, New Jersey -- where my grandmother lived for sixty-odd years -- they had installed a telephone that went from the garret to the parlor. And when guests came, my father had to skip up to the garret and talk to guests in the parlor. And, having had just about the first telephone in those parts, grandmother was almost the last person to put in a real one, in the late 1920's. When she died there were two golden oak receivers of this telephone -- that was all that was left of it -- worse luck. My brother-in-law at that time was working at M.I.T. and Harvard. They had the first manufactured model of the telephone, lacking the receivers. So these fitted in and completed the set. I was very pleased with that.

PC: Well, since everybody was from Baltimore, how did you come to be born in Annisquam?

HM: Because my grandfather Hyatt got his first job as curator of the Natural History collections in the Peabody Institute in Salem. Then he also founded the Teachers School of Science in Boston. And, having gone to Harvard, you see, looked for a country place, and found this dilapidated 17th-century house which belonged to a family that had been bankrupt so that the house had passed into the hands of the bank. And he bought that house. Which was where I was born. That's the only time that land has ever been sold, which is rather unusual. It was a crown grant in the 1660's. I was born in a room in that house where my grandfather established the first marine biological laboratory in the New World, which then moved to Penikese and then moved to Wood's Hole. And that started right in the little back room in our old house. It's rather interesting.

PC: Is the house still standing?

HM: Oh yes, very much so. We go there every summer.

PC: How old is it now?

HM: Well, it's hard to say, you know. It's been one of those things that's been remodeled a great many times. According to the land grants of those days you had to start building (at least make a gesture toward it) six months after getting your grant. The grant dated from 1663 to a man called Francis Norwood. So something of the kind was started then. But the bulk of the house is mid-18th century and it's been all transmogrified and the hell ripped out of it. So it's no good architecturally at all.

PC: It's an architectural collage.

HM: Yes. Alas! It was a very fine house indeed once. All gone now.

PC: Is this a large house and is there a lot of land around it?

HM: Originally they owned a great deal of land. Oh, they owned as far as you could see. But my grandparents had seven acres there and then they divided that so now we have three-and-a-half, a point of land, the highest point. Oh, it's a pretty place. Wonderful tidewater country. Limitless marshes to look out on which are green-gold in spring and corn-gold in autumn.

HM: That's really where you grew up then?

HM: That's where I grew up, yes. It's a beautiful place. And ten-foot tides rushing back and forth. It was lovely.

PC: How large a house is it?

HM: Oh, gosh, I don't know. It has four bathrooms, I think. I once counted up the rooms, I can't remember how many there are. But it is a big house. It doesn't look big. But there was room for everybody. Well, four of us and then always cousins coming to visit.

PC: You have brothers and sisters?

HM: Yes, I'm the oldest of four. I have two sisters and a brother.

PC: Did any of them ever get into the art world?

HM: Yes. My younger sister Barbara painted very well indeed. She really had talent. She lives in Berkeley, California now. Whether she's painting or not I don't know. She didn't pursue it with enough energy to break through and become a real professional painter. But she has great, great talent, really great talent. Especially in portraiture. Wonderful children's portraits she made.

PC: What is her name now?

HM: Her name is Mrs. Theodore Money, my sister Barbara. She now lives at 5 Forest Lane in Berkeley.

PC: Not with all the riotous students?

HM: Well, it's way above. She's on a vast height.

PC: I don't know Gloucester. I don't know if the houses are close together or if there is a lot of space.

HM: Well, our house is on a point between two coves, Goose Cove and Lobster Cove and it's about a long mile from most of the summer houses on the other side of the village of Annisquam, which was a great trial for me as a little boy because I had to walk an awful long dusty way to get to anybody to play with.

PC: It was really rural?

HM: It was very rural. Oh, certainly, very rural. All the roads smelled of horse manure in that delicious way they used to and the dust and the watering cans. It was really charming.

PC: Well, you had brothers and sisters to play with after a while - right?

HM: Yes, exactly. So we didn't mind that too much.

PC: How about in the summer? You had lots of summer people around, weren't there?

HM: Yes. But the summer people, as I say, were over the hill.

PC: But in the winter what did you do?

HM: Well, we didn't live there in the winter. We only lived there in the summer. In the winter we lived in all sorts of places. My father was a marine biologist who ran a Carnegie Laboratory on the last of the Florida keys, the Dry Tortugas. A wonderful place. I went there to spend a summer with him once. It was absolutely great. A tiny island of sand, very hot in the day, of course; south of it nothing but the Gulf of Mexico as far as you could see. And after supper, when the sun dropped and the night sprang up, we would walk around the island. And if there was moonlight the fiddler crabs would be like the sand itself moving away. Oh, it was a great, great place. I loved it.

PC: Did that inspire any interest in nature in a scientific way?

HM: It should have. I suppose everybody so expected me to be a naturalist that I couldn't do it. In a sense, of course, I suppose that I have combined art and natural history in art history.

PC: It's an interesting kind of natural history.

HM: Yes.

PC: What kind of school could you go to then if you were traveling and living in these different places?

HM: Well, it seemed to me that I was always the new boy in a new school wherever I went, because we never lived more than a couple of winters in one place until I was of high school age when we settled in Princeton.

PC: What were some of the places you lived?

HM: We lived in - dear me - where was it? Sharon, Massachusetts, which is where I first went to school. Then we went abroad and we lived in Mouse Hole near Penzance in Cornwall for a summer. This was when I was seven and eight. And then we lived in a place called Auber-sur-Oise. And that's really rather amusing. My aunt (Anna Hyatt Huntington) is a sculptor. And she was doing this big statue in Paris. She wanted a summer studio which would be cheap and on the ground floor so you could wheel in heavy sculpture. So she and my mother took a train out of the - would it be the Gare de L'Oest? - perhaps, I don't know. They took a way train and took tickets to the end of the line. Every time the train slowed down they looked out and they would see, you know, those silvered globes in the gardens. They would see a factory roof.

Finally the train slowed down to a little village where roses were growing over the garden walls and thatches. Beyond there were bachelor buttons and poppies in the field. It was just beautiful. So they got out. And they asked the Chef de Gare if he had any kind of barracks or shed that would serve as a studio. And he said, "Mesdames, nous avons des ateliers." And they landed in Auber-sur-Oise where Van Gogh shot himself, where Pissarro painted, where Cezanne painted. And they hired the studio of Daubigny whose backyard had been painted by Van Gogh.

And we lived there with a Madame de Plantier who was the mistress of some rich industrialist of the region who had died. She gave herself off as his widow but we always rather doubted it. She had a wonderful collection of faience. And I can still remember as a little boy the rose de Marseilles lavabo which was about a yard high with a pewter spigot. A wonderful object. That made a great impression on me. And she taught me French in the best way in the world. But you know all French are really teachers if you scratch them. Just as we're all missionaries. And she took me up among the cornflowers in the fields above and there she taught me French in the right way. She wouldn't let me learn any words until I could pronounce the vowels because that's the difficult thing for any English-speaking person -- to get the pure vowels. They're like an organ tone, not like a violin tone, mixed as ours are. So I had to say ba, be, be, bou, bu. And I had to say those absolutely exactly for about four or five days. And then she taught me words. And I've always been terribly grateful to her. That's how I started my children speaking French and it really worked quite well.

PC: It's true, that's the key to the whole sound of the orchestration of the voice.

HM: Yes. And all those continental languages except Russian all have pure vowels. And it's just very difficult to do. I'm sure that English had at one time the way Welsh has now. Shakespeare's English certainly had pure vowels. And the vowels got more and more mixed until now they make those awful vowels in England nowadays.

PC: Welsh is a strange language.

HM: It is a strange language but I'm sure that it preserves a great deal of early English just as Irish does.

PC: Does Irish? Do you mean Celt?

HM: Well, I mean the Irish learned to speak in the 18th century. So they say "tay" for "Tea," which is what Pope said after all -- "Here thou, great Anna, whom three continents obey doest sometimes counsel take and sometimes 'tay'." But that was a wonderful summer at Auber-sur-Oise. And great fun. Great fun. I remember my grandmother always tried to make me feel sorry for people and have a social conscience which doesn't come very readily to little boys.

So above the village there were chalk cliffs in which people lived. Troglodyte caves, you know. People I suppose have been living there for ten thousand years. And they had little modern facades with lace curtains or all that kind of thing. And my grandmother said it was such a pity that people lived there; it really must be very difficult for them, it must be so damp. And I tried to be sympathetic and I said, "Yes, that must be terribly bad for the piano." That was as far as I could go in my imagination.

PC: Did you ever visit one?

HM: I never did. We passed the entrances but we were never asked in. You know French people don't ask you

into their houses.

PC: Never.

HM: We didn't dare try to get in. And I suppose those things still exist. I'm told that in the north of Spain there's a house still lived in that the archaeologists think was a neolithic house that has never been abandoned.

PC: Really! That's fantastic.

HM: Stone. That's really extraordinary.

PC: Good material that really lasts.

HM: Yes.

PC: Do you remember where in Spain?

HM: I don't remember. I was told about it. I've never seen a photograph of it but I was told by an archaeologist in Madrid.

PC: Well, you were how old? About seven or eight?

HM: I can remember very well because when I came home it was the spring of 1909 and the Lincoln pennies had just come out then. That fixes it in my mind as a little boy. We spent the winter after that in Naples in an apartment overlooking the whole Bay. Which is fascinating. Because, when storms blew up, the water in the Bay would turn chocolate brown and the sunken villas and temples (because all that land is sunk) out by Pozzuoli on the side away from Vesuvius would be squares of dark peacock green in the chocolate brown. And you could tell exactly where those buildings were. Its very curious. And that only happens when storms are brewing.

PC: I wonder what causes that?

HM: I don't know. Something about the light on the water or something like that.

PC: That's fantastic.

HM: It was a very pretty place.

PC: You must have had a household going around you of scientists and quite widely assorted people?

HM: Yes. My father at that time was on an expedition to Australia. He wanted to measure the growth of the Great Barrier Reef, the coral reef there, and he had to spend a while. And while he was absent on those long trips, we were taken abroad to learn languages. That was first in 1908 and 1909 and again in 1912, 1913, and 1914. Those were trips. And on the first trip he came back and joined us all in Naples. And he was a great friend of Anton Dorn who was a German who ran the great aquarium in Naples. And I remember going out on their trawler when they were trawling for specimens and we'd go close in to those extraordinary volcanic cliffs at Pozzuoli and Sorrento. And it was absolutely spectacular. Because the water falls off practically to a submarine precipice so you can go up and almost touch them in the boat and not get rammed or go ashore. And I remember very vividly those extraordinary cliffs and the birds and strange things they dredged up out of the bottom of the sea. It was fascinating. It was a wonderful winter.

PC: Did you learn a lot of things about what came out of the sea?

HM: No. I just thought they were spiny and definitely not to be touched because they would pinch me. That I do remember.

PC: Was there interest in art in your family?

HM: Yes. Oh, yes. All the women have always painted. My mother and my aunt were sculptors. My mother is dead now. My aunt is still alive at ninety-four. She still works every day in her studio. And their mother painted and their grandmother painted. My great-grandmother who was Lily Ann Reynolds - Aunt Bebe as she became - used to design patchwork quilts. And one night she dreamt a design so she lit her candle and drew the design. And we have it. It was an extraordinary dream. It looks like snow crystals made of Indian clubs in indigo blue on a white ground, great big crystals, quite an extraordinary design.

PC: It's interesting that the whole art tradition was carried on by the women.

HM: By the women, yes. It's very curious. Maybe that's why I never began to paint. It could be. I don't know.

PC: Was there music when you were young?

AM: Well, my aunt who is a sculptor had to choose whether she'd play the violin or model. And she thought that her fingers would last longer modeling than playing the violin. So she forsook violin lessons. Which I think was a very sensible choice to make. My grandmother played the piano in an old-fashioned and pretty way. She composed little waltzes which she used to play with her arthritic fingers; rolls and roulades and things. But my sister Barbara, the painter, has a real gift of music just as my daughter has. But they've both remained amateurs. They didn't want to get into the rat race of professional music making.

PC: You didn't go to concerts or anything like that?

HM: No. Concerts, you know, were very rare. You can't imagine what the world was like before radio and phonograph.

PC: It was quiet.

HM: It was quiet. When I was in Princeton as a little boy Stokowski would come once a winter and play Tschaikowsky's *Pathetique* and a few things like that that everybody wants to hear. That was the music for the winter. And when the first phonograph records came out and I bought the Bach Inventions and the Partitas that was an extraordinary thing that happened. I remember it very well indeed. I was in my early teens. I got a little wind-up machine. I used to play those.

PC: With a big horn.

HM: Yes, a big horn. A sort of morning glory horn.

PC: That's marvelous. Going back to our chronology for a minute, after Naples you went where?

HM: Then we came home and we lived in Princeton for a while, for several years. And then we went off to Germany for two winters and the summer between. That was into the summer of 1914. So we came home because of the war. And then we settled in Princeton where my mother lived until a few years before she died when she joined my aunt in Bethel, Connecticut. And we lived in various houses in Princeton and around, moving from one house to another.

PC: How did you like living in Princeton? You lived there quite a while.

HM: Yes, we lived there quite a while. I really never liked Princeton very much. It was very different in those days from what it is now. It was very much of a Scotch Presbyterian town and one had to mind one's P's and Q's very much indeed. It was a small narrow town dominated by the university. It's entirely different now. It's a great big commuting center, a bedroom for New York and Philadelphia. We lived at one time in a beautiful 18th-century farmhouse out at the end of Witherspoon Street. And you could look across a great sag of empty fields and there was Princeton on the crest of the hill about a mile away. We lived there while I was going to college. I would bicycle in to the University that way. And now that is absolutely solid houses, solid, solid houses. The house still exists. It was very well maintained. Very well restored. It was a beautiful house.

PC: Your parents always seem to have picked interesting houses to live in.

HM: They usually were ones with low rent. Just like this apartment here. Tumbledown, picturesque places is where we lived. Just exactly like where we are now.

PC: But it was fun.

HM: It was fun. Oh, yes. I wouldn't have had it otherwise. It was just great.

PC: You went to Princeton because you were living there?

HM: Because we were living there. Because my father, although he was not a member of the faculty, had a lectureship there. He was really employed by the Carnegie Institution. But having a lectureship, we could go there free for ten dollars a year in library fees. And also to save money by living at home. And when I was there my father, poor thing, got a tubercular throat, which was why we had to live out in this so-called country air out in the country. And there the poor man lived in a sort of horrible little greenhouse on a roof with no heat in it. You know the barbarous treatments they had for tuberculosis in those days. And finally, he died a few days after I graduated. It was all very, very sad. Very terribly sad. Because he could only whisper for several years. It was just awful.

PC: It must have been terrible after having had such a busy life.

HM: It really was. A dreadful way to die. He finally died, thank goodness, in his laboratory on Dry Tortugas. He went to Tucson for the spring and the doctors saw that he was a goner anyway, and that he might as well do as he pleased. Which was very sensible of them. They didn't keep him hospitalized. He went off, opened his laboratory and there, while he was wading in the shallow water, he dropped dead, finally, of a heart attack. But actually it was brought on, of course, by this terrible tuberculosis of the throat. But, for a man who was enormously communicative and talkative and charming, it was a real cross to be locked up like that. Awful. Awful. And of course it took him out of circulation just when a son needed him.

PC: You were the oldest child?

HM: I was the oldest child. I was 21, just turned 21, my 21st birthday, my graduation and his death all occurred within less than a week. Barbara would have been 10 years younger. But then I had to grow up in a great hurry, all of a sudden.

PC: What was Princeton like as a school in those days? Was it large?

HM: Well, it was fairly large. I suppose there were fifteen hundred students there. And what it was really like I don't know because I didn't live on campus. I just simply bicycled in to classes. It was just like a continuation of high school really. There were some very, very good teachers there. Wonderful people. There was a Frenchman called Louis Conze [Conz?] who looked like a truffle pig always buttoned up in absurd overcoats and going around to rummage sales and coming home hugging ghastly lamps that he'd bought at a small price. A charming, wonderful man. And he gave a course in -- it was announced as being "Rabelais, Montaigne and the Pleiades." It was to be three hours a week and outdoors if possible. So we'd take pillows or blankets and sit on the grass and then he would really talk. I never got so much out of anybody. He was an absolutely marvelous man. We started off I think with Rabelais. And of course we hardly got through him so we had to do it the next spring again for the Pleiades, which was very, very good indeed. It was just great. And he would then ramble off in free association on all the kinds of subjects that would occur to a wonderfully stored historical mind. Latin grammar of the Middle Ages, the voyages of discovery, the travels of Isabella the Catholic, Rabelais's student days. A word would send him off on some extraordinary dissertation. He was a great, great teacher. A great teacher. And we didn't do one lick of work. He would say, "For the next week take the next five lines." It was so minute an assignment one forgot about it. But I never got so much out of anything that I ever did. Because there was a mind nourished out of whole books, not out of the little gray pamphlets with vocabularies that we had to read. Princeton had a great many wonderful people in those days. And it was a great education also, of course, to have the run of the stacks of the library. You'd go looking for a book and find four or five much more interesting on the way. That was wonderful.

PC: Right. That's one of the secrets of an education.

HM: That really is. Books should have a difficult classification. They should be hard to find just so you would stumble on something better as you go around.

PC: Right. It always happens, too.

HM: Always. Absolutely always, yes.

PC: Well, what did you major in?

HM: I didn't realize I was majoring in anything. And when I had my cap and gown on that rainy day of the graduation, it was an overcast day, there was a program and I discovered that I was graduating with high honors in modern languages. Somebody had kindly added it all up and said I could rate that. I don't know who ever did it. But that's how it happened.

PC: Did you have a lot of language courses? Or was it because of the European travel?

HM: I must have. You see I was simply interested in that. I was not aware of having taken many language courses, I just simply took the things that interested me but it happened to be a good many language courses. Curious.

PC: It sounds as if they were rather easygoing and didn't have a formula to apply the way it is now.

HM: That's probably sure true. I daresay it would be very different now.

PC: Do you remember other things that you studied?

HM: Yes. I took one or two courses in the history of art, one with Frank Stuart Mather who was wonderful. A great undergraduate teacher. And he gave a course in Italian painting, mostly the early painting. He was a magnetic, marvelous mind; not, I would say, a great scholar, not a graduate teacher. But an incredible man for

attracting people in. He could lead the horse to water and make it thirsty, which is a rare, rare gift. So I owe him a great deal. I think really I owe my interest in the history of art to him.

PC: That was the beginning then?

HM: And that was the beginning. Curiously though, in those days he collected beautiful drawings and some rather good paintings but it never occurred to him to bring a drawing or a painting into the class and pass it around.

PC: Oh, really? So you studied from -- what?

HM: One studied from photographs and slides. But he was a fascinating man, a little sort of rabbit-shaped, hairy man, very impulsive, warmhearted, charming. I loved him. And of course descended from all the Mathers there are. Right by the front door in his house on Effenden [?] Place, he kept an impression of that famous woodcut of Doctor Richard Mather, which is the first woodcut made in North America, which had been given to him by an aunt who kept it in her sewing box. And he was so attached to this thing that he hung it always by the front door so that, in case the house burned, he could always rescue that. That was nice, sympathetic. Yes, he was a lovely man. He really was a lovely man. A great man.

PC: That's marvelous. Who was the other instructor -- do you remember?

HM: Well of course Rufus Morey was going in those days. And I signed up for his course in Early Christian and Gothic Art. Then Morey traipsed off to Rome and the course was given by Baldwin Smith. Perhaps he was better than Morey. Morey, as I found out later, was an absolutely disastrous lecturer. He would stick his face into the manuscript and go "Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm." He read it all in a monotone, rapidly, indistinguishably. And, curiously enough, he knew it; he absolutely knew it; and he couldn't help it. Because I know somebody who was in the graduate school who had to give a lecture when Morey was there and Morey gave him a criticism and said that his delivery was monotonous. Then Morey added, "But who am I to criticize anybody for that." It's strange that he could be aware of it and do nothing about it. Very strange. He was a great scholar, a very great scholar. It was just not his dish. He was not a communicative man at all.

PC: Do you think that's true of many scholars? Have you noticed that in working with them over the years?

HM: Yes, I think so.

PC: They're very reticent verbally.

HM: Yes. Panofsky of course was entirely different. There was a very interesting session on him last week at the Princeton Museum, more as a memorial celebration for him. And there William Hecksher [?] gave an excellent talk about him and said that he prepared his writings so carefully beforehand that he could recite you chapters out of his unwritten books at any time. I'm afraid that, in season and out, is exactly what he did. Out they came. No word allowed for anybody else until the chapter had ended.

PC: Well, from Princeton you became a Rhodes scholar?

HM: Then I became a Rhodes scholar, yes.

PC: How did that happen? I'm very curious because two or three people I know who were Rhodes scholars and they never talk about it.

HM: Oh, really? Indeed. Why?

PC: Well, I don't know. One is an actor and they're various kinds of people and it's a big secret, you know.

HM: Really? How curious!

PC: Is that something that one receives or applies for? I don't know how it works.

HM: Yes, you apply for it. Let me see, in my day it went by states. Now it goes by regions. It is really not quite fair because if you live in Montana you simply go up and say you'd like to go to Oxford and you're sent. If you live on the Eastern seaboard, you have a great deal of competition. So that it is rather unfair regionally. But I tried out for it in my senior year at Princeton. At the time the examination was held in Princeton and they very sensibly gave it to a man called Bill Stephenson, who I believe became a lawyer; who exactly had all the specifications the Rhodes ordered: he was an athlete, a good high scholar, and what Rhodes called "a leader of men." I was never an athlete. I never by any stretch of the imagination could be called a leader of men. So they very sensibly gave it to Bill. He then went to Oxford. And unfortunately the climate cut his wind so he couldn't run in track. And so I suppose the next year they thought they might try something entirely different and they

sent me. At that time the examinations were held in old Castle Stephens in Hoboken. Which was a marvelous house (it's gone now), a Tuscan Gothic villa with a circular hall three stories high and enormous rooms with chandeliers all draped in brown cloth and brown dust covers on all the vast Victorian furniture and the doors -- the examinations were held in the dining room -- the rolling doors would open and absorb somebody and bang! Shut again. Then they would open again and somebody would stumble out as though they'd been in a torture chamber and somebody else would go in. I came towards the end. I sat there for hours and hours and hours with a lot of other people. I was so tired and so exhausted I didn't give a darn whether I got it or not. And that was just the mood to get it for; that's exactly the mood. So that I was totally lucid and just not frightened at all because I had ceased to care. And curiously enough -- it was evidently a very close decision --there was one very, very nice man there, I don't know his name, I've forgotten all about him, but I took a great shine to him as we all sat there talking during this waiting period. And when finally, after a *long* discussion (I must have got it by a very, very close margin) they announced that I had it, I went to this poor fellow and, with total sincerity, said that I wished he'd gotten it. I was entirely wrong but that was what I felt at the moment. I was just so exhausted

PC: How did you decide to go to Oxford anyway?

HM: Well, the Rhodes scholarship takes one to Oxford.

PC: Right. But I mean you had interest either in the scholarship or in Oxford to

HM: In those days I thought that English literature was my dish and that I wanted to write. And Oxford seemed like a good place to prepare for that. I don't exactly know why I was really hipped on being a Rhodes scholar but I was. I really wanted that very much indeed until this final moment of exhaustion when I got it. At any rate, I went over there on the boat with Francis Ferguson and various other Rhodes scholars -- there was quite a batch of us. You have to pick the college that you want to go to and, of course, I just knew them as pictures of pretty gardens and Tudor facades and things like that. One was exactly like another to me. An ex-Rhodes scholar said he'd help me. And he said, of course, your first choice must be Balliol; that's a good place to go; and then after that it doesn't matter. And so the second choice happened to be Christ Church, and I don't know what the others were, I've forgotten now. Thank goodness, Balliol wouldn't have me. You sent your photograph and your curriculum vitae, then they'd bat you around there at Oxford. And Balliol wouldn't have me I'm happy to say because that was a purely political college. I wouldn't have been a bit happy there. I was sent to Christ Church which was the largest college with the richest and the poorest and the greatest variety of people. And that was exactly where I would love to have gone, if I could have chosen with knowledge, that is what I would have chosen. And I was given a tutor called Ridley who had been brilliant in greats and was therefore given a tutorship in English about which he didn't give one hoot. And he was so discouraging and so limp and lax and lackadaisical and dreadful, I thought I'd just have to get rid of him.

I moved heaven and earth and changed my degree to a B.Lit., which was rather hard to do, and was determined to do it with some non-Oxonian, either a Frenchman or a Spaniard. I went around one evening to the head of the French department who was a man called Rudelaire; who wasn't home that night. Then I went a few streets away to Wellington square to the head of the Spanish department who was Francisco de Aguila who was home. He opened the door himself. He was a little, white-haired man with bright blue eyes and all the warmth and impetuosity of a Madrilene. And he and I just fell on each other's necks immediately and that was it. A wonderful man. A marvelous man who had married an Englishwoman much younger than he. He used to write couplets while he was shaving, you know, little verses. And he showed me a bureau entirely full of them which he wrote and never read -- just filed away in a drawer. He just wrote them on the back of receipted bills, envelopes, anything. Oh, he was great. Absolutely great. A great scholar. And wonderful fun. I liked that man.

PC: You liked Oxford then more than Princeton?

HM: Yes. Oh, yes. Well, Oxford after all was an experience and Princeton was just a day school. And the intoxication of just sitting down and talking about any darn thing with no holds barred was really absolutely intoxicating. It was just wonderful. Talk, talk, talk. I'm sure that if I had lived on the campus in Princeton I would have had that experience then. But coming to me later in life when I was 22, it meant more. It was more of a revelation. You know, youth *is* wasted on the young and if you can have some of the experiences a bit later, it's so much the better.

PC: Are there any professors there that were important to you besides

HM: Besides Aquila?

PC: Yes.

HM: No. You see, in Oxford they really realize the usefulness of the printed page and you don't have to go to lectures. You can just read. The result is nobody goes to lectures. A few of the girls, but nobody really goes to

lectures. And there is very little contact between the teachers and the taught as far as I remember the experience. You have your tutor, of course -- and that was Aguila -- and you're in touch with him but not with the others. The ideal college in Oxford is All Souls which has about three dozen dons and one or two undergraduates.

PC: Oh, really? That's marvelous.

HM: That's where they would all like to be.

PC: What did you read then? Or what did you study there?

HM: Well, Spanish. And of course I did a thesis degree which left me entirely free. Therefore I could read all kinds of things. And did. I read all sorts of things and got my silly old thesis finished, and passed, and satisfied the requirements of the people who sent me so they wouldn't feel I had let them down, which I did have to do.

PC: What did you write on?

HM: I wrote on the influence of the Quixote on English literature. A stupid subject. Happily a German had written a Ph.D. thesis on exactly that subject of which I got a copy by writing to somebody in Germany. And my examiners could not read German, didn't realize that most of what I had was rearranged from this German with a few little additions I was able to find on my own. And it was a miserable performance. You know, all Ph.D. theses are miserable.

PC: A tortured experience.

HM: Exactly. And I was examined by Aguila and that lovely man Henry Thomas from the British Museum, who used to be head of the Spanish department of the British Museum. When I came in, Mr. Thomas asked me if I was going to publish this thesis. I said, "Certainly not." And you could just see the sigh of relief that he gave.

PC: How many languages did you know by this time?

HM: Well, of course I had learned French really well at Auber. And then I learned Spanish quite well at Princeton from an excellent teacher called Marden. He was a dandy teacher. Then, let me see, when I taught at Vassar, I picked up Italian from a wonderful girl there called Gabriella Bosano. She let me sit in the back of the class with all the girls in the back row and I could listen in on that and that gave me a start on Italian. Then I got one of those wonderful Temple classics, Dante's, which had an excellent English translation on the right hand page and the Italian on the left. And with that you really were set.

PC: Your French maybe helped all those.

HM: The French helped all those things, of course. And of course living in Germany for two winters I got German quite thoroughly. But it was terribly interesting. Languages are useful not so much to speak them but it is useful to read them because then you have all sorts of information accessible. And I've found it absolutely invaluable (my reading knowledge of the languages) to be able to read rapidly, to skip through a page of French or Italian or Spanish.

PC: And pick out really what you're looking for.

HM: And then to know where you've got to read slowly and concentrate. That's very useful. I must say that German is a language that I still can't read with my heels higher than my head; that I cannot do. I can go through it but it is a murderous language because they think in a different order.

PC: Yes, that's true.

HM: And that damnable "nicht," you know. You turn a page and there's a nicht, you reread the whole sentence with that in mind. Oh, it's really difficult.

PC: So what were you interested in doing then after Oxford?

HM: After Oxford I thought that I'd probably never have leisure again (which indeed was true), and that I'd better see something of classical Greece. So I spent a winter at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens with the money that I'd saved up out of my Rhodes scholarship. And that was extremely interesting also, very interesting. In the spring I went off for two or three weeks to Egypt, for about ten days to Constantinople. And then we traveled all over Greece; the school did in a body. It was extremely interesting. They used to organize those tours beautifully. You had to read up. You were given an assignment and you read up on that assignment in the library in Athens and then, when you got to the site, you conducted the rest of them through the temple ruins or the fortification or whatever it might be. And I was given the sculptures of the pediment of

Olympia. So I read up on that. And on meeting them for the first time I introduced others to them.

PC: That's terrific. So you knew what was going to happen.

HM: Yes. And that's a very good discipline, and excellent discipline.

PC: You don't come to it cold.

HM: And, when the others stumble through their introductions, you're a little more kindhearted because you've been there or are about to go there yourself. I don't know how they organize those things now but we used to go in a fleet of open cars, and of course Greece in the autumn is terribly dusty. I arrived in October. It had not rained one drop in all of Attica since April; not one. And the roads were ankle deep in limestone grit. So unless you were in the first car of this cavalcade of cars you were absolutely covered -- in your hair, in your ears, up your nose, in your joints.

PC: Who was there? Were there any professors that you remember in that group?

HM: Yes. Karl Blagen was there, who was the great Helladic archaeologist, and so was Mr. Hill who was the great authority on the Parthenon. And, while I was there, William Dinsmore came for a visit; he was the great archaeologist who used to teach at Columbia, and was the great idea reconstructor of buildings. He was a fascinating man. I remember going with him to the Propinlea of the Acropolis. And he reconstructed the southwest wing which lies in moldy boulders all over the place. And he would say (of course the walls of these buildings were battered so they were slightly thinner at the top than they are at the bottom, very slightly so the incline is imperceptible), but he would say, "Now of course this stone over there measures only 35.5 centimetres through; that one over there is 40 centimetres through so therefore this goes two courses above and three stones to the right." He played chess in the air with these stones until you went absolutely crazy trying to follow him. He was a genius, the kind of man who could play chess against himself while walking in the woods. I remember when I met him for the first time (I was in Egypt when he arrived). I was going out of the school one day when he was coming in and he said, "Oh! You must be Mayor by elimination." I was the last stone in the wall slipped in place and the wall was complete.

PC: I only know one recent wall built that way. That's the back wall of the Covent Garden Theatre.

HM: Really! Oh, indeed! It is? Why, I wonder?

PC: I don't know.

HM: How do you happen to know that?

PC: Well, I used to work in the theatre.

HM: Oh, really?

PC: And I studied with -- I always forget names -- a man who is a descendant of a great American actor, a theatre historian. Oh, well, anyway it will come to me later. You pick up all those useful bits of information like that.

HM: That's interesting.

PC: So you had seen a great deal of the world by the time you came back to this country.

HM: Yes. So much that I really didn't care about traveling again very much. I really got my belly full. And that was a very good idea.

PC: Because you were young and everything was happening, school and education.

HM: Yes, that's right. I bicycled in Provence. I did it the hard way. It's amusing.

PC: Right. I think you always get to know a country better, you get the feel of the real earth.

HM: Yes. Oh, yes. The bicycle is a wonderful way to travel. Not nowadays with motor traffic; but in those days, back in the Twenties when the roads were empty it was a great way to travel. I hired a bicycle once in Avignon in the spring and went around the Mt. Ventoux for a week where it was so exceptional to have a tourist that I was arrested as a suspicious character. And, when the gens d'armes had inspected my minute baggage, they stood me to a beer. I thought that was delightful.

PC: But people always say the French are so difficult.

HM: I find them easy. I've always found the French very easy. You know, you take them the right way and they're perfectly easy. You just boil over like milk as they want you to and then it's all right.

PC: Well, did you have intentions of teaching after you finished school?

HM: Well, I did teach actually.

PC: You were at Vassar.

HM: Yes, I taught at Vassar. Knowing nothing whatsoever.

PC: What did you teach there?

HM: History of art. About which I knew absolutely nothing.

PC: Well, it was after Princeton?

HM: Just after Princeton exactly. With two courses at Princeton! You know those old days were so informal. One never could do those things nowadays. The head of the art department at Vassar was a lovely man called Oliver Tonks who was an Englishman, totally lazy. He didn't want to be bothered, thank you. He was the ideal boss. I could go ahead and do exactly as I pleased. Just provided I didn't make any trouble for him it was all right. Frank Mather recommended me, bless his heart. Tonks wanted me to go up and see him. So I went up to Portland, Maine where he was, a long, long trip from Gloucester. And I met him in a hotel and he said, "My wife is in a movie. Come on." And that's all we ever said about this. Nothing else. We sat in the movie until it was time for the only train to take me home. I left. And that's all we said. Nothing whatsoever else.

PC: That was a great interview.

HM: It was a great way to do it. He hired me.

PC: What was the movie?

HM: I don't know. I was so perturbed by the whole matter I have no idea what the movie was. I wasn't in to see it very long.

PC: You went all that way to see a movie.

HM: Yes. I got in after it was started and left before it was finished. I arrived at Vassar on a hot day in September carrying my rather dingy, very heavy suitcase. And I had no idea where Tonks's house was (I was supposed to check in there). I met one beautiful Juno of a girl after another but without the courage to ask them. Finally I found a seedy old gardener who was pruning a hedge and I asked him. And then I got to the art building there and I found the photograph collection which I would have to work with was in total disorder. There were cabinets all around the room and there there would be a photograph of the Cellini chalice in the Metropolitan Museum next to the Vassar chapel in construction, next to the Sistine Madonna, in total confusion. So I hauled out all those photographs that weekend, dealt them out simply in piles: architecture, painting, decorative arts, and so forth, so I'd have something to use. And Tonks was delighted. He didn't care if they were arranged or not. But if I did it without bothering him he was charmed. Oh, he was a wonderful, wonderful man to work for. That's just the kind of man that really makes you roll up your sleeves and go to work.

PC: The man who wasn't there really.

HM: Yes, he was. Oh, he was great fun though. He was great, great fun. And when he left he said I was almost a genius. And I said, "Why almost?" You could say those things to him. I was very fond of him. We were great friends for years. And in the middle of my year one of the teachers left, got married, and they rushed around and telephoned and telegraphed here and there and got Agnes Rindge to take her place, who became the great lady of Vassar and was until her retirement. When was it? -- a year ago -- something like that. So Agnes and I shared a minute office. There was just room for our two desks and two chairs and, if we wanted to stretch out, we'd have to pull out a desk drawer and put our feet into it. You know we had more fun that spring term. She was great. She had just come from Paris and she had all the Parisian latest wrinkles. She washed her hair in gasoline. She had Louis Philippe amethyst earrings that tickled her shoulders; the highest heels that had been seen on the Vassar campus. And she had an umbrella with a sort of horn handle that looked like a tear in a cow's eye. Oh, she was great! Oh, she was great fun. And of course just totally saucy and amusing. I loved her. Oh, yes, we had a wonderful time. And it was a very jolly bunch of people, lovely people. Then when I left to get my Rhodes scholarship I was succeeded by Alfred Barr; I think he was immediately the next one. Then came Jerry Abbott, Russell Hitchcock. It was a very good system to take on young men for their first jobs, take them for a year or two and then send them on their way. That's what the Frick does with their lecturers nowadays. They kept something fresh and amusing going there. I'm very happy to say that I was the head of the

procession.

PC: That's marvelous. And now of course it's one of the places to have been. Or to go to.

HM: Yes, that's right. Yes, yes.

PC: How were the students?

HM: Very nice, charming, interested in me but not in the history of art.

PC: Well, you weren't much older than they were.

HM: No, I wasn't. I was absolutely terrified. Oh, my God, I was terrified! And to make matters worse, there was a girl called Mary Lou Howe who was from Annisquam. We had played together when we were both shedding our front teeth as little children. And she of course had about as much respect for me as she had for a toad. She was determined she would get in my preceptorial and I was determined she wouldn't. Finally she won. And in my first preceptorial there she was right in the middle of the row grinning at me. It was very difficult! It was very hard for me.

PC: But those are the things that make it fun.

HM: Yes. It was a great winter.

PC: That's great. And then after Vassar it was Oxford?

HM: Yes. And then Athens. And then I came home. And by that time all my connections with the United States and home were entirely withered up and broken. And I had not the slightest idea of what I'd do. But at Oxford I had known Francis Ferguson and Francis was then teaching in the American Laboratory School Theatre.

PC: What was that?

HM: Well, that was over on 53rd Street and First Avenue. Or was it 53rd? It was 53rd. It had been founded by Richard Borislavsky and by Marie Ouspenskaya: Ouspenskaya had come here with the Moscow Art Theatre in the twenties. She played the governess in *The Cherry Orchard*, the German governess. That's how I remember seeing her because I remember very vividly when she stands on the log and jumps off, you know, a suicide. I remember her saying [quoting in German]. And, oh, I remember her very vividly in that performance. She then had a nervous breakdown here and remained behind when the company went back to Russia; existed God knows how. And then she and Borislavsky founded this school together with Mrs. Stockton to get people to finance it, and organize it. Out of that of course grew the Actors' Studio, the Method, and everything else. In the long run it had a great repercussion on the American theatre. And Madame, as she was called, was perfectly wonderful. She was a little creature always dressed in what my grandmother used to call pin silk, (don't just know what pin silk is, but it's a sort of rustly silk) with Florentine sleeves, you know, points to the fingers so that her hand would have a gesture with this pointed sleeve. And she looked like a little Hammacher Schlemmer gnome; terribly unhappy, brilliant. Her only real friend was a little white dog called Petya. And she had really fascinating classes in the method of acting that started with the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen and went through Stanislavsky. You see, all this tradition was behind her, a century of naturalistic acting. She would start them off with exercises like picking up a chair and walking across the room with it, then walking across the room as *though* you were holding a chair; threading an imaginary needle; lifting a sack of excelsior as though it were full of rocks. And from simple little things like that then she would go on to lessons in attention. I remember one spring day she opened the windows, everybody was to sit with their eyes closed and count the number of kinds of sounds they could hear, you see: a bus, a motor horn, somebody talking in the street, a bird; all that sort of thing. Then one was to sit very tense and see how much you could hear. And then one was to sit relaxed and see how much you could hear. They were exercises in awareness. And they finally wound up to elaborate *comedia dell arte* scenarios. I remember one time she came in and said, "Now this is the bank. It's nine o'clock. You are the vice-president. You are the president; you are the vice-president's secretary; you are the president's secretary. You have overheard a telephone conversation which indicates the president and his secretary are getting married. Now you do so and so. You do so and so. Now it's nine o'clock. Start!" And it was a tremendous exercise. Tremendous. She was really wonderful. She went to Hollywood to play in the movies -- the countess in *Arrowsmith*, which she'd also played here on Broadway. And she played opposite Mary Astor. She arrived in Hollywood with a typical Hollywood reception. She had a little black ebony cane with a garnet handle and her little white dog Petya, got off the train this way, and was received by photographers. Mary Astor thought, Ugh! This little thing! What is she doing in my bailiwick? They had a scene together in which Mary Astor made a different mistake for twenty-odd takes, to try to break Madame down. And Ouspenskaya gave a perfect performance for as many takes as it took to break down Mary Astor. Which she did.

PC: Oh, that's incredible. There's nothing like two actors feuding.

HM: Yes. And she had, of course, such a command of energy of the right kind that she could reduce you to tears while she was reading out a laundry list. And she could do things you would not think possible. I remember once in that dismal side room of the Colony Club, one of those tall rooms with the top light, horrible rooms, for some reason or other -- I don't know why we should have been at the Colony Club, but we were -- she put a chair on a table, she sat up on the chair looking like a little gnome, looking even more like a withered apple under the top light while a young man called, I think, Dick Gaines (somebody I suppose who never amounted to anything), the two of them played the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. You cannot imagine a more grotesque juxtaposition. And somehow or other, you know, it was grotesque for a minute and then came the line "The moonlight on fruit trees." Boy, you were off. It was extraordinary. The dismal room melted, Madame was a beautiful young girl, everything worked from then on out.

PC: What did you do there? Did you teach?

HM: Yes. Francis Ferguson invented a course for me, invented a title for it. It was called "Style and Background." And I would borrow photographs from the Metropolitan Museum, from their lending collection, that showed -- well, it showed how you wore a toga or a farthingale or whatever it may be. Then I would read extracts from some play or other illustrating them with these photographs: how you'd enter, how you'd sit and walk. In other words, a bit of the visual with the literary. It was just a fascinating thing to do. It taught me an immense amount. How much it taught them I have no idea. I don't know if they got a thing out of it. But I did. After all it's the teacher who learns, not the pupil. It's the parent who learns and not the child. And I used to do that for ten dollars a week. When the Laboratory Theatre finally folded, they owed me for several lectures and gave me this sofa I'm sitting on. That was my final payment from the Laboratory Theatre. It had been part of their furniture for their summer stock company on which people were murdered, seduced, laid out dead, everything has happened on this sofa.

PC: I'm curious about the people you might have met at Oxford or the American Laboratory Theatre. Are there many of those people that you've kept track of for a period of time?

HM: Yes. I used to know Auden. He was at the house (Oxford). So was Harold Acton. I didn't know them well; but I knew them. I also knew -- oh, dear, what's his name -- he's now very prominent in the British theatre, that Welshman who wrote

PC: Emyln Williams?

HM: Emyln Williams, yes. I knew him. They were very different from what they are now of course. Emyln Williams was a violent, messy, dirty, exuberant man, very prominent in what they call Oudes, the Oxford University dramatic society. And Auden was also furiously messy; well, he is now, still is. And I've seen them since, not really very much. I mean we see each other from time to time, usually at Lincoln Kirstein's nowadays. But he's grown into a very different kind of life from mine. He came around once to the Museum to see what had become of me.

PC: Auden?

HM: Auden, yes. It was rather amusing to see him do that. Then Harold Acton was there who was at that time exactly the way he is described in *Brideshead Revisited* as the esthete -- who walks down the High as though he were swathed in Oriental embroideries. That's exactly how Harold Acton actually walked. Very apt. He was already then balding and so he had this vast, bald, bare forehead and a retrouse nose and he had bright, black, impenetrable parrot eyes and a little red mouth like a Japanese female impersonator; wicked, vicious, a perverse little mouth. But an amusing man, terribly amusing. And in those days very flamboyant; fantastic. His brother Willie was also there, who painted. And Willie had a room a couple of flights up. He used to drink a very great deal, lived on champagne wafers and champagne. One night when some people were in the room he put on a melancholy tango, sat on the windowsill and let himself fall out onto the grass. Luckily it had been raining all day so he made a dent in the grass, dislodged his liver, was laid up in the hospital for a few days and then went back to champagne and wafers. Finally, of course, the poor thing did kill himself.

PC: That's incredible.

HM: Yes. Strange. Harold Acton was really a very pathetic man. The pair of them lived in an enormous house outside of Florence called La Pieta which now belongs to New York University. It had been built by a cardinal when he was not made Pope. So, to console himself, he built this gigantic thing, a great square block of a thing. His father was descended from the William Acton -- let me see, how does it go? -- anyway the Acton who managed the affairs of the Kingdom of Naples when Sir William Hamilton was there around 1800 or so. It was that family and they have always been Italianate since then. And Harold's father dealt more or less in Florentine antiquities, and was supposed to be the only Inglese that the Florentines could not cheat. They would be cheated by a rough, tough, nasty man. I remember we were there once when I was on my wedding trip years and years later in 1932 when Harold was -- God, it was 1932, Harold would have been in his thirties, you see --

oh, no, no, this was later, for heaven's sake, Harold was then about fifty years old. We went out to La Pieta on a very cold November day and Harold charmingly showed us over the gardens. We then got in most gratefully to the warmth of the house and started having tea when some latecomers came. And Mr. Acton said, "Harold, show them the garden." And poor Harold had to bundle up and go out and show them the garden. There was no two ways about it. At night Harold would be sent to bed at nine o'clock with his candle in his hand.

PC: Unbelievable!

HM: Unbelievable! Then he would open the window, slide out over the roofs and amuse himself in Florence. But a dreadful life.

PC: How long did that go on?

HM: Until Mr. Acton died when Harold was in his mid-fifties or later. Unbelievable! Unbelievable!

PC: They'd lived there for decades then? Through the war and everything?

HM: Yes. And he's now become of course a quiet, inconspicuous, middle-aged old man and all that amusing flamboyance is entirely gone.

PC: It's a kind of horrible way to live.

HM: Oh, dreadful, dreadful! Just dreadful!

PC: Let's see, you got married -- when?

HM: In 1932.

PC: That was when you were with the American Lab Theatre. You were also involved with *The Hound and Horn*?

HM: Yes, that's right. They all came at the same time sort of, yes. And the Laboratory Theatre folded and *The Hound and Horn* folded shortly after that. Just after I was married.

PC: How did you get involved with the publication?

HM: Let me see, I think that was through Francis Ferguson who knew -- I think that's how it went, I have such a bad memory for how things happened -- but I think Francis introduced me to Lincoln Kirstein, who was then a senior at Harvard. He had taken over *Hound and Horn* from Varian Fry and he was running it from Harvard; he was about to graduate and bring it here. Then I came in with them. They needed somebody really to read manuscripts. Lincoln was very busy about all kinds of things at that time, and somebody really had to do it. And they came in at the rate of about three hundred a week. God, it was an awful chore! But I did undertake it just as a volunteer because I was interested. And it was a difficult thing to do because it was a magazine whose formula was to have no formula. If you're reading stories for, say, *The New Yorker* you know the kind of thing you want. And the first paragraph will tell you. But when you want to encourage unknown writers who are trying, feeling their way, you have to read, skim through the whole darn thing. And you find that your standards of adequacy decline so that you just have to knock off for a day and read oh, *Measure for Measure* or something which really is written good and tight and hard. But I did that for quite a long time until the magazine folded. And then I'd write occasional pieces for it. But it was very interesting. And Lincoln and I worked together a great deal. We understood each other very well indeed. I suppose Lincoln is just about the oldest friend I have now.

PC: How did you meet him?

HM: We first met in his rooms at Harvard. And I think it was Francis who introduced us but I just don't remember. At any rate, we had a wonderful sort of free-for-all relationship. I remember when Virginia and I were engaged there was something that I thought Lincoln was doing wrong. So I sent him a saucy telegram of some kind or other, a violent telegram. My fiancée was sure that he was going to come down on the next train with pistols in hand. Of course naturally there was nothing of the kind. It was just our way of communication and it made for something delightfully free. There were no holds barred. We could say any doggoned thing to each other. And thrashed out a lot of interesting things as a consequence.

PC: That's great. So he's really been a friend for thirty-odd years?

HM: Yes. Yes. Thirty-five or more years.

PC: He's always interested me because he's been active in so many things.

HM: Yes. He's an astonishing man. One would have thought in those days that he was a man with a great future

behind him. But not at all. He has lived up to his promise. And that takes a lot of doing, especially when you promise to innovate. The most difficult thing is to keep really running in the front of things. Oh, yes, I admire Lincoln very much.

PC: Well, you started at the Metropolitan then. Was everything else closed or did that overlap? Or how did that come about?

HM: Well, I got engaged in the late summer of 1931.

PC: Where did you meet your wife?

HM: In Annisquam. My wife's family rented a house there just after her father died. Her father was a nose and throat specialist in St. Louis, had helped found the medical school there, was very prominent in the Barnes Hospital, in fact was *the* great nose and throat specialist in the United States. All the opera singers and people like that used to come to him. He died I suppose in 1930. And the family then took a house in Annisquam where we met. And when I wanted to get married, of course, it was in the draggy depths of the Depression. So I hawked myself around to all the people I knew in the universities on the Eastern seaboard. Who would just have none of me; it was just "throw that man out, it breaks my heart." And finally, just completely by accident, I just stumbled in to the Print Department of the Metropolitan Museum. Ivins had the courage to hire me. And believe me it took courage because I had no qualifications whatsoever beyond being able to read languages. And that was his reason, that I could inform myself, I could teach myself.

PC: Well, you had used the library there you mentioned before. So you knew it.

HM: Yes. Oh, yes. Oh, I'd used that library for a long time. And Ivins was an astonishing man. He was trained as a lawyer. His father was a prominent reform lawyer here in town. His brother was the attorney-general of the State of New Jersey. And Ivins himself had done the accident work on the Hudson [River] tubes. There were lots of accidents. He was very busy indeed. He had also been a lawyer for a team of people who had tried to float a loan for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad on the Paris Bourse.

PC: Oh my goodness!

HM: They'd gone over there to Paris to interview the people, everything was going very well until the Paris people asked how many kilometers of track the railroad owned. And Ivins then, as the junior member of the team, did a little figuring on an envelope, turned the miles into kilometers and said how many it was. And this all stopped. "Impossible!" And [they] threw them out and would have nothing more to do with them from then on out. They were just imposters; you could not have such a long track. And his father was a very remarkable man indeed. That was William Mills Ivins, Sr. who really felt that he came to life when he was facing an angry crowd in Carnegie Hall or Cooper Union auditorium and beating them into coming around to his way of thinking with such effort that, as Ivins told me, he could feel the sweat trickling down his arms. That's an erratic way of describing the predicament but that is what he enjoyed, a fight like that.

PC: Well, that was just sort of the end of the great public harangues.

HM: Yes. This was the age of muckraking and all that. His mother had an apparently rather intellectual salon somewhere downtown, sort of the rival salon to the Gilder's salon. Those were the two salons.

PC: Richard Gilder?

HM: Yes. Exactly. And Ivins was brought up in this very bright Old New York kind of atmosphere. His sister was much interested in music and she used to go to all concerts and would read orchestra scores the way somebody else might read a novel. And then, when she was about fifty, she decided one day that, after all, she really had never been interested in music at all; and stopped from that day on. It was a strange family, a very strange family.

PC: So what were you hired to do at the Metropolitan?

HM: I was hired to learn the Print Department business.

PC: Oh, that's where you were when you started?

HM: Yes, that's where I started. And I was hired because I had not gone to the Fogg.

PC: Oh, really?

HM: Was therefore not warped, tainted, smeared, or whatever

PC: They were anti-Fogg?

HM: Yes, they were anti-Fogg, although he was a great friend of Paul J. Sachs, a personal friend. In a sense he was right. Because the Fogg in those days didn't turn out museum curators; it turned out directors. And probably rightly. Because, back in the Twenties, museums were springing up all over the country and what they needed was bright personable young men who could persuade people to give money and keep the old ladies happy and get things going. And they didn't have to know much. But they had to know something of the world of dealers and a little smattering of works of art. So that was a perfectly sensible way of looking at it. But that was not what he wanted for his assistant. Also very sensible.

PC: What did you do there when you started? This was really coming into a new world in a way.

HM: It certainly was coming into a new world entirely. Well, I was simply turned loose with no instructions except that I was to learn the Collection. And the Collection then was several thousand boxes of prints; it's now about ten thousand; I don't know how many it was then but it was perhaps about five. A great many things. So that I would take the various catalogues and the books and I would open the boxes and try to remember what was in them. Which is a taxing thing to do, which you can't do all day long. And then I had to man the study room which is the room where the public comes in and asks questions and you get stuff out for them. It's the maid service for the Collection, which teaches you an enormous amount because just about every other question knocks you off your perch and you have to go and look it up. And if you know where to look it up you are doing very well. I've always felt that I wasn't held to know things but to know where to find out things. Specialists have never bothered me or intimidated me because I feel that everybody is a specialist. I know the contents of my pants' pockets better than anybody else does and I'm a specialist on that. And it was of course extremely educational to try to answer people's questions. Naturally I made a fool of myself time and again in the beginning. But that's allowable because, when I did something wrong, I'd simply say, "Sorry, I've only just come to work here." And people were very nice and didn't mind. And then you set yourself to work. And of course there's a very great deal in the museum world, there's an enormous amount of stock-taking and inventory-making.

HM: And cataloguing.

HM: And all the things that come in have to be given their numbers and described and cards made for them and all that kind of thing. I did a great deal of that. Which is interesting and which is the way you learn the Collection. The first job that I set for myself outside that was to make an index of the plates of Diderot's *Encyclopaedia*. Which was eleven volumes, about 3,000 engravings of all the arts and techniques and sciences of the 1760s and 1770s. And that was a fascinating thing to do. I've never regretted that. It's been a most useful index ever since. But really in the end you had to set yourself to your own -- find your own way. Which was a very nice thing.

PC: Did he organize that department?

HM: Yes, he did. The Museum had no print department, although it had some Whistler prints in the library, until 1916 when a paper manufacturer upstate called Harris Brisbane Dick died and bequeathed his entire collection to the Metropolitan Museum. Then they had to decide what to do.

PC: That was really the beginning?

HM: That was the moment of truth. They decided to accept most of it, to sell off a great deal in order to get funds for purchasing. And Ivins then separated what should be kept and what should be sold: separated it very intelligently I think. He was, as I said, doing legal work downtown.

PC: How had he gotten involved anyway?

HM: He got interested in prints because he once went to study for a year in Munich. And on his way in Paris he bought Goya's *Disasters of War* for twenty bucks. And that got him interested. And, as a lawyer, he was not free to go to museums because he was working while they were open. He wanted something that he could afford to buy out of his rather small earnings that he could play with and study at home, so that prints and facsimilies of prints seemed to be the answer. And he would sit around and look at these things and try to find out about them. His wife was an excellent illustrator, she drew beautifully. She drew that little portrait over there of my daughter. And out in the hall there's a lovely watercolor of my wife. She was really skillful. And her things don't look old-fashioned and don't look silly after all these years. She was good. So that helped him also, to be interested. Then, when this crisis came to the Museum, there were no people trained to prints around except, I suppose, Rossiter at the museum in Boston, who after all was head of a department and didn't want to leave. So some of the trustees had known Ivins as a lawyer and they knew of his interest in prints and they took a deep breath and invited him to come as full curator. Such a career would not happen nowadays. Those opportunities no longer present themselves. In fact, anybody with my qualifications wouldn't be hired nowadays either. It's a great pity, a very great pity. Because by those bold decisions you sometimes come a cropper and get somebody

in who's no good, but you sometimes get somebody who is a genius like Ivins. That's what he was, a genius. Then he had great friends who helped him: Mortimer Schiff and Nathan Strauss and, I think, Herbert Strauss. And so he would go abroad to the print auctions at Leipzig which occurred in May. And they would give him money to spend, the Museum would give him funds, and he would go with \$40,000 or \$50,000 in his pocket and bid at those tables there where all the museums in the world and all the great dealers were also bidding. And there he laid in this marvelous print collection with intelligence, with a sense of what is important that I can't but admire more and more as I think about it. It was the last time that such a collection could have been made. It was between the wars, you see, during the wars and when the great German princely collections were broken up, when the Russians sold off prints, and a good many of the British families went bankrupt and sold their things. Everything washed into a central auction house of Bermans' in Leipzig. And you simply had the great prints of the world channelled to that one green baize table. And so he would go there and come home with things that have never come on the market again and never will.

PC: They just don't exist any more.

HM: They are just not free. And he was a great respecter of the traditional opinion. So he read the great connoisseurs of the past, like C. J. Bulliet, Varga, and those people. And if they admired somebody very much, like Papagano [Papozzona(?)] who was then not considered worth picking up, he thought -- well, these people are extremely intelligent, we should get what they admire. So he got what had been admired through the ages. You see, it was a kind of consensus of opinion.

PC: And it was out of fashion at the time.

HM: It was out of the purchases of his own time. And that was extremely intelligent. And time has shown the wisdom of all that because he got things that in those days people laughed at him for getting, but now everybody runs for: all those Mannerist people, the Fontainebleau School, all that kind of thing.

PC: And there's growing interest in that now.

HM: There's growing interest. So he really laid in -- he missed very, very few great things that came up in his time. Among the moderns he had not much sympathy for Toulouse-Lautrec, none for the German Expressionists, and none for Munch. But otherwise he did well with his contemporaries, too. He didn't have much sympathy with Picasso either. But he got very good Matisse's. He didn't even have a Klee. I mean the people who somehow have emerged out of the modern movement now seemed violent to him and rough. And, when all those things exist in the Museum of Modern Art, it doesn't particularly matter whether they're at the Metropolitan or not. They're here in town to be available. And we always work together with the Museum of Modern Art as though it were one collection in two places, we lend to each other and help each other; it's always perfectly safe.

PC: He dropped his legal practice, didn't he? And the Museum then became full-time.

HM: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, I'm told by his old cronies that he never really liked the law. He was restless in it. His was a very restless nature.

PC: I've been able to find out very, very little about him.

HM: Oh, really?

PC: So I'm quite curious about how he worked and what kind of personality he was and all this sort of thing.

HM: Well, he was a very tall, slatternly kind of man, he didn't quite shamble like the two halves of two camels the way Steichen does, but he walked a little like that. And he looked like a sort of Goethe, rather consciously sloppy. He had the Harvard hat, all in holes and tatters; but that wasn't because it was an old hat; it was the style, it was quite deliberately conscious. He was more an owl than a lark and he'd work late at night as lawyers do and would come into the Museum at eleven o'clock in the morning and then stay late sometimes. As a lawyer he had an intemperate way of arguing and it was always the *argumentum ad hominum*.

PC: Somebody did mention that he was vitriolic when he would argue.

HM: Yes. He had a terrible temper, absolutely un-governable temper; a mad temper. And when a fit of temper came on him he simply was a being who should be put away and not seen until he cooled off, radioactive for the moment, you see. And it was very curious. He would see things that he didn't like and he wouldn't tell you anything about them at the time but these complaints would rankle in him over weeks or months and then he would simply march up to you one day and there would be the shaking forefinger and the stuttered accusation and you would blanch and it was really embarrassing, really embarrassing. And shaking. He hurt everybody who was near him, everybody absolutely, his family and everybody else. But you could always say that he hurt himself more. You know Hume said that Rousseau was a man without a skin. So that you could understand all

that but it didn't make it any easier. It was really very, very, very annoying. And if I hadn't had school bills and pediatricians and diapers to pay for, I would not have lasted out, and it would have been a great mistake to have left. But I would have flounced out certainly if I had been a bachelor. There's no question about that. But somehow to pay for a family gives one a stomach for crow.

PC: You have to sort of pull the belt in and fight.

HM: You just have to bear it, that's all. And his writing came out of controversy.

PC: Oh, really?

HM: All of it. Wrangles often at the directors' lunchroom. His great antagonist was Gisela Richter who took care of the Greek and Roman things. She was a wonderful woman but not with anything approaching a sense of humor or proportion. So he would lambast into her until she was practically in tears. And out of that an article would come. The result was that when he retired to the country and had nobody to fight with he stopped writing.

PC: It was therapy or something.

HM: It was. He was writing really legal briefs to prove a case. And he had to trump up a litigation in order to get up the energy to write his brief. It was a curious state of mind.

PC: Did he work like a lawyer, I mean in his thinking and in his processes?

HM: Yes. All words had to be absolutely exact. You had to say exactly what you meant and if one word was out of place he jumped on it and tore you all to pieces. Curious. He made an exhibition of the techniques of printmaking with labels that explained how you'd make an etching or a woodcut. This thing hung for years in our hall and was used by classes. Then the hall got painted one time long after he had retired; we had to take the thing down and take it all apart. A man called Chapin Rogers was then working in my department. And we thought we would see how they were. We looked these things over. There was an error in every single label. It's so difficult, you see, to describe in words what you do with your hands, I mean try to describe how you tie your shoelaces; you just can't.

PC: It's incredible.

HM: It's incredible, yes. So we thought we could do better. We rewrote all those labels, laid them aside for a month, looked at them again, and there were just as many different mistakes. But it was the right idea. And he did just as well as one person could have done working all alone on those labels. He was a brilliant writer. And he would write and rewrite and rewrite. I remember the first bulletin article that I did. It was a very bad little thing on Goya's *Colossus*, a terrible little job -- oh, no, it was on Moreau Le Jeune's *Monumental Costume*. I handed in my script to him and he took it. Ten days went by. Nothing happened. Two weeks. Finally I said, "Was my article all right?" He said, "Article? What article? Did you give me an article?" I said, "Oh, yes, I gave you an article." He said, "Well, I must have lost it. Back to the anvil," says he. I said, "Oh, that's perfectly all right. I have a carbon." And it was as though I had grabbed candy from a baby. His face fell. I wasn't aware, you see, that he was putting me through the hoops. I was totally innocent.

PC: That's a marvelous device.

HM: It wasn't often one could really catch him. But of course naturally I always keep a carbon of anything I write, keep it in two different places, too, in case it gets lost.

PC: I'm curious about the early collections or groups of prints that came in to the department. There was the first Harry Dick collection. Were there other ones like that?

HM: Yes. There were a good many. A charming little tiny old lady came in once called Georgiana Sargent and she had a Durer woodcut of *Samson and the Lions*, which was one of the woodcuts he made around 1500, a very early one. This was part of her father's collection. Her father collected Biblical subjects. And she said, "This is so fresh and new of course I'm sure it is a facsimile but you might want it perhaps." Ivins looked at it very, very closely indeed and said, "No, my dear, it's not a facsimile. It's just simply about the best impression that's survived from this block." She was delighted with that and gave her father's whole collection. Which is a curious, very miscellaneous collection indeed, but it had wonderful things, offbeat things that a regular print collection would not have collected, since he collected subjects. And the Georgiana Sargent Collection has gone through the entire collectors -- Oh, I suppose perhaps 500 - oh -- probably 1,000 prints. Then Junius Morgan, who I think was the nephew of J. P. Morgan was very much interested in Durer. And he sat in Paris for some thirty years collecting Durer's prints and other things, too. He would swap out things when he got better impressions; so he was always bettering the impressions he had. Finally he sold the copper plates to the Museum and gave woodcuts. Which is a wonderful thing. That was in the early Twenties, maybe 1920, I don't quite remember. So

that gave us the best Durer collection in the country, or, as a matter of fact, one of the best Durer collections anywhere. I suppose you could get a better one in the British Museum, or Berlin, but not in Paris. And I don't think anywhere else really. It's a wonderful lot. Then perhaps one of the most remarkable gifts came from Felix Warburg, who lived where the Jewish Museum is now. And in the billiard room there (it was the corner room on the ground floor) on the billiard table they kept the large portfolios of books of prints. And I know that Gerald Warburg told me that he and his brothers were very annoyed by this collection because, whenever they wanted to shoot pool, they had to take off these great big heavy volumes. He also had some posts with those whirlarounds of frame things, two of those.

PC: Oh, yes.

HM: And when he died he bequeathed his collection to Mrs. Warburg for her lifetime and, at her death, the children were to take what they wanted out of it and the remainder was to come to the Metropolitan. Well, the family got together and said they didn't want that at all, that they would like the Metropolitan to choose immediately (this as 1941) what it either lacked altogether or had in worse impressions. A very good proviso, you see. In other words, we were not to take duplicates; we would only swap. Absolutely correct. So the whole batch of us, Ivins and I, it was a big collection, three or four hundred things, worked very hard on this and very scrupulously observed these requests. And in came some of the most wonderful Rembrandts you ever, ever saw! Oh, my God, things you'd never, never get nowadays or again. Never. And the wonderful early German things which had belonged to Junius Morgan. Because Morgan had bought the early Germans. And all sorts of things. It was one of the very, very great gifts. Then Mrs. Havemeyer's collection which came in 1929, I think it was, also contained some wonderful things. It contained beautiful impressions of the color etchings by her friend Mary Cassatt, as well as marvelous Rembrandts and some Durers.

PC: You must have quite a large Rembrandt collection?

HM: Yes. Ivins was extremely sensible there. He never bought what people collected because he knew that that would be dropped in the poor man's hat some day. And he was right. So the result is we had very little of Rembrandt's youth, which really was when he wasn't making very interesting things because of the later work, but a marvelous collection of stuff that he made, say, after he was in his mid-thirties when he began really going strong. And from there to the end it coasts along in wonderful style. And that was very intelligent of him, very. He never bought Whistlers because they would come in. And they did.

PC: They were around, and people would give them.

HM: Absolutely.

PC: That's interesting. Are they the main groups that have come into the collection?

HM: Let me see. No, we bought various large lots, too. I think perhaps the biggest purchased lot that ever came in was what I got out of the collection of Prince Lichtenstein who lived in Vaduz -- Prince Valery Lichtenstein -- and had a collection which I suppose goes back to the early fifteen hundreds, 1505 or something like that, when the Emperor Maximilian would give his woodcut portraits to his various friends and one happened to be the then Prince Lichtenstein, you see. This thing had been greatly augmented in the 18th century, all laid down on 18th century cardboard which was very carefully sized and calendared on the back of each sheet so that the sheets wouldn't be rough against the prints facing them. And these things were put away in large red morocco portfolios with green linen flaps to keep the dust out. About 350 portfolios. We bought, I suppose, 50 or 60 of those portfolios in two goes. And what I got -- this is when I took over after Ivins retired -- was all the unsaleable things. I got the reproductive prints of the Italian schools, of the German schools; I got the theatre prints, a wonderful lot of those, marvelous; and varied things like that. It was a great purchase because they are not collector's prints. They are not prints you ever show on the walls, they're not works of art; but they're the prints that answer questions. And there's no collection like them outside the very, very old collections like -- well, like Paris or Vienna. There aren't too many of them in the British Museum. But they were the collections that were the pre-photographic approach to works of art, you see, when you got engravings of things for lack of any better picture of them.

PC: Well, did that include decorative arts and architectural things and all the practical things?

HM: Yes. Yes, all that. All the practical things too. I got all that stuff. And at that time nobody wanted them. They came in for about a dollar or a dollar-and-a-half a throw. It was a huge lot.

PC: How many would be in one of those large portfolios?

HM: Well, it was a sort of man-high pile of stuff when we unpacked them all. And that was the kind of thing that never turned up in that mass during Ivins's activity because no such reproductive collection had come on the market. I don't think it ever had really; and certainly never will again. No one has formed a collection like that.

PC: Extraordinary. How did Lichtenstein come to have them?

HM: Well, you see, a great gentleman had a library. And he also had a picture collection.

PC: Which he had a lot of trouble with Vienna about.

HM: Yes, exactly. And these sort of illustrated or made a background for his great paintings by Rubens and other people. And they were the sort of art historical background that an 18th century man would have to illuminate his collection of works of art.

PC: When you think of famous collectors or families who collected for a long time, I can't really think of another one.

HM: No. There were very few. Although I was reading just the other day that the Duke of Medina-Thaley in Madrid has two left out of a set of six tapestries that a Duke of Medina-Thaley bought in Brussels in 1572. That's not so bad, you know.

PC: That's marvelous.

HM: The set is now split up; there are two in the Prado, one in the Metropolitan, and one somewhere else; they still have two.

PC: After whole centuries.

HM: After all those years that's not so bad.

PC: That's phenomenal. How are we doing on time? Is it all right for you?

HM: It's a quarter to five.

PC: We've got about 15 or 20 minutes left on this side.

HM: Right. Let's go to the end of this tape.

PC: I'm very curious about some of the other curators and other people who were active at the Metropolitan when you first came there. Who was the director of the Metropolitan at that time?

HM: I came when Winlock was director. Robinson, who had been director, had died perhaps around 1930. I came in 1932. Winlock had recently taken over. Winlock was an archaeologist - an Egyptologist. A terribly nice man. I was very, very fond of him. He looked like sort of a battered marble bust of a Roman pro-consul, very weathered and tanned and hardy. A lovely man. And wonderful when he talked with enormous nostalgia and romance about Egypt, about the nights there, about the fellaheen and their conversations, about discovering this and finding that. He was really a born Egyptologist. When he was a little boy he had mummified a mouse and made a set of coffins for it.

PC: Oh, that's absolutely fantastic! He kept it up.

HM: That's right. There was no question of what he'd be ever. He was just born

PC: How have the directors been in relation to the Print Department?

HM: Well, they varied. It's never been an important department because the things aren't terribly expensive. Francis Taylor used to call it the trash basket to tease me partly and partly he meant it. Of course that had its drawbacks but also it had its advantages because it means that nobody examines very much what this inconspicuous thing does.

PC: But the drawings are certainly expensive.

HM: Yes.

PC: They're also part of . . . ?

HM: No, they're not part of my department.

PC: Oh, they're not? I thought it was combined.

HM: We stored them; we got them out and we gave them out to people and did that kind of thing. But they always used to be bought and taken care of by the paintings department. We had nothing to do with it at all

except the storing and the handling of them. Then, about five or six years ago, Jacob Bean was brought in order to make a separate department for drawings. It's a pity that couldn't have been done years ago when it was easier to get drawings. But I must say that the paintings department did pretty well with their left hand. After all they were so busy with paintings that they couldn't do very much with drawings, but they did awfully well. They got that beautiful Leonardo *Head of Sainte Anne*. They got the Buran Collection of Canaletto, Laguardia and Tiepolo. They got those two wonderful little Leonardos that came up years and years ago. It was not at all an inconsiderable effort. They have never been given credit for doing very much with the drawings but they did a great deal better than they're supposed to have done.

PC: What other directors besides Taylor had amused ideas for the Print Department?

HM: Well, James Rorimer was always very nice to me except in a most curious way. This is rather indiscreet but, I don't know, it is funny. My last trustees' meeting, my last purchasing committee meeting before I retired, I proposed a lot of very remarkable early prints that I had found at Charlie Childs in Boston. They had been collected back in the 20's and 30's by Bendow in Kansas City. They had lain in bank vaults somewhere or other. And it was stuff you just do not find in Europe at all. It cost about \$22,000 which, as purchasing committees go, is small-time. I was about to be sent abroad on a buying trip with, I think, \$25,000. So I posed these things thinking that, you know, in my sentimental way, that my last meeting of the board of trustees with the purchasing committee that they would certainly give me anything that I asked for. Well, James Rorimer called me up the next morning and said that, if I bought them, I'd have to buy them out of my foreign purchase money. I said, "Okay, scratch the trip. I won't find anything as good." He was totally taken aback. But he just had not supported me. He just let me down. Which he would do from time to time.

PC: If he had other moves to make.

HM: Or his mood or something. You never could tell what. But I got that lot of prints. That was the last thing I bought and it was very worth getting indeed. And then he turned around and was very nice and gave me some purchasing money, not as much as before, but something that made it worthwhile to go abroad. But of course I didn't find anything as interesting.

PC: You made your point.

HM: I tried to get the best but it just does not exist.

PC: Yes. It's become more and more difficult.

HM: Yes. Actually one's best purchases are often made right in this country. Partly because it's not romantic. Stuff from a little gallery in Boston had no glamour to the purchasing committee. None whatever at all. If it had come from Colnachi's in London, all right. They would have been all for it.

PC: Right. That's another story.

HM: And that's one thing I think one has to be very careful about in collecting: not to let the grubbiness of the surroundings blind you to the magnificence of what may lie there.

PC: Oh, that's true.

HM: And to be willing to go into all sorts of flat, tame, uninteresting-looking places. Because you never know. And I've always gone in my collecting into expensive places and cheap places and just anything. Because expensive places often have things that they can't sell to their particular specialized clientele.

PC: Right. And they must get rid of it.

HM: And they must get rid of it.

PC: Do you have any observations to make on the kind of patronage that you were involved with? That is, collectors who were interested in your department who would, say, buy things for you or give things to you?

HM: Yes. There was a terribly nice man called Barry Friedman who was a banker, very sort of the aristocracy of Wall Street, very conservative, and was consulted by everybody. He loved to go around and buy things from little shops. Often interesting things. And he bought Near Eastern things and metalwork and all sorts of things which he offered to those departments and if they didn't particularly like them, or like him . . . I liked him very much. He would give us a lot of things. Of course nobody can ever be led to give you or buy you what you want. You have to take what *they* want to give you. That's rule number one. And then Anne Stern, who was Mrs. Janos Scholz, and is now Mrs. Carl Stern, gave us \$1,000 a year, which was very nice indeed. And I would get the kind of thing that I thought she would be amused by, which was usually rather spectacular ornament drawings and things like that which are very splashy, showy, fancy things. So that she was very helpful that way, very, very

helpful. But on the whole the Print Department never had anybody who really helped the way Thornton Wilson has helped with porcelains and pottery. The porcelain collection is his gift and there he's collected the things not that he liked but that he thought ought to go into a representative collection of porcelains. Which is a very unusual attitude in a donor. We've never had anybody like that.

PC: Very few departments any place have someone like that.

HM: Yes. Very few. That's very, very exceptional. But we've been very lucky at the Metropolitan in having knowledgeable trustees. And there have been in my time several trustees who could have doubled as curators.

PC: Oh, really?

HM: Which is most unusual.

PC: Who would they be?

HM: Well, the first one was R. T. H. Halsey who was instrumental in organizing the American Wing, who did as much as any one man to dispel the grandmother's stories about American antiques and put them on some sort of firm historical basis.

PC: And now the prices are on a historical basis.

HM: Indeed they are. Indeed they are. Oh, he was such a nice man. He was a Baltimorean; and charming, charming, charming. You could go to him with any problem on any subject of the museum and know that you'd be heard with interest and sympathy. He was great! Then Walter Baker, who was also a banker, collected drawings. He's dying now, poor man, very slowly of Parkinson's Disease or something that paralyzes him; terrible, terrible, terrible. He was very good: a very intelligent man. He collected small Greek and Roman sculptures, terracottas and bronzes and things like that, and drawings, mostly early Italian drawings, and really took the trouble to find out about them. The third trustee would be Judge Irvin Untermyer who knows an enormous amount about the decorative arts, especially the English decorative arts, and has formed an astonishing collection which is to come to us when he dies. Our collection of such English things is not particularly good nowadays but, when his things come in, it will never rival the Victoria and Albert Museum but it will be the next great collection after that.

PC: That's marvelous. Do you find that the trustees have interests in specific areas?

HM: Yes. Very much so.

PC: Before they're trustees?

HM: Yes, usually. Yes, certainly R. T. Halsey, and Walter Baker, and the Judge were formed in their taste before they became trustees. In fact, that's why they became trustees. The others probably less on the whole. Francis Taylor started assigning them various departments, they became visitors to their departments.

PC: What does that mean?

HM: Well, it means that the curator is supposed to go to them if he's in trouble and they will help out with advice or help him get purchases or something of the kind. He's supposed to go and look at the collection and get familiar with it, which is terribly embarrassing to him. The trustees are absolutely floored by this assignment. They don't know what to do to cover this lion's den of the curatorial departments. And I really do pity them. But they've come around and been very nice to us. Douglas Dillon was one. He was very nice. When the Seasongood Auction came just after he took over and became my visitor he bought some very good things out of the Seasongood Auction, German 15th century woodcuts. He was extremely helpful. He couldn't have been nicer. And then Mrs. Fosburgh, who was Mrs. Vincent Astor, she was another visitor. And I don't know who is now. Maybe she is still; I don't know.

PC: The trustees really have things to do, don't they?

HM: Yes. They have as much as they would like to undertake. Of course the prize assignment is the purchasing committee, to be able to spend all that lovely money, see all those pretty things.

PC: And to find it someplace, too.

HM: Yes, to find it. The good trustees are given that assignment. Well, of course the other trustee who knows a very great deal also is Robert Lehman, who knows a very great deal about his collection, which is enormous, which is the last great collection in American hands. Absolutely a supreme collection that would have rated as a great collection in 1900 of those things that can still be got. That's the last one. And there never will be another

one.

PC: Who will get that collection?

HM: I don't know. I have no idea. Not the slightest idea.

PC: One hears this; then one hears that.

HM: I just have no idea. I just hope it comes to us. If it doesn't, it doesn't. It is so enormously valuable I shouldn't think the family could afford to keep it. I should think the inheritance taxes would be ruinous.

PC: It must be worth tens of millions.

HM: Oh, enormous, incalculable amount. And he's collected with great intelligence, very, very wisely. And of course he's been terribly nice and lent us his collection. As you know, that beautiful show that we change from time to time.

PC: Right. Why don't we stop here because there's really only a few minutes left and we can do another tape.

HM: Well, I don't think I've anything more I think I've talked myself totally out.

PC: Oh, you'd be surprised. I have a whole list of things.

HM: Really?

[BREAK IN TAPE]

PC: This is April 22. Reel 2. You had mentioned Francis Ferguson on the other side. Do you know him well? Have you known him well for a long time.

HM: Oh, yes, I knew him very well indeed.

PC: Did you have lots of interests and activities in common?

HM: Yes. We were Rhodes scholars together. That's where we met. We met on the boat going to England.

PC: I'm curious if he's had any influence on your activities because you always seem to have an interest in the theatre besides your working with the American Lab Theatre.

HM: Yes. And my reason for coming to the American Laboratory Theatre was because of Francis. He was there. You see, we were Rhodes scholars together. Went down in 1926. He went to New York and entered the Laboratory Theatre (Am Lab as it was termed). And I then went on and spent a year on my own in Greece. So I came back after an absence, pretty much uninterrupted, of four years. And all my connections here had vanished. Really about the only person I knew was Francis Ferguson. He was then working at the American Laboratory Theatre and he got me into it. And I used to give a course there called "Style and Background."

PC: Right. Which you talked about. I'm curious about things subsequent to that time.

HM: Yes. Well, after that broke up, which was just after I was married, say, in 1933 or something like that, then he went off. And I think he taught in Rutgers, was it? I've forgotten. He taught in various places. And has now become, of course, the grand white-haired old man of the drama, as I am the grand white-haired old man of whatever else it is. It doesn't seem possible. But there you are. But I have not seen very much of him since.

PC: Really?

HM: We met very occasionally. Just simply because he's always been in different places; there was no falling out at all.

PC: Are there any people that you've had long-term professional relationships with or friendship?

HM: Yes. I suppose Lincoln Kirstein is the person I've been sort of in closest touch with continuously for a long time. That also came through Francis. He knew him somehow or other. And I was once in Cambridge and was taken to Lincoln's rooms while he was a senior at Harvard and had just taken over *The Hound and Horn* from Varian Fry.

PC: Right. And you had worked on that.

HM: I worked on that, yes.

PC: But you see him -- well, Kirstein lives in New York, so you see him?

HM: Yes, so I see him from time to time. He would be a very interesting man to make a tape of; very, very interesting.

PC: Yes, he's had lots of activities.

HM: Tremendous! Oh, a very extraordinary man.

PC: Has he been interested in the Museum ever?

HM: He's been very generous to the Metropolitan and given us a lot of things on anatomy, popular prints, or *images populaires*, and all sorts of things. He's been very generous to the Museum, very generous indeed.

PC: Have you done any projects with him ever?

HM: Not since we worked together on *The Hound and Horn*. Well, you see, he went off from that into ballet, which doesn't particularly interest me. And then he went into the theatre which interests me more a good deal. But we never worked together again. Simply it didn't happen that way.

PC: But you still see him socially?

HM: Oh, yes. Every once in a while he'll call me up. Sometimes I'll see him two or three times a month for lunch. He always calls up around eleven o'clock in the morning and says, "What about lunch?" Well, usually I say no. He hates to commit himself.

PC: It's always last minute?

HM: It's last minute or nothing. He hates to be caught.

PC: No planning ahead.

HM: No.

PC: Well, you talked quite a bit about Harold Acton actually.

HM: Yes.

PC: Is there any more that one would want to say about him?

HM: No, I don't think so. The terrible life that he had with his father.

PC: Oh, yes. That sounds to be just unbelievable.

HM: Dreadful. Unbelievable, yes. I knew Berenson. I don't know whether I've talked about him.

PC: No, you haven't talked about him. How did you come to meet him?

HM: Oh, well, that was rather curious and rather amusing. When I was a small boy we lived for a winter in Naples. And there my family got to know an old lady called, not then, Ernestine Rudolph. Countess Rudolph who had been born a Fabri which is an Italian family that had come here and lived in Newport and then had gone back to Italy. So when I went to Florence on my first vacation as a Rhodes scholar which would have been the Christmas of 1923, my grandmother said to me, "Now be nice to dear Ernestine" (who I considered an old lady). So I telephoned to Countess Rudolph and she asked me to come around to tea. Well, she lived in a really very interesting place, Casa Caponi, which was behind the Annunciata, and was the largest private house in Florence. Which her brother Egisto Fabri had bought by selling off half of his Cezannes. He owned twenty-six Cezannes which he bought around 1900 when he was an art student in Paris. And he sold one-half of them to Wildenstein and with the proceeds bought this enormous house which was all divided into apartments. They had the top floor apartment of one half of it all hung with yellow silk.

PC: Oh, my goodness!

HM: And I went there. It was very impressive indeed. And Egisto Fabri was a fascinating man, absolutely fascinating, rather lame because he'd had a mistress in Paris from whom he had contracted some kind of tuberculosis of the bone that left him lame. And always kept at home in these grand rooms. The barber used to come and barber him there because he didn't like to stir out. He had a great oiled and curled beard like a Babylonian bull, very elaborate. Quite a fascinating man. And Countess Rudolph was an extremely nice old lady, very nice indeed. She said, "I suppose you'd like to meet the Berensons." I said, "Certainly. But I have no idea

how." So she picked up the telephone, telephoned I Tatti. The next noon the Berenson's car was at my cold water hotel by the station to take me out to lunch.

PC: Marvelous!

HM: And he just could not have been nicer. Berenson has the reputation of being horrid to people and I've seen him being very horrid indeed. But he was absolutely wonderful to me. Perfectly wonderful. He wanted me to come out there and be a disciple. Which I did not want to do. I didn't like to get caught. So I stayed in my cold water room and I thought I wouldn't get too involved with I Tatti. But he let me have the run of his library. I went out there to lunch a good deal. And he let me take books home to read from his library which is enormous generosity for somebody who really loves his books.

PC: Very rare.

HM: And he talked to me perfectly frankly. I can see why. Because I was no threat. I didn't know anything. I was young and absolutely agog at everything; thought Florence was absolutely the most wonderful place I'd ever been to. And he therefore opened up the treasures of his time which were very remarkable. I think the most wonderful thing he did for me was to take me on the walks. He used to have walks on which he took very, very few people. After lunch he would look out the window and say to Mrs. Berenson, "Mary, what shall it be today? Should it be the rock? Should it be the tree?" And she'd say, "Aw, B.B., the rock of course." And then we'd get into his car, which was one of those enormous old black limousines, the kind that bullfighters had, made very tall so they could stand up and bow to the crowd, that sort of thing, a little black house on wheels. We would drive up through all those miserable villages that lie above Florence, all that tawdry mess of rural Florence, get out at the crest of a hill somewhere or other, saunter along a hilltop path with, you know, Florence lying down on one side, Valdama lying on the other, Castello del this and that. We walked leisurely for perhaps half to three-quarters of an hour and came to what was the ultimate Chinese rock. In the meantime, the car had gone down to Fiesole, Florence, rushed up the other hill, arrived there, really in a boiling state.

PC: Well, what was the rock and what was the tree?

HM: Well, they were simply features that lay far away from any tourist track, beautiful natural features in the hills above Florence which he knew extremely well because he'd walked all over them as a younger man. And I remember one time there was a wonderful little woman called Pelegrina del Turco, a beautiful little sort of Florentine cameo of a girl, an exquisite little creature, of the del Turcos who had been prominent in 1200 and so forth, who was their social secretary. And who, shockingly enough, when the Germans came, was stood up against a wall and shot. Still incredible. Any way, he got Pelegrina to take me aside one time . . . It had rained very heavily the night before, a real downpour, and the rain had flattened the grass, the tall spring grass in the upland meadows and, where it had gone down in temporary brooks, it had smoothed the grass to show where the water had rushed. Everything was still sparkling with rain drops that morning. And she took me into the fields, with these curious traces of the brook that lasted for hours, to a shrine put up, say, around 1450 in the style of de Cipriano, carved in *pietra serena* and there it was among the orange trees, exactly the way it had been put up centuries ago. You know, it was the kind of sculpture that, if you had seen it in a museum, you would have thought: "Oh, it's a school piece." But to see it in its source in that weather was an unforgettable experience. And that's the kind of thing that Berenson gave one.

PC: He planned little experiences.

HM: He planned little experiences. He was really wonderful that way.

PC: Isn't that marvelous.

HM: Really wonderful. He lived a wonderfully controlled and sort of air-conditioned life before air conditioning. Everything was exactly the way he wanted it in this small villa, a rather small house; no great architectural features. It had a beautiful garden designed by Jeffrey Scott, small, which went down in terraces.

PC: I've heard of the garden. But I didn't know who designed it.

HM: Very, very . . . One approached it in a wonderful place. You went out on a trolley car to Ponta da Mansa, which was an untidy little place. Then you went up a muddy road, you went aside into a garden wall gate, you came to a great upward carpet of grass with cypresses on either side to wall it in. At the top there was a complicated little sort of stairs that divided and rejoined and then went into a grotto up again, and over that a little marble figure of Fortune. And that's how you entered the house. It was really very, very beautiful.

PC: It sounds like a very good set to work from.

HM: It was. It was absolutely great. Everything was exquisite in the house. The small fragments of paintings, the

Chinese paintings.

PC: He was very interested in Oriental things, wasn't he?

HM: Very interested. He got things out of Tung-hwan. He had very beautiful Oriental things, probably at that time the only Chinese things in all Italy, I daresay. And I daresay they are among the very few that are there now. And the upholstery was exactly the right shade of dull gray or green, the agate ashtrays always clean and exactly in place. Everything was in order, always in order.

PC: That's interesting. But do you think he enjoyed living there?

HM: No, I don't think he did.

PC: Really!?

HM: He once said to me when we were alone coming back from one of these walks, "I feel I'm going back to my gilded coffin."

PC: My goodness!

HM: He said he thought he would be happier as a teacher in a Midwestern college. And it's possibly true.

PC: But why?

HM: And Mrs. Berenson -- well, Mrs. Berenson wanted to be married to a great man with the proper setting and the proper guests. And his life was really the creation of Mary Berenson. She worked on all his books, put them into better English because she was very literate (her brother was Percival Logan Smith), and I think she probably managed his business affairs. And I daresay the somewhat dubious way he made his money off Duveen was probably as much her doing as his.

PC: Oh, isn't that interesting!

HM: Hard as it is to think so. You know, as a proper Philadelphia Quaker, she knew the ways of this wicked world.

PC: Why do sometimes the most proper people know the most incredible ways?

HM: I know. They can afford to be proper.

PC: That's very, very interesting.

HM: He was a tiny little man. I remember the first time I saw him. His beard seemed to come up to his eyes and when he smiled his nose almost telescoped together.

PC: Well, did you write to him or see him frequently in the years that you knew him?

HM: We went back from time to time, yes. Yes, I saw him I think on two or three vacations while I was a Rhodes scholar. And then when I was married -- or rather, no, long afterwards, around 1950 or so, my wife and I spent a month in Rome with the Harry Francis's from Cleveland. Frances Francis (Mrs. Harry Francis) was a great friend of the Berensons, especially B.B., so she told him that we were in Rome and were coming to Florence. I was very much afraid to meet him really.

PC: Now you'd been with a museum and had all this experience.

HM: A very different situation. Very different.

PC: Had you correspondence in the intervening years?

HM: Very intermittent. A Christmas letter on both sides. That was about all. And we went from Rome to Florence by way of Siena. She told me that he was very angry with me because he sent me a book and I hadn't thanked him for it. Well, the book had arrived after I had left New York but I was wondering how to explain that. So I knew that I had to be awfully careful. And I wrote him that we were coming to Florence but didn't say where we'd stay or when we'd arrive. Well, we arrived, say, at ten o'clock in the morning at the Pensione di Consigli. Before lunch there was a telephone call inviting us out to lunch the next day.

PC: Spies were everywhere.

HM: You know, Florence is one of those places where everybody knows everything about everybody else. So the

car came and took us out there. He wasn't there. But Nicky Mariano received us; she was terribly nice. I was very, very fond of her. And we were talking. My back was to the door, and I felt something materialize in the door. So I turned around and there he was in slippers. He looked at me, went around me, still looking at me, shook hands with my wife and said, "My dear, I'm so glad to meet you and how nice of you to come and entertain an old man." He turned to me and said, "How do you do. Shall we go in to lunch?" And lunch was set for four people, which I feared the worst. He talked to Virginia very, very nicely indeed. And then he turned to me finally and said, "You Americans write very few letters." And I said, "Not at all!" You just told him the way he was lunging. That really upset him. And then it all turned out. He said, "I sent you a book. Why didn't you acknowledge it?" So I explained when I had left New York, when the book had arrived. And it was all right. But it was a ticklish moment, a very ticklish moment.

PC: He really had to make his point.

HM: Oh, yes! And he could be extremely cutting.

PC: That's fascinating. So then you just saw him that time?

HM: That was the last time I saw him. Mary then died. And Nicky had taken over as sort of the chatelaine of the place. I Tatti was left to Harvard, as you know, but she was allowed to take out anything that she chose. So I was told a story which may be apocryphal, I don't know, but when President Conant came from Harvard to look at the house, the King of Sweden was also there. He was also a great archaeologist. There was a Greek pottery amphora in the front hall. And the King of Sweden, as he came in, said, "Oh, how nice to see that very lovely pottery painting that I've always been so fond of." Nicky and President Conant received him at lunch. And when they took him to the door to say goodbye, Nicky apparently took this Athenian pot and said "This is yours," giving Conant a look: 'This is what I can do if I want to.'

PC: Oh, my!

HM: 'If you don't behave I'll give more.' It may not be true, the spirit of it is.

PC: That's fantastic.

HM: It was an extraordinary house. Curiously enough, he had never collected drawings. He knew a great deal about drawings. He must have seen thousands at very small prices in those days and never bought a one. He had fragments of paintings, very interesting fragments of sculptures but he didn't consider himself a collector; he was not; that did not interest him. He wanted a few things around as much as to save them. He had a huge Sassetta altar of St. Francis which he had found in a Florentine carpenter shop where they were about to plane off the painting and use the old wood for a fake and a more attractive subject than St. Francis. That was the biggest thing that he ever bought and he did it really to salvage it, to rescue it. I think that interested him more than owning it.

PC: That's interesting.

HM: It was rather pathetic.

PC: Who else was there that one might find provocative to discuss these days?

HM: In Florence in those days? Well there was Vernon Lee -- Miss Paget --

PC: Oh, yes.

HM: Who used to write. She lived in a nearby villa. And she came to lunch one time. She was a strange-looking woman. She looked like an El Greco portrait with black and white hair brushed right back and cut off in a bob in the back. She wore a black riding habit with a stock and a gold pin and a crop; very, very mannish.

PC: Hard edge type.

HM: Hard edge exactly. And Mrs. Berenson said to her, "Ah, Miss Paget, that's a very nice dress you have." And she said, "Yes, yes, I bought it for my funeral." Death was in the air.

PC: Goodness!

HM: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

PC: But I'm amazed about Mrs. Berenson. I didn't know that she was such a manipulator behind that image.

HM: Yes. Yes, she was the real power. She organized his life. The whole thing was her organization.

PC: That's fantastic.

HM: And his writing is not as polished after she died. I think the adroit writing of those little early books on which he first made his reputation is quite as much hers as his. The opinions are his but I think the words are apt to be hers.

PC: The style and things like that.

HM: Yes.

PC: That's very interesting because in the books I've read about him there's no indication that this is an apparent

HM: She liked to manipulate unseen.

PC: He was a puppet.

HM: Yes.

PC: It's amazing.

HM: Yes. And he said extraordinary things to her. I remember once again in the car coming back from one of these walks he patted her on the knee and he smiled at her in the kindest way and he said, "Mary, you're kindest when you least mean to be." Said in the sweetest tone. Very strange. Very strange.

PC: That was a very long marriage, too, wasn't it?

HM: Yes. Because they lived together for years before they got married. She just got tired of Marcello. He wasn't interesting.

PC: And of course Berenson was becoming more and developing well under her tutelage.

HM: That's right. Yes, yes.

PC: It's amazing there are some women who are superb at doing that kind of thing and it's a special career.

HM: Yes. I think he interested her because she could make a career for him. She could arrange a career for him.

PC: He had the equipment.

HM: And he had the brains but he probably didn't have the organization.

PC: I don't think there are any other specific people right at this point. I'd like to go back to our chronology. You talked to some degree about starting out at the Met and being there and various directors and some of the other people. I'm just curious about your ideas or some of the history of the development of your department in the years that you were there, how you were able to do things, or other people were able to do things through you, and the kind of things that happened through the trustees and directors and other people; a kind of history of the whole development.

HM: Oh, yes, yes. Well, did I say how the department was started with the Dick bequest?

PC: Right.

HM: That, of course, gave us an enormous start, a huge mass of prints, the Whistlers and Camerons and Bohns and various things that we don't care much about now but that seemed to be important then. Then Ivins laid in the marvelous Renaissance and medieval things and the great Goyas. He had a wonderful sense of what was important. When I came along, I of course laid in those things when I could, which was hardly at all, but I did get a few great things of that sort, because I thoroughly approved of what he was doing. And it struck me, however, that no American collection had the reproductive prints except for the 18th century, the pre-photographic records of works of art. So that what I tried to get was those engravings which one would never put on exhibition because they were not at all interesting. But they do answer questions. And I was very lucky at that, really very lucky. Because, on one of my trips abroad, I went to Zurich when Feisenfelt had the bulk of Prince Lichtenstein's Collection which consisted of about 375 red morocco portfolios.

PC: Oh, yes, you said you bought some.

HM: We bought about sixty or seventy of these portfolios. And that was an enormously useful purchase. Practically none have ever been on exhibition. But that doesn't matter. They're enormously useful. And it's the

only collection in this country that has these things.

PC: Oh really?

HM: In fact, very few collections abroad have them. The British Museum hasn't very much because they were formed really in the late 18th century and started when there was the cult of genius and people wanted the autographed print by the great man and not a copy by somebody else. So the great only comparable collection of such reproductive prints are the very old collections, the 17th century collections in Paris and in Vienna. Berlin, for instance, has very few indeed.

PC: Are there any things left in the Lichtenstein Collection?

HM: Paintings. There's an enormous mass of paintings.

PC: The prints are all gone?

HM: The prints are gone. They sent those out.

PC: The drawings -- are there drawings?

HM: They may have some drawings for all I know; I don't know. But above all the paintings.

PC: It was an enormous collection.

HM: Enormous. Absolutely gigantic collection. I know that Hans Zinzer, the print dealer who sells very, very expensive prints told me that he once went to Lessing Rosenwald with some of the goodies out of the Lichtenstein Collection because he bought the most expensive ones, Colnaghi bought the rest, and I bought what was commercially the trash. And Zinzer had offered a print or two to Rosenwald for whatever it was, a large sum I'm sure, and Lessing Rosenwald said, "Why, Mr. Zinzer, for that money I could have bought the entire Lichtenstein collection." And Zinzer said, "Well, why didn't you!" And why indeed didn't he? Why didn't he? It was offered to him. It was never offered to me, you see. I certainly would have. But it was never offered to me.

PC: You'd move heaven and earth to get it.

HM: God, yes!

PC: That's fantastic.

HM: Because there are wonderful parts of it that I'm glad to say were kept intact. The city views and maps went to Harvard. I think the military things went to Mrs. John Nicholas Brown in Providence. So certain sections of it were kept together. The theatrical things I got in a lot. They're kept together. And all that reproductive stuff was kept together at the Metropolitan.

PC: Has very much of that been published or used in any way?

HM: It's used a great deal. It's not the kind of thing that you'd reproduce in a book usually. You get your information out of it but you don't reproduce the pictures. It's not a very cheering picture usually. Of course, among those things there were some really great works of art sort of drifting around, you know, Renaissance German woodcuts of the utmost rarity, and 15th century Italian engravings, there were a certain number of those that came in for the price of the rest, say, a dollar and a half a throw. It was just too large a transaction for Colnaghi's to comb it thoroughly, I'm happy to say. And I was not aware of what I was getting when I got that.

PC: You were buying a great package of stamps.

HM: Just a package, exactly. Oh, there were some nice surprises when we unwrapped them.

PC: It must have taken a long time to catalogue the things.

HM: Oh, yes, a very long time. A tremendous amount of time went into that. It's all done now, all in apple pie order and accessible.

PC: That's great. Did you have any plan for developing the collection, say, after you became the curator, or even before?

HM: Yes. Yes, in a general way. Any art collection should be tailored to the needs of the town it's in. New York I suppose is the most complex town there is today. It has more different kinds of things being done in it than any other city. So that it needs a collection just about as complex as you can get it. It's hard to think of a work of art

that would not be of interest to somebody in this town. Whereas Boston is entirely different. There's no theatre, there's no fashion industry, publishing is minor in Boston, and various other things like that. So that their print collection is a collection of the great artistic masterpieces as they were sort of arranged and thought of around 1900. Which is exactly what the town needs. Chicago is also a town of private collectors, no theatre, no fashion design and all those things, not much architecture (yes, there is a good deal of architectural designing but not the best, there is that). But modern architectural design does not look to the past. It's not interested in the past. So that has no bearing. Therefore Chicago has collected the great masters as sort of sorted out in, say, 1920 to 1950. And they have the greatest lot in the country of Odilon Redon, Toulouse-Lautrec and then assorted very remarkable early prints, and wonderful Picassos.

PC: Right. Oh yes.

HM: It's a different kind of collection. And I always thought it was more important here to get a lot of different things rather than some one very expensive thing. That seemed to be more important. Maybe I was wrong. But that was my

PC: So, instead of buying one Picasso for \$30,000, you'd buy a great number of other things.

HM: That's right. Exactly. And then I collected all kinds of things that were very definitely non-new. I made a great effort to collect all the American commercial trade catalogues I could think of of all the things that might enter the Museum some day or be interested in; that is to say, clothing, glassware, china, interior decoration of all kinds, furniture especially; so that I think we have probably the biggest lot anywhere, especially American catalogues, of all these articles of the decorative arts. I steered clear of, say, farm machinery, plumbing pipes. But, when it was decorated toilet bowls, I got them and all the things that showed any kind of style and fashion. This collection had to be done very quietly because the various directors, especially Francis Taylor, thought I was mispending the Museum's money very badly. So I never mentioned these things in annual reports, never showed them, didn't talk about them very much. But now it's one of the most used sections of the collection.

PC: That's fascinating. I didn't know you had things like that.

HM: No. I was very careful not to talk about them. Now these things are terribly expensive. Things we used to buy for three to five dollars cost \$25 to \$75. And when you *can find them*. But in those days they were just worth enough to make it worthwhile for a bookseller to stock them, but not so expensive as to strain my modest resources.

PC: They were on Fourth Avenue and then when they moved they got too expensive.

HM: Exactly. That is it precisely. And I also collected as much as I could of foreign catalogues. The first great catalogues were issued in England beginning, say, in the 1780s for brassware, silverware, and pottery. And we got all we could of those.

PC: How did you get the idea to start collecting these things?

HM: I wanted the documents for the American Wing of the future. And this kind of furniture that's in the catalogues I collected is, of course, the kind of furniture that nobody would think could ever enter the American Wing. But, when it gets rare enough and expensive enough, it will. We'll have an 1880 room someday.

PC: And a 1960 room.

HM: That's right. It'll all come in. And so I wanted the collection to be in a position of strength when the American Wing needed that documentation.

PC: All the source material.

HM: And the time for getting it was now. I think the time has already passed when one could repeat that collection today. These things, curiously enough, are frightfully rare. Of course they're paper bound.

PC: Ephemeral.

HM: They're thrown away. When they do survive, they're often in bad shape. And there are two or three catalogues that turn up quite often because they must have survived in a trunk, a great huge trunk. But by and large they don't survive.

PC: What other areas did you develop while you were there?

HM: Well, let me see, there was another area of ephemeral collecting that I developed through a man called Jefferson Burdick. He was a very remarkable man indeed. He lived in Rochester [New York]. And he had no

money. He earned his keep by assembling electric switches for mines and flour mills that wouldn't give out sparks.

PC: Oh, yes.

HM: And this is very difficult to do. And I don't know how he managed to do it because he was crippled with arthritis; at the end so crippled that it was a good minute's engineering for him to get his hat on. And he had to have somebody help him on with his coat. And he collected, first, cigarette insert cards over the years, and then all sorts of ephemera related to that. And he corresponded with everybody all over the country and abroad to swap, buy, assemble, until finally he had a matter of, I don't know how many thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of these things. And he came to me once, asked if we had that kind of thing. I showed him what we had, which was very little. He said he wanted to give his collection (I did not know then how large it was, I must say, I would maybe not have been so cavalier about it if I'd had any idea) and he didn't know where to put it. So I said he'd better go around to the other places in town where that kind of thing might be used and might be looked for, the Public Library, Cooper Union, and other places outside of town; I said he should look at the Boston Museum and various other places like that. He went around and looked at these places, spent about a week or ten days of his vacation, and then came back and said he liked the way we took care of things and showed them, and he'd like to give us his collection. So at the end of every year several cartons of these things would come. And we had absolutely no idea how to arrange it, you see. They were all nicely tied up and labeled but *how* do you make them available to people so they won't be pocketed.

PC: Right. They're all little.

HM: Oh, they're little things. Some of them are very Well, collectors anyway, if they want to collect a series, they will steal to complete that series.

PC: Collectors are incredible, aren't they?

HM: The most honest people in the world will do that. So we finally worked out a way of gluing these things down, which is not a really good practice, on sheets of pure rag paper and then binding them into scrapbooks. I got some volunteers to start this. Then he retired from his job, he really got too arthritic, came down here and, for several years, he arranged all these things in scrapbooks, making about 200 scrapbooks.

PC: Oh! With how many items?

HM: God knows! It's absolutely impossible to guess. And he got more and more and more crippled and he would say, "Do you think I can make it? Do you think I can finish it?" Then one Saturday he said, "It's finished." He mounted the last card and he finished the last album. And I helped him on with his hat and his coat. He went home. And that Monday he went to the hospital and was dead in about six weeks. He had done it and that was the end of it.

PC: That's incredible. That's absolutely fantastic.

HM: That's strange. Very, very strange.

PC: So now there's this huge collection.

HM: Yes. Which is much used. A great many people use it.

PC: Well, you know, the collector, the perfect image

HM: Yes. Yes. If you can enlist somebody like that to help you in a museum, then you've really got something.

PC: He must have been collecting for years?

HM: Oh, yes. Oh, he collected these things when a nickel would buy a box full of those things. And now they cost really a great deal. And he had perhaps a dozen and a half of the Clipper cards that announced the sailings of Clipper ships from San Francisco, Boston and New York. Which are printed on shiny, loaded paper in metallic colored lithographic inks and they're very gay and pretty; very bright indeed. The biggest collection of them belongs to the Boston Bank. But he had I suppose maybe the next biggest lot. And those things now I suppose cost \$100 apiece if you can get them.

PC: If you can find them, yes. That's the thing.

HM: Exactly.

PC: That's fascinating. Are there any other collections or groups that came in like that?

HM: Yes. A number of silhouette collections came in. There was a little Mary Martin (not the actress), another one who, out of the blue, bequeathed us her silhouette collection. I don't know who she was, never met her, have no idea.

PC: Just a letter came one day.

HM: Just a letter came one day from the lawyer saying it's yours if you want it. It was a very good collection. Then I was able to get Glen Tilley Morse to bequeath his collection which was the next biggest American collection. And I was able to buy a lot of the ones out of a collection formed by Mrs. Hill in Charlottesville. Those were the three greatest American collections. Then there was Alice Van Leer Carrick whose collection went to the Smithsonian. But we got three out of the four great American collections of silhouettes. And I particularly wanted the ones that were signed so as to have as many signed or definitely attributable pieces by which one could then attribute unsigned things. I thought that would be the most interesting. Of course, if some of them were very spashy and grand, I naturally took signed or unsigned. But I suppose it's the most varied collection there is anywhere. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London has a good collection, especially strong in English things, naturally.

PC: Well, it was very popular in England.

HM: Yes. Nobody collects them now I don't think.

PC: Once in a while you would see one here and there but now nothing. Maybe they're just hard to get again.

HM: I think they are. I haven't seen any worth adding to our collection for a great many years.

PC: Probably it's been all skimmed off.

HM: I don't know. I have no idea.

PC: That's fascinating. That's incredible. Well, let's see, were there other groups that came in like that? You mentioned a couple of people who were patrons, you know, gave you money every year.

HM: Oh, yes.

PC: Were there many people like that?

HM: No. Very few. There was a very nice man called Harry Friedman --

PC: Right. You mentioned him.

HM: -- who used to give us things. And then the Warburgs; that was the great bequest that came in in my time, the Warburg Collection. It was *the great* American print collection. And I think I told you how that came.

PC: Covering the billiard table.

HM: Yes. And before my time, of course, in 1929, the Havemeyer prints came in along with the rest of the Havemeyer Collection. Which was very beautiful Rembrandts, some very good Durers, and Mary Cassatts, and Degas. It was a very, very good one; a beautiful one. Very personal taste.

PC: It's very interesting that, you know, because the Metropolitan has always been really the great museum in this country -- the Smithsonian being something else and Chicago and Cleveland and Boston and Philadelphia have all been kind of satellites in a way; although Cleveland is doing very well these days.

HM: It certainly is. Oh, it's marvelous, marvelous.

PC: But I'm just curious if you got people from around the country. I notice in the Annual Report every year there are all those patrons who have given this and that sort of thing. Did you get people from, say, the West or the South or the Midwest and places like that who would write you and say we have gifts for you or we want to give you this? Or were most of them people around here?

HM: They're around here. It's quite local. I think people tend to give either to the place they were born in or worked in. Although one very great bequest came from a long way away. That is the wonderful collection of French silver given by Mrs. Wentworth in California. She was a Weyerhauser and owned all the forests for pulp paper. And somehow or other, oh, I think I remember now, Preston Remington back in the 1930s made a summer exhibition of 18th century French things, decorative arts mostly. And he borrowed some of her French silver. He went out to California to arrange this loan. She like him, she liked his knowledge of French silver and she bequeathed her collection of French silver to the Museum as well as a very great deal of money to which no

strings were attached. So that, although we bought very unusual -- although we bought works of art out of it, it's been absolutely indispensable for the housekeeping and salaries and things like that. And I don't know what we would have done without that bequest. We are not allowed to sell off the principal; we can only use the interest (which is sensible). But that interest can be applied exactly as we see fit. Which was marvelous.

PC: That's the most difficult thing to get money for.

HM: Oh boy, it certainly is!

PC: People can't see any of those things.

HM: No, no. And that frightfully expensive housekeeping. Well, I was just told the other day that the new Julliard School is so marvelously arranged that the maintenance will be one million dollars a year. Just think!

PC: That's fantastic.

HM: What an awful lot!

PC: Did you do many exhibitions while you were there that were very, very special?

HM: Oh, yes, we did a great, great many exhibitions all the time. We sometimes had three and four on in various galleries in the building.

PC: But are there some that, you know, that *you* consider very special?

HM: Yes. We did a wonderful exhibition of German Gothic prints when the German Government sent over the Berlin paintings. When would that have been? -- After the war and I can't remember exactly when it was. It was before the Berlin museums were installed to hang them so that rather than have them in storage they sent them over here. We did also sometime back around 1940 the first exhibition in this country of prints of the French Renaissance, the Mannerist prints of the School of Fontainebleau, which are now very much the fashion. That was so much a pioneer show that nobody would look at it. Nobody had seen them before and nobody wanted to examine them. Now it would be very different.

PC: Yes.

HM: Then we did a very beautiful exhibition when the Warburg collection came in. That was a marvelous show. And what I always tried to do was to make my print exhibitions tie in with other things. So that, for instance, when the Museum of Modern Art had the great Renaissance paintings lent by the Italian Government, I had a show of Italian Renaissance prints. Or, for instance, this next autumn we're going to have a show of Degas's paintings and drawings and with that we'll have a show of Degas's prints and prints by his associates.

PC: Oh, that's terrific.

HM: That makes it much more interesting. And I always watched what the Guggenheim and the Museum of Modern Art and Cooper Union were doing and tried to find out long enough ahead so that I could plan a show to go with them. In the shows that I did I tried to make prints and drawings, or whatever it was, look (I won't say exactly inexpensive) but to make people forget the price tag; not frame them elaborately, not be too grandiose about them. And I had large, slanting decks made which were forty inches high, or thirty inches high, with great sheets of Plexiglas on them, it was eight feet wide, and they slanted so they brought the thing in about the position of a book that you'd hold in your hand. Then the prints were put in there without frames, with their mat, their simple label, and you were to be made unaware, you were supposed to forget the surroundings so you could just see the print and nothing else. And then for interest in my shows I tried to make explanatory labels which were typed up and put on the mats in one side, say, about every three or four mats; not every one because that's too much reading. And it's rather a difficult thing to write those labels. They're not easy. You have to think of somebody intelligent, of a sort of general education, who is also impatient, who's been standing too long on his feet and has to be kept very much interested if he's going to read a label. Each label I thought should take a different approach and you should never know when you began one whether it was going to be factual, flippant or serious, appreciative, or whatever it was. Each should strike a different note of some central theme.

PC: Constant variety, yes.

HM: Constant variety. And not of course waste one single word. Everything had to be pared down to the bone.

PC: That's marvelous.

HM: And that was great fun to write those labels. And I enjoyed very much indeed doing it. And I know people

liked them. I know they did. It's a lot of preparation. You have to really work for weeks on a show. And of course I never wanted to show very many prints at one time. A hundred is about all you can see at one go. Somebody once said that you can really see works of art for half an hour, then the next half hour you check off the existence of things in a particular exhibition; after that you just wander about hoping for some indecency. There's a lot in that.

PC: Yes, that's true. Well, you've written a number of books. How did you come to write these? Are they subjects that have interested you? Or were they commissions?

HM: Well, they were both, really both. The first thing I did was the catalogue of the Life in America Show of 1939. That was the first year of the World's Fair Year at Flushing Meadow. And Ivins at that time was the acting director. And the Trustees thought that we ought to have some kind of very special show to show to all the visitors who came to the World's Fair. But they couldn't decide what it should be. Time ran on, ran on, and ran on. Finally there was about, I think, not more than about two, maybe three months before the opening date; which of course is no time at all to assemble any kind of a complicated show. And Ivins said, "All right, boys, we'll do something on *my* plan." And his idea then was to make an exhibition of all the American paintings that showed American life, genre pictures: the West, industrial life, all that kind of thing. Everything that showed how people used to live in this country. That kind of painting in those days was in -- some of it was in museums, in the top floors of club houses, but never hung out on the front line; never, never. It was hidden away. So Herbert Williams, who then became director of the Corcoran in Washington, and I went out on a trip. We were sort of given carfare, a camera, which I managed, and we were just to bring back photographs and descriptions of everything we could find, whatever it might be. And we could go where we pleased and we were given *carte blanche*. And then of course there was a committee in the Museum which would select what we recommended. It was just about the most wonderful trip I ever took. It was great.

PC: Where did you go?

HM: Well, we started in Boston. And Bill was a wonderful man to work with because we very amiably divided forces, or we joined, rejoined; it worked beautifully as a partnership. And I brought back lots of photographs and we assembled a show -- oh, I suppose two or three hundred paintings -- which made an immense impression. It changed American collecting. And all this collecting that's done nowadays, the Hudson River School and things like that, is the direct outcome of that exhibition. We had wonderful things in that show. Absolutely marvelous. Out of which the Metropolitan Museum bought not one single painting; *not one!* I found out later on, too late, years later, that Bierstadt's *Last Buffalo*, which is really one of his prettiest pictures in small house size, could have been had for fifty dollars. But I didn't know it then.

PC: Oh, not any more!

HM: No. Not any more. We had William Sidney Mount's real masterpiece of *Eel Spearing in Setauket*, which is now in Cooperstown. We could have bought that from the descendant of the original owner. We could have had all sorts of things. And nobody bought a darned one. And that catalogue had to be done in a hell of a hurry, really in a hurry. So my wife and I (that's the only venture we've ever done together in this kind of thing) went down to the Public Library and just barricaded ourselves in books and rushed around for all kinds of quotations that would go with the various paintings. We had a wonderful time. And many dreadful mistakes got into it because I don't know American history well and it was all done in such a hurry that it's a very fallible catalogue. But it is interesting; it still is an interesting thing. Out of it came Marshall Davidson's big book on Life in America; I don't think that's the title but that thing was the direct outcome of that catalogue. And I gave Marshall all my photographs and all my notes.

PC: He had worked at the Metropolitan at one time, hadn't he?

HM: Yes, he did. He was in The American Wing. Very bright and very good at it, too. Wonderful. I was very sorry when he left. He did an excellent book. It went into some gigantic edition. And I was very proud that that should have come out of my little thing. Then my other books have all come out because of Hebert Bittner. Did I say anything about Herbert Bittner before?

PC: No.

HM: Well, he was a very remarkable little man. He was from, I think, North Germany, if I'm not mistaken. He had gone to Rome where he worked in a bookstore run by a Swiss whose name I've now forgotten in via Cavour and was a great friend of Wendell who invented the Wendell light here, you know, and became very prosperous indeed.

PC: Oh, yes.

HM: Wendell at that time was working in a garage as a mechanic and he was an amateur electrician of sort of

lighting effects. Somehow or other he got in touch with one of the great Roman families who was giving a party; he said, "I will light up your palace and your garden for the party." It was for the Colonnas, or somebody like that, you know, one of those great Roman houses. Everybody came there. The whole ambassadorial world. People came in from France and England especially for this grand party. They had never seen the indirect floodlighting of a building or the floodlighting of trees and that kind of thing. They were all snowed by this. And *Son et Lumiere* came straight out of that one party, you see. Herbert Bittner then came to this country with his Roman training, started as a secondhand book dealer here and did it very well indeed. But he had no use, no respect, for his secondhand book dealing, in which he made an adequate living. He wanted to be a publisher. In which he lost everything; went bankrupt twice as a publisher. But he insisted on doing it. I liked him. By the time he came here he was a little, round, tubby, beery, sort of weepy-looking man, very unattractive. As a young man he had apparently been the absolute image of some very famous German movie actor, a blonde movie actor. So much so that whenever he went to a hotel there'd be scratching on the door about two o'clock in the morning by some girl from across the hall wanting to borrow a cigarette. So he had quite a life. Quite a life! That had all passed when I saw him at the last. He was married to an American girl, Marie, who was very intelligent, a beautiful girl, she looked like a Raphael Madonna. And, if he'd had the sense to come in out of the rain, he would have given all the business affairs to Maria and done the publishing and the artistic work himself. But poor Herbert had to be everything, you know, like one of these little German czars. So he asked me if I would write a book on Piranesi. I said, "Why not? There's no book on Piranesi. Write a book on Piranesi." So I spent a summer rushing around and wrote a book on Piranesi. He was the most wonderful man to work with you could imagine. He was great. No trouble was too much. To design a title page he'd spend days adjusting, you know, putting the vignette a millimeter up, or a millimeter down, varying the type face. And it came out with that beautiful difficult simplicity in which he really set a style for art books. He also of course wanted to do everything himself. He wanted to suggest the subject, he wanted to suggest the treatment. And I was always delighted with these suggestions and worked on them; it suited me. And we did a book on stage design together. And when the thing was in page proof he decided it would be more stylish to spell "theatre" ". . . tre" in the British fashion instead of ". . . ter" as I had spelled it in the American fashion. So I said, "Herbert, I don't care. If you want to change it in page proof you go right ahead." So he did. And of course you can't -- you know a key word in a book on the theater every other line and you cannot catch such a repeated word every time it turns up. So that if you read that book now it's spelled ". . . ter," ". . . tre," ". . . ter," ". . . tre," all through the book.

PC: The rhythm of the sentence.

HM: In fact I didn't care. But he got into terrible loggerheads with everybody else who wrote for him because other people did care.

PC: Sure.

HM: These are just details and if that amused him, why not?

PC: Was Piranesi a great interest of yours?

HM: Yes, he was. And he is a fascinating man. And the whole idea of Rome, which I had never visited in those days (I saw Rome only after I wrote that book), actually I probably could write about Rome much more eloquently when I had not seen it because I didn't have to think away the motorcycles and the Fiat cars and the modern shops and things of that kind. It was just pure what Piranesi showed me. And that was it. So it was an advantage.

PC: Well, what about the book on stage design? -- Which is a little later.

HM: Yes. there were two books on stage design. One was called *Baroque and Romantic Stage Design* which wasn't much of a book really; that actually was done for Janos Scholz who then owned an enormous collection of drawings of stage designs which he had bought in Vienna and in Eisenach, I think.

PC: He's always been a collector anyway.

HM: Oh, yes. The things he's owned at one time is just a gigantic amount of stuff. He's got rid of a great deal of it.

PC: Yes, but it turns over and he sells it.

HM: It turns over, yes, yes. It's sold and swapped.

PC: Yes.

HM: He found somehow or other the last descendant of a long family of stage designers. The last old lady had a pile of stuff of all kinds that had been gathering since I suppose 1780. Because apparently what happened in

Vienna, at least, and probably in other places too, was that when a stage designer died some other stage designer bought all his stuff to get ideas from.

PC: Right. That was his resource.

HM: Yes, exactly. That was his springboard. And these things had been gathering and gathering and gathering. There was the entire work of a man called Platza who worked in Vienna around 1820. And then all sorts of other things. This collection was then sold *en bloc* to Donald Oenslager who, I believe, is bequeathing it to Yale. And Janos wanted a book made of this. At that time it was in the hands of Herbert Bittner to sell. And I think really this was a sort of a ploy to sell it. But I didn't care about that. That didn't bother me. So we selected some of the prettiest drawings and I wrote a little essay and made a book of it. It isn't much of a book but it has nice reproductions of drawings. Then I did another book on the Bibiena Family.

PC: Right.

HM: That was done during the war. So it was impossible to get any photographs from abroad. It was very difficult indeed to get the illustrations for that. And I couldn't write abroad to find out about things that weren't in this country. So that book I think is all right as far as it goes but it certainly needs a reworking. They put out 1,000 copies. During the war there were unskillful hands in the binderies and they ruined 100 so the total edition was 900 copies. It's quite scarce now.

PC: Yes. All the paper problems and everything else that went on.

HM: Yes, yes. I think the most touching result of all that writing was a story I heard of a man who was in our Navy during the war and who was on that terribly dangerous run to give the Russians supplies up in Siberia -- where did they go to? -- what was that port they went to way up north? -- Any way it was right through the German submarine fleet. And very few came through. And of course if you got in that icy water you sank in five minutes and that was the end of you. I heard of a man who brought along my Bibiena book to cheer him and keep him going. I think that touched me, really touched me, to think of that going up on that frightful run under those awful conditions to cheer somebody along.

PC: It's amazing that one out of 900 would be traveling across the ocean like that.

HM: Yes.

PC: Well, have you enjoyed writing the books?

HM: Oh, yes. That's what I always liked doing best when I was working in the Museum. That was the fun. But it was something that I always felt I was playing hookey when I did it. I would just say to my colleagues, "Now you keep the job while I go write." You can't do that very often.

PC: Are there any other things that you've written? I notice there's the Artists for Victory exhibition where you've done a foreward.

HM: Oh, yes. Those were just small jobs.

PC: That really had an enormous impact, didn't it? -- That series of exhibitions?

HM: I think it did. I think so.

PC: Because as I talk to people they say, "You know I had a painting in that show."

HM: Yes. It was really quite interesting.

PC: It's a point that's always been made by a number of people.

HM: John Taylor Arms judged the prints there. He was chairman of the jury. And I shoved around, was his errand boy. And John was absolutely a marvelous man. He wore himself out. He wanted to do everything. He wanted to unwrap the packages, carry them around. You had to just jump around and be ahead of him to save him a little bit so he could do the things that only he could do.

PC: Yes. Have you served on many juries and things like that?

HM: Oh, yes. Lots of them.

PC: Lots and lots and lots of -- thousands of prints.

HM: Oh, yes, yes. The best arranged juries, the best organized ones, are the ones that Una Johnson does in Brooklyn, or did. Her Biennial American Print show, which was really the pace-setting show of American prints, was beautifully, beautifully organized so that one could judge a matter of 1,500 or 2,000 prints in one day and be fair.

PC: Oh, really? How did she arrange to do that?

HM: She arranged them in categories. And if you arrange things in categories you can see what's good and know who does it and know who's better and vice versa.

PC: all the lithographs and all the woodcuts?

HM: Well, all the landscapes in sort of modern style, landscapes in traditional style; that way.

PC: Oh, I see. Subject matter.

HM: Oh, it was beautifully done. She was the great print person in my time. She retired just recently.

PC: Well, that's interesting. I want to get into all the other activities here, or we'll go on forever. How did you become associated with things like the Brookgreen Gardens and all these various institutes of which you're a trustee and things?

HM: Well, I don't know. You know, those things just fall on you, I have no idea how, but they just do. They come to everybody. That's just a matter of time. But my connections with Brookgreen Gardens and the Hispanic [Society] was entirely through my uncle Archer Huntington. Did I talk about him?

PC: No, we haven't talked about him or about your aunt either.

HM: Well, Aunt Anna did a medal back around 1920, I suppose, of William Dean Howells for the Academy of Arts and Letters. This was commissioned by Uncle Archer [Archer Huntington]. At that time his first wife had left him and he was terribly gloomy. He really didn't care if he lived or died. And Aunt Anna somehow saw this, saw how it was. I don't know how she saw it, but somehow he saw that she saw. And this made a bond between two people who really were very unlikely ever to have become associated. At any rate, they were finally married on their joint birthday, which is March 10, in 1922.

PC: Oh. It saves a lot of celebrations, doesn't it?

HM: Yes. It's one easy celebration to remember. And he had so neglected himself, sat up all night studying, and just not bothered to eat or take care of himself in any way at all that he ran himself down. He was a giant of a man. At one time he weighed 250 or 275 pounds; a huge man, six foot, six or something like that; an enormous man. And I remember that I was once visiting my aunt -- she was wonderful to me, for my Christmas present she would invite me in to sleep on a cot in her studio on Twelfth Street and take me to the theatre or give me tickets and send me off to the theatre. And I spent my days in the Metropolitan Museum and my nights in the theatre from the cheap seats in the top balcony. She was just great because I hated Princeton and this was an absolute godsend. I never can thank her enough, she was so wonderful. At any rate he was terribly ill. He had pneumonia. And of course this was long before penicillin or any of those things. She, of course, had no more right than any other enormous number of ladies to find out how he was because nobody knew anything about their engagement. This was all kept extremely quiet indeed. And I remember very well one night she asked people in to supper. My grandmother was there also. That night was the crisis of the pneumonia. If there was no change, there was apparently no hope. Somehow or other he had been lucid enough to arrange that she should be told of his condition. During the supper the telephone rang, she went out to the next room, came back, finished supper, perfectly bland and pleasant to all her guests. And the message had been that there was no change. She thought this was the end of her only chance of marrying and the only man she'd ever loved. And she just took it absolutely unruffled. Nobody could have guessed what was going on. Absolutely not. Then they were finally married in her studio standing by the piano. And I was there. And they went off. At that time he was still so weak from this pneumonia that when they crossed Grand Central he suddenly grabbed her and the porter who was carrying their bags, because he was about to fall. And I didn't know who he was. I hadn't the slightest idea. I knew he was interested in Spanish things. I was then given the job of telephoning the newspapers and giving the news of this marriage. I thought this is just a marriage, it won't interest anybody. So I telephoned the *Times* and got the right person who handles marriages and I said, "Anna Hyatt has married Archer M. Huntington." "What! That rich man!" That was the first inkling I had that he had any money. It never had occurred to me. Nobody ever mentioned it.

PC: That's incredible.

HM: Anyway, he was terribly nice to me and I was very, very fond of him, really very fond of him. He was an

extraordinary man. He came out of that generation which could dine out if they talked well; and he talked divinely. I have never heard anybody with that instant lapidary wit of that man. He was at ease in any language, French, Spanish (the only non-Spaniard I've ever met who spoke Spanish eloquently -- not only correctly -- but eloquently). He could recite scraps of the Koran in Arabic. He was an astonishing man.

PC: He did a very good translation of the *Cid*, didn't he?

HM: Yes, it was the classic translation; still is the classic translation. And his notes are still the classic notes on the *Cid*. He never went to college; never had a college degree. Which curiously enough bothered him. That bothered him. People who haven't a college degree feel they've missed something. He knew far more than almost any college graduate I've ever met. But still not to have gone through the mill was a handicap.

PC: It was an experience that he missed.

HM: Yes. He'd been brought up rather solitarily. His mother and father -- his mother was Belle Yarrington from Virginia, I think. They had been married when he was six years old. Because the first Mrs. Collis Huntington wouldn't give Collis Huntington a divorce. This is not generally known. So Collis Huntington set up Belle Yarborough in a house on 53rd Street. Which then became Rockefeller's house. Which was then torn down to make the Museum of Modern Art (That would be 53rd Street, yes). Or was it 54th? -- I can't remember exactly. At any rate, the Rockefellers bought the house when Uncle Archer's parents were married. Then they wanted no more of this irregular life that they hadn't liked at all. They wanted to get rid of the whole thing. They took their clothes out of the house and sold the whole thing, lock, stock and barrel, to the Rockefellers.

PC: That's fantastic.

HM: The Rockefellers then, when they tore the house down, gave three rooms, as you know, one to Brooklyn and two to the Museum of the City of New York. My uncle went into the Museum of the City of New York, having heard that the Rockefellers had given some rooms, and walked into the room in which he had been born and which he remembered very accurately because he lived there 'til he was six years old. That rocked him back on his heels, I can tell you.

PC: What an extraordinary experience!

HM: An extraordinary experience! And there was everything exactly as it had been when he was born there; precisely. He was then a man of seventy at least. And he was brought up more or less traveling around Europe with his mother. A very solitary life. He went to a thing called the Columbia Grammar School here in New York, which was a very stuffy, old-fashioned kind of grammar school indeed. And he was the daredevil in the school. There was another daredevil. He told me they once dared each other to do something really shocking. They made a bet. It was such a solemn bet that they had to go through with it. They were to walk up Fifth Avenue side by side past the houses of all their cousins and uncles and aunts. The friend was to wear no hat. Uncle Archer was to carry a brown paper parcel. They went through with it. That was life in those days.

PC: That was another life altogether.

HM: It was another life. He told me this with great good humor. Even though it was terribly funny then it hadn't been a bit funny when he was a boy. So in this solitary life with his mother, going around to various grand hotels, his toys were shoe boxes in which he arranged miniature works of art and made museums because museums were what she went to all the time. She knew French memoirs extremely well, she collected, of course, she owned the Aristotle. Contempletory [?], the Bust of Homer print [?] by Rembrandt, and a lot of very good French furniture, very good English paintings, and things like that. So those were his toys. Very naturally, when he grew up, museums were the things that continued to interest him. And he founded, I think, it was thirteen in all.

PC: Really!

HM: Yes, thirteen. He got very much interested in Spanish things. And apparently that was because when he was, I think, eighteen his father was invited down to Mexico to do something about the Mexican railroads, invited by Porfirio Diaz. The father took Uncle Archer along on the trip. His father was Collis Huntington who put through the Transcontinental Railroad. And they arrived by train in Mexico City in the morning. That evening they had to attend a very grand banquet in the Chapultepec Palace. So they arrived there at a rather late hour, as one does to dine in a Spanish land, all the grandees of Mexico were there, everybody dressed up to the nines. They stood around a while and then the great doors to the dining room rolled back. Each gentleman was supposed to take a lady on his arm and drift into the banquet hall. At that very moment poor Uncle Archer fell flat on the floor, passed out cold. He never drank. The altitude had got him. And of course he was embarrassed -- you can imagine an eighteen-year-old at his first grand, grown-up party to have that happen. Well, the Mexicans all gathered around him and they were so nice. They said that really they expected every stranger to do this, it was

just the most normal thing in the world, they would have been disappointed if he hadn't fainted, and made him so comfortable that I think he fell in love with the Spanish frame of mind at that moment and devoted the rest of his life to it. It was very interesting. Very shortly after that he learned Old Spanish, learned Arabic, because so much Arabic is in Spanish, traveled all over Spain on an unfortunate donkey. How the donkey carried him I can't imagine. He went, he said, to more places than anybody but a tax collector. And he told me once that he went to a village where, of course, there was no inn (there was never any inn in those days), one of the farmers took him into his house, gave him *the* bed, which was upstairs, and supper in a very dim candlelit house. When he came down from the only bed (everybody else slept on the floor or somewhere or other), the farmer produced his wallet which had slipped out of his pocket in the dark. And Uncle Archer thanked him and put it in his pocket. And the farmer said, "Aren't you going to count the money?" And Uncle Archer said, "Sir, I am in Spain."

And he always had that note, that exactly-on-the-button note to the Spanish temperament. He knew precisely what to say. He was just great. When they were exporting a great many works of art surreptitiously from Spain, were selling them elsewhere, he wanted to stop this. He was a great friend of the King, Alfonso XIII. So the King said, "What's new in Paris?" And Uncle Archer said, "Well, they just offered to sell me Toledo Cathedral." And that made them pony up and pass a more stringent law about exporting works of art. And very honorably he never bought any of his works of art in Spain. He always bought them outside; he wouldn't buy anything . . . so that when the Venen Blanco [?] patio (which is now in the Metropolitan Museum, that marble patio) was exported in 1904 (this was offered to him in Paris), he didn't want to buy it -- he was then building the Hispanic Society Building, which was built in 1906; because it was too radioactive, as it were. He, however, admired this thing and he had his architect adapt the windows for the arcades of the Hispanic Society patio. So it's curious that the adaptation is on one end of the Island and now the original is in the middle. It's very curious.

PC: Do you know which are the thirteen museums he founded?

HM: The Mariners Museum in Newport News. I think he founded the Numismatic Society here in town. There was a golf museum somewhere or other. But you know I don't know the rest, I really don't.

PC: That's a lifetime's work for a number of people.

HM: It actually is, yes.

PC: But anyway I asked you about Brookgreen Gardens.

HM: Oh, yes, yes. Well, he liked to build things. So at one time poor Aunt Anna got tuberculosis. And she had to spend a couple of years in Switzerland. And when she came back they felt that she ought to have the country air. They heard of a tract of land at Brookgreen which had had a large country house on it that had burned down years and years and years ago near Georgetown, South Carolina. They bought this place and they built a house which they called Atalia on the beach. It was a beautiful house. He built it on his own plan. He got a contractor. He marked out on the beach, he said now the most stable thing on the beach is my hat; that won't sink. So he built himself a house like a concrete hat. He marked out this long place, had them level it, had them get some railroad rails dumped in it, pour concrete all over so as to make an absolutely uncrackable platform. Then, say, a yard or so inside the edge of this he said, "Now you build a wall along there and you put a window here and a window there and a window there and you turn the corner and you do this, that, and the other." And, after this went on for several weeks, the contractor said, "Mr. Huntington, if you tell me much more I'm going to find out what you're building." So he built a house. It turned out to be a house with rooms on three sides to the sea, and right and left to the sea. The side toward the land a wall making a patio full of palms. The door then went to a perfectly straight drive of a quarter of a mile to the high road. And at night you'd look down this long drive and if they had the place open and were expecting people you'd look through the garden door into the patio through the house door at a fireplace with fire in it. It really was beautiful. And the flat roof on top was a wonderful sort of deck on which you got the wind and the sea and so on.

PC: It was a low house?

HM: It was one story. It was a beautiful place I thought. Very, very simple, absolutely simple. And a really imaginative and marvelous plan. And sure enough it has not cracked. Whereas the hotel on Myrtle Beach, which was built on piles driven at great expense, has cracked all over the place. He was rather proud of that. Well, on the other side of the high road there was this large tract of I suppose 150 to 200 acres which had been the original Brookgreen Plantation. It had had a sugar refinery. Of course, there was nothing there but the smokestack. And a live oak avenue, which was very beautiful, enormous live oak avenue, which had led up to the house, to the foundations of the house. This was such a beautiful tract of land that they had this idea of getting a lot of American sculpture of that kind, of the 1920s or so, and making a sculpture garden out of it, a garden which would require as little guardianship as possible, so that the marble statues are set in pools so nobody can take lipstick and write "Joe loves Susie" on them. The other statues are in walls which are like Jefferson's walls at Monticello -- or rather at the University of Virginia -- snake fence walls made one brick thick

which are openwork so you can look through to guard the place a bit better. The statues stand in the niches made by these snaking walls and you have prickly plants planted in front of them. It's all very cleverly done. And immense numbers of people come, drift by there, because it's a high road from North to South, and look at this place. It's very prettily planted. And when the dogwood comes out it really is charming. The back of the garden gives on part of the Inland Waterway which there flows through a cypress swamp, these enormous cypresses all draped in Spanish moss. And there are water steps at the back where the daughter of Aaron Burr went away under romantic circumstances -- I forget what.

PC: Oh, my!

HM: It's really very pretty. And of course now that's all given to the State of South Carolina. And I believe that the house is used for the girl scouts or something or other -- I don't know just what.

PC: It's not open as a museum or anything? It is used for something.

HM: No. the visiting area is all on the inland side of the highway.

PC: That's fascinating. Well, what about the Hispanic Society? You've been involved with that for a long while.

HM: Oh, yes, certainly. I really am involved with that. Oh, altogether too much. And very ineffectually, too, I'm afraid. At any rate, I remember one time when I was in the Metropolitan my uncle telephoned me (he lived at 1083 Fifth Avenue, which is now torn down but it's next door to the National Academy -- no, the Heavenly Rest - - that block). And he said, "Can you come up here so quickly that the air closes behind you with a snap?" He had a lovely way of speaking, a lovely, old-fashioned way. And he then took me into the library, locked the door, sat me down very solemnly, said, "Would you be a trustee of the Hispanic Society, but you must promise me never, never, never to change one single thing?" Well, you know, he was eighty years old and I said, "Certainly." Of course, naturally, what else could I say. Then he died when he was eighty-six (he died in 1955). At that time he had gone downhill for the last, oh, over five years. And that wonderful, matchless mind had gradually slowed down and become just like the rest of us, and then had become less than the rest of us. That grieved me terribly, terribly. Oh, to see that happen was awful. And he knew it. That was even worse. Finally he managed to die, poor thing. During all this decline, of course, he had not been well enough to go to the Hispanic Society. He ran absolutely everything. Every single decision was his. And his board of trustees was simply a lot of agreeable stooges who knew nothing about Spain and who'd say yes as he read out the annual report. "Yes," that's all he wanted. He didn't want an active Board at all.

PC: No discussion.

HM: No discussion. Part of the board was members of the staff, which duplication of functions I think is entirely wrong. At any rate, when he died, there was absolutely nobody to take over. There was no director. There was no procedure for running the show.

PC: It was a private museum, wasn't it?

HM: It was a private museum. And there were a lot of old ladies there who were very bright but utterly cloistered and timid like nuns who knew their specialities marvelously; there was no question about that. And many of them wrote very well. But absolutely no idea of what went on outside the walls they worked in all the time. He had ruled them very strictly, dictatorially because he'd always had his way with everything and he didn't tolerate any, *any* interference or any suggestions of any kind from anybody. So what to do? That was a case of nepotism in reverse. And my aunt said would I take over? Well, there was nothing else I could do. God knows I didn't want to because the place was utter gloom. Oh, dear, I never shall forget the day at Woodlawn -- he died in December and he was taken to the great, big, ugly, imposing mausoleum that his parents had built there -- and they carried this heavy sealed coffin upstairs. And this little group of pathetic ladies, pathetic women in the whipping December wind, all clinging together and wondering what the hell was coming next. It really was quite a sight. They did not know. Nobody knew.

PC: Their first sight of the real world.

HM: Yes. And terrified they were. Well, I went up there a couple of days a week in the beginning, or at least one day, and simply tried to hold their hands and tell them that things would go on and this was not the end and they must brace up and do something constructive. And gradually got them writing again, interested in things. And I sort of made bridges to the outside world. That was all I could do. And sort of massaged them to get their circulation moving. That was really all I did. There was a great deal I should have done that I didn't think of at the time. I should have asked the Kress Foundation for *Spanish Ladies*. It never occurred to me. Damn fool.

PC: It never occurred to them either.

HM: No. I know I could have had some. But I was so occupied with the human situation of these women. I got them to take their little articles which had always been published in little pamphlets that nobody could find, that disappeared in the world, you know, I got them to submit these articles to various magazines *Connoisseur*, *Apollo*, or things like that, magazines of art and so forth. They were frightened to death to do this. People would re-write their things; they would no longer be able to say what they wanted to. Oh, the goings-on! Well, they found that not only were their things respected and liked and wanted but they even got a little bit of money out of them; not much, but some.

PC: A startling revelation.

HM: Yes. And they found that when people came into the Museum they would say, "Oh, I read your article in such and such a magazine" and that made a great change, an enormous change. So I went up and did this kind of thing. It was really a sort of a dead albatross around my neck. It was real uphill work. Oh, dear, it really was. And I gradually got things rearranged a little bit in the galleries a little better. And then I shopped around for a director, somebody who would be on hand all the time and somebody who knew Spanish literature. (Which I don't know.) And had a better knowledge of Spanish art than I have. I know Goya and Velazquez and El Greco a little bit but I do not know Spanish art. It was very difficult to find. It's hard to find a director like that because it's got to be a man, say, over thirty or thirty-five, who has some experience and scholarship and that kind of thing.

PC: And can work with people.

HM: Yes. And yet it can't be a man much over forty because, by that time, he's settled down to a place where he wants to stay. Or if he hasn't, he's going to move around from place to place and won't stay at the Hispanic either. I really thought I was never going to find this man. And finally, at Madison, Wisconsin, I found Ted Beardsley, Theodore Beardsley, who was exactly right. He worked out beautifully. That was an enormous load off my shoulders.

PC: But you're still active there?

HM: Oh, yes. I still go up there one afternoon a week. They don't really need me but I just go there to cheer them up and do a few little things. And Ted knows nothing about works of art. He's purely a literature man. So I have to

PC: Does the museum still collect things? Or is it mainly literature?

HM: It's difficult to find things that would add to the collection because Uncle Archer did a really extraordinary piece of work of getting a series of types and there is everything there, you may say, one each of everything they have except for contemporary Spanish painting. There's no Picasso, no Miro. And, curiously enough, there is no painting by Murillo; there's a drawing, but no painting. And no still life, one of the great Spanish specialities. But otherwise it's astounding what an extraordinarily continuous genetic series it is of things made in Spain from prehistoric times to now. They have to be rearranged. There's a great deal that has to be rearranged. The building was built in 1906 and therefore it looks its worst. It is just the very antipodal of present day taste. And various people have urged me to remodel it so it will look modern.

PC: The whole area is lovely.

HM: Yes. I like that Plaza very much indeed, that terrace. But they wanted me to remodel the interior and get rid of all that ornament on the patio and things like that. And I have always said, "So, this is the time you must not remodel the building because you can't do it intelligently. In another fifty years or seventy-five years, if it still looks terrible, then you have a proper basis for criticism to go ahead and remodel it."

PC: Just a change of taste isn't enough.

HM: You can't remodel it just because it's unfashionable taste, you can't do that. There's a lot we could do if we had some money. We could dig out under the terrace and put books there. We could rearrange the skylights and make ourselves another gallery. In that gallery, I'd like to reassemble the two wall tombs, very beautiful late Gothic and Early Pateresque wall tombs which are about thirty feet high. They would come to about within a yard of the top of such a gallery. It would be very spectacular. No such things exist outside of Spain. They now are in pieces here and there and don't look like anything, just like a boneyard. But it would cost a very great deal of money to do that, an *enormous* amount of money. Some day those skylights will have to be remade whatever happens because they have not been renewed since 1906 and that's a long life for a skylight. A very long life for a skylight.

PC: How did you become associated with the museums in Madrid and the other places in Spain?

HM: Well, that went when I became president of the Hispanic Society. Uncle Archer had been a member of

everything in Spain, absolutely everything, absolutely everybody. And that is no fooling. He was an intimate friend of all the great Spaniards of his age: The Duke of Alba, the King, everybody from there down; all the museum people, all the writers, everybody. He really was part of the intellectual life of Madrid. So that, as his nephew by marriage and his successor at the Hispanic, they thought they ought to do something for him. And they therefore gave me these various entrees to academies and things like that. It was rather terrifying I must say. I finally got up my courage to go to Madrid.

PC: What was that like?

HM: Oh, boy! Oh, boy! That was terrifying.

PC: When did you go?

HM: When would that have been? -- Oh, around 1950 or so I think. No, it was after that because he died in 1955, you see, and all this happened afterwards. It would have been perhaps 1957, 1960, or somewhere around there. My wife and I were in France and England, I think it was, looking for prints for the Museum and then I took a bit of my vacation and went on to Madrid. And she doesn't speak Spanish so she didn't go because she feels very out of place in anything Spanish, can't even understand it. And I went to the Academia de San Fernando and I was told all about their meetings. I think they meet on Mondays, if I'm not mistaken, at exactly half-past seven. That's one of the very few punctual things in all of Spain. You're supposed to get there between half-past six and seven. You then gather around a long table on which there are learned magazines and reviews and journals from all over the world. You pick these up and talk about them. Then you file into a very fine late 18th-century room with white and gold chairs that were given by Charles IV in about 1790 or so. And there's a grander chair for the perpetual secretary. I was told that I would be welcomed. I didn't know what that meant. But I was just to say a few kind words, in Spanish of course, because none of them speak English. Well, they started the proceedings and sure enough Jose Francis, whom I knew was the perpetual secretary, began to welcome me. And I then had to, I thought, stand up and reply. So I stood up to reply and everybody motioned me to sit down. One sat down. And somehow or other I lived through it. But it aged me a year I can tell you! It was frightening. When I went back the second time I was told that this time I would be given the medal or the diploma or whatever it is, which they had gotten ready by that time. I said, "I don't have to reply to that, do I?" He said, "Oh, no." However, again there was a speech and I had to get up and go around to the grand chair and collect this thing and again say something. It is absolutely terrifying. You know, if I have a long time to work on an extemporaneous speech, I can do it. But it takes an awfully long time. At the end of my time in Madrid, which was two or three weeks, they gave me a supper at a restaurant. Which was very, very sweet because they haven't much money. And they gave me a really grand dinner. And they came from other cities in Spain and it was very touching. They're wonderful people. There I knew I did have to make a speech and I was all prepared. And there I did it right. I said that at home in my country were things known as an electric eye in railroad stations. "As you approach a door the door will fly open and admit you." I said, "You, wherever I have gone in Spain, have been my electric eye." And that was exactly right. Uncle Archer couldn't have done better. Because it was something they did not expect, it was brief, it was eloquent, it was polite. That was all right. But it takes an awful lot of doing to think up something like that. It does not come easily to me.

PC: Well, there's still great formality in Spanish society, isn't there?

HM: Oh, yes, yes. I asked a young Spaniard here, as a matter of fact, the son of Jose Francis - Alberto Francis. I said, "How does one behave in Spanish society?" And he said, "Well, think that you're in the Court at Vienna in 1860 and you'll be all right." And he was perfectly correct.

PC: That's marvelous.

HM: I know when my son went to France when he was about twenty he asked me how to behave. And I told him, "Be polite just beyond the point of being ridiculous and you'll be all right." And he came back and thanked me for that advice.

PC: That's marvelous. So, do you have things to do with the various museums in Spain and academies, on boards that you're on?

HM: No, they write me and I sometimes arrange a few little things. But it's purely But you know, you can't get anything done in Spain unless you know people and unless you go personally. It's not exactly a matter of pull. It's a matter of friendship. Everything is person-to-person. And it's important to go there and meet people. Then you can get all sorts of things done. Now Ted Beardsley went there recently. And he went to a thing called the Archivo del Parara, which is a set of phonograph recordings of the voices of all the great writers in Spain, which had never been published. And by meeting people and talking it over, he persuaded them to let the Hispanic have transcripts of these records. We're going to put them on two long-playing records, four sides, and they will be the voices of absolutely everybody of importance who's been working since, say, 1920. It's as though we had the voices of Henry James, James Joyce, Galsworthy, everybody all on one record. We'd be

thrilled about such a thing. And I think that's going to be a most interesting publication. And it's a new kind of publication that Ted Beardsley started at the Hispanic. He's published a great, great many books but never published records before. And they don't cost much to publish. It's very inexpensive. And they really are a great service to everybody.

PC: I think it'll bring a lot of people to the Museum that don't even know about it.

HM: I think so. He's also done another very imaginative thing which is to make video film, or sound film, of great Spanish plays that have been produced. And he did the

La Vida Sueno which was done by Columbia a year or so ago. I haven't seen that yet but I am going to see it in a few days. And then he did a marvelous performance of the grand Teatro del Mundo of Calderon which was done in St. Paul's Chapel this winter, which is the thing that gave Pirandello his idea for "Six Characters . . ." A wonderful play. An absolutely marvelous play. I will be fascinated to see that. These will be rented. And we already have requests to lend them to England and to Spain.

PC: Isn't that marvelous!

HM: That's hitting the jackpot. That's all right. That's good. That's very good.

PC: But you enjoy all these things now?

HM: Yes. Now that the apostolic succession is secured in the Hispanic, I don't have to worry. If something happened to Ted Beardsley, I'd of course be in despair all over again. I don't know what we'd do. Because so far he has no understudy. There's nobody to come along.

PC: It's hard to find people.

HM: Oh! It is very hard to find. Oh, I think the problem of getting a successor is perhaps the most important thing you can do in any job after a certain length of time. And it's a thing that Uncle Archer had not done at all. He wouldn't think of it. He wouldn't have men around the place. He only wanted women. Men got drunk. They married the wrong girls. They got divorced. They did all the wrong things.

PC: Excuses for competition.

HM: Yes.

PC: Well, did you have any choice at the Metropolitan in your successor?

HM: Yes. I tried four people. And the present man, John McKendry, is the fourth and much the best. But that also is very difficult to find. Because it's a job that takes rather exact specifications. There were some very bright people who wouldn't have done emotionally. And then there were people who were perfectly fine and stable emotionally who wouldn't have done intellectually. And it's very hard to find.

PC: There must be a great deal of social activity involved in it, too, isn't there?

HM: There's not so much activity with the trustees -- no, very little with the trustees. But there's a great deal to do of course with the rest of the staff. And you can't get anywhere unless you are welcome in every office and welcome above all with the man on the floor. You've got to be liked by all the people who might help you. It's terribly important. And the most of the work is done by women, as it is in every museum. But women almost never get to the top.

PC: Why is that?

HM: I don't know. They do in Russia. They do in Italy.

PC: Oh, really?

HM: They rarely do in France, because, although Frenchmen are very polite to them and kiss their hands, they will not let them have any overt power. So that if a woman wants to run things in France, she runs the man who runs things.

PC: Of course in Spain it's just the same.

HM: Yes.

PC: In England.

HM: England is difficult for women, too. But we are very unjust to them. I must say that the few women who have got to the top often act more tyrannically than men do. That can be. Not always. Women have done wonderfully: Belle Greene of the Morgan Library. Juliana Force at the Whitney. Lisa Richter who is head of the Classical Department at the Metropolitan. They are all just great women who ran things extremely well. But they were exceptional. They're very exceptional. Juliana Force was a great woman. Marvelous.

PC: Did you know her?

HM: Yes, I did. I knew her quite well because we were on a long jury together. Some publisher or other, I forget which one, had an idea they wanted to get out a book with several hundred color plates of American paintings. Well, the project was so ambitious it, of course, came to nothing at all. But Dorothy Miller, and Juliana, and Jack Baur, and I met intermittently for the better part of a year discussing this. She was a perfectly wonderful woman. Just bright; hideous (she was ugly as a mud fence); a bright and wonderful woman. And she got cancer, turned yellow, was told that she was going to die, but then you're never sure. My wife had cancer, too, and I was told she was going to die; and she didn't. I remember going around to the hospital to see poor Juliana and told her this to give her a little hope and it was just pathetic how she gasped at that straw. Well, the last meeting of this committee she was then very close to dying indeed and everybody knew it. She said, however, that she'd come. This meeting was in some publisher's office, some ratty little old office with a harsh ceiling light, top light. And we all gathered and she wasn't there and she didn't come and she didn't come and she didn't come. Finally, half an hour late, the door swung open and there she was, dressed in electric blue with a hat of electric blue plumes and all her war paint on and her wit and her courage and her dominance absolutely unimpaired. Oh, it just rocked one back on one's heels to see this happen. Because this was the last gasp. She was dead in about a week. It's curious, I went to her funeral. She was buried at the same time as Henry Kent, the same morning. Henry Kent was buried from the Brick Church and there were just a few polite Metropolitan Museum trustees. Then Juliana was buried in the Church of the Resurrection down on Fifth Avenue at Tenth Street. It was filled with artists. One had a book, a notebook, and was writing in it all the time. One family of two painters had come with their little baby strapped to the husband's back and of course the baby began to mewl and fume and cry and had to be taken out. But it was touching, you know, people came because they had loved Juliana and wanted to say goodbye to her. A wonderful woman.

PC: That's fascinating. She was very active and did a great deal.

HM: Yes. She reorganized that thing. And of course the Whitney was charming when it was in those two old brownstone houses on Eighth Street. And she upholstered it in Belter furniture when nobody was using Belter furniture. And it was all very feminine and right, absolutely right.

PC: I'm just crossing off some of these things here. You belong to the Grolier Club, don't you?

HM: Yes.

PC: Have you been active there or a member very long?

HM: Yes. I've been a member, let me see, back perhaps in 1940 or so. Ivins had been president of the Grolier Club. He was an old, old, old, member. And Philip Hofer was in the Museum. And Ivins and Philip and I were leaving and as we were going down the big steps to Fifth Avenue on a warm day or evening -- Ivins was in the middle -- and Philip talked across him and said to me, "Hyatt, you ought to be a member of the Grolier." And before I could say anything, Ivins said, "No, no, no, he has to support a wife and children. No. Absolutely not." He wasn't going to have any competition; none. I think I finally . . . Sinclair Hamilton proposed me and I think I became a member before he retired; but I'm not sure. It was around 1946 and I really can't quite remember. And I was quite active there for a while. I was on the council for a while. And men had been on the council, which made a kind of club within the club, some of them for twenty years.

PC: And those marvelous reports they write, highly stylized language.

HM: That's right. So I did something furiously tactful. After I'd been on three or four years (these administrative things bore me, I'm not interested in them really) I said that I ought to retire because I'd been on for *three* or *four* years and I had therefore given all the ideas that were in me to give and I really should make way for fresh blood. Well, this of course struck to the heart and those old people have never forgiven me and I've never been asked back on the council and never will be. It did no good at all. None of them resigned. But I'm on their committee of publications and their committee of exhibitions. That's fun. That interests me.

PC: They do lots of interesting things.

HM: Oh, yes. They have four shows a year: very, very good ones. And sometimes marvelous talks; sometimes terribly dull. But many of the shows are really remarkable shows.

PC: I haven't seen one for quite a while.

HM: Well, at the moment they're showing the treasures of the Antiquarian Society in Worcester.

PC: Oh, really!

HM: Which is, as you know, one of the great, great American libraries.

PC: Unbelievable. I've worked up there and it's just fantastic.

HM: Well, their best stuff is there and you can see it. Wonderful stuff. Just wonderful stuff.

PC: Incredible to find these things from 1750. It goes on and on and on. It's fabulous.

HM: Yes. There are great things there.

PC: Do you belong to any other clubs or things like that?

HM: The Century. They asked me there a long time ago -- Bob Hale was on the Stim Committee -- and they wanted to Stim me into joining. I'm not very clubable. And I didn't want to offend him. But I told him, I used the old ploy that Ivins had used for me: I said, "No, I have to support my children, I can't afford it right now." Then finally the doggone old children began to support themselves and I had no leg to stand on. And I joined. And I'm on the admissions committee and the exhibitions committee but otherwise I would never go into the building. After all, what has it got for me? My club is the Metropolitan Museum. And if I can go there to lunch and lunch with my old cronies that's all the clubability I need.

PC: I always get the feeling the Century sort of stopped about twenty-five or thirty years ago.

HM: Yes, that's true. It's enamored of its own wit.

PC: And they don't bring in new life.

HM: Right now there's an exhibition on of Ralston Crawford.

PC: That's kind of modern.

HM: Well, they were astonished. Oh, this was really action painting with a vengeance. It is a pretty show, but you can't exactly call it the forefront of painting nowadays. I mean it's the charming academy of today.

PC: Yes. It's always interested me the artists who join things like the Century and some of the older clubs. I mean you don't see de Kooning or Rothko or David Smith belonging to any of these things.

HM: Exactly. That's right. And of course in the old days Childe Hassam, Pennell, everybody belonged.

PC: Well, it was a smaller group.

HM: Now it doesn't matter.

PC: Of course the newer painters I don't think are as social as the other ones were.

HM: Yes. Exactly. And then the Club understandably wouldn't like them as people because they're raw, rough, satirical, not witty. And I think this blitz probably started when Edwin Dickinson joined years ago. An artist member has the choice of either paying the initiation fee or giving a work of art, a painting or something he's made himself. So Edwin Dickinson sent in a painting, a landscape. The art committee thought that it really didn't have enough paint on it and returned it to him. So he resigned.

PC: Unbelievable!

HM: Unbelievable! That happened.

PC: When was that, I wonder?

HM: I don't know when that would be. Perhaps ten years ago. Of course I don't know really why he joined. He was silly to join because he's the least sociable of men.

PC: That's fantastic. "Dear Sir, your painting is not finished. Put some more paint on it." Oh, boy! I can see if they had done something like that to David Smith they'd have a rock thrown in the window.

HM: Exactly.

PC: Really, that's incredible.

HM: I like that.

PC: Do you know actually there are a whole group of other questions I would like to do but I think there's only about six or eight minutes left on the tape and, if we could, I'd like to do one more to kind of wind it up.

HM: Surely. I don't know how much more I have to say actually. It seems to me I've talked myself out really.

PC: Well, anyway let me stop here.

[BREAK IN TAPE]

PC: Reel 3. This is May 5. Well, let's talk about your aunt here for a bit, Anna Hyatt Huntington. And you really have known her all of your life and it sounds like she's been a great friend all the way through.

HM: Yes. That's absolutely correct. Yes, indeed.

PC: Was she a great influence in your going into the museum world? Or your interest in art? How would you describe her?

HM: Yes, certainly. Oh, she was an enormous influence on my life because -- let me see -- well, she was a younger sister of my mother's; my mother started sculpture before Aunt Anna did and led Aunt Anna into it. Mother continued sculpture as far as she could with all the duties and distractions of marriage and bringing up children. And of course Aunt Anna then made a profession of it and devoted her entire time and life to it. Aunt Anna always spent her summers with us in Annisquam outside of Gloucester, Massachusetts where she had a studio. There she modeled the Joan of Arc. The figure was posed for, the nude figure, that is, by my cousin Clara Hyatt who is now Clara Kent, married H. G. Kent. And then the horse was posed for by the Gloucester Fire Department horse which used to trot down to the studio for its session as a model. And the Fire Department of course was extremely proud of this horse as a model so they would braid red ribbons into his tail and they'd polish his hoofs and currycomb him and he looked just great as he came down there. And, because he was a Gloucester horse, all Gloucester got together and subscribed for a cast of the statue. She let them have it for the cost of the casting. It was mostly the school children. So now that's why there's one of the casts of the Joan of Arc in Gloucester in a very pretty square. As a matter of fact, it looks better there than anywhere else because it's in a small triangular square with little 18th-century houses around it. And it looks just right. And it's on a very pretty pedestal. It's really well-done. So Aunt Anna always spent the summers with us. My grandmother and my mother had an arrangement for reciprocal visits. My grandmother was my mother's guest in winter; my mother was my grandmother's guest in the summer. That was how it was sort of arranged so that each would know who bossed the house at which time. And it worked very well, too. Because the house in Annisquam belonged to my grandmother. Before she died she gave it to me and gave the back of the land (there were seven acres at that time), she gave the back half to my sister, Barbara, who is now Mrs. Money in California. Then she sold that part of the land. But Aunt Anna had a studio there which had been built for a painter called Garrison, built around 1900. And it was a very good studio for a painter because it had large doors through which you could wheel huge canvases in and out, a very good north light for a skylight. We lived in this thing for eighteen years while we rented the big house. We moved back into the big house only last summer, as a matter of fact. And it was close to the ground so that one could wheel heavy sculptures in and out. It was an extremely convenient studio. And Aunt Anna did a great deal of work there. We used to pose for her as children also. She was perfectly wonderful. As we grew a little older she would ask us our opinions on what she was working on. And she really meant this seriously. She was not just putting on an act and being agreeable. She wanted to know how the composition and so forth struck us, even as children.

PC: How did she work? Because I know there are bronzes and stone things of hers that . . . Did she work in wax or clay?

HM: She worked a bit in wax. She used to work in wax in the evenings, made little things like seals, made little animals, and small figurines, say, four or five inches high. Those she would do in the evenings with hot tools and red wax. And those were cast solid in *cire perdue* which is of course a very simple way of casting. Then of course her big things she would model in oil clay which would then be cast, enlarged with a pointing machine to three-quarter size, reworked in that size, enlarged again and cast in plaster, then reworked a little bit in the plaster and then finally cast in bronze in the sand casting process. All very, very complicated. Extremely difficult to do now. There's only one enlarger working in this country now.

PC: Really!

HM: Who has two pointing machines. He's in Connecticut. And of course everybody queues up to get their things enlarged by him. And there's only one plaster caster who is now about sixty and has a lame arm. So that all that kind of figurative sculpture is just not possible to do any longer.

PC: The craftsmen are gone.

HM: Yes, the craftsmen are gone. All the supporting craftsmen. That is why, I think, sculptors have gone in for styrofoam and welding simply because that's the only thing you can do with the detectable resources today.

PC: That's amazing. I didn't know there was such a lack of . . . I know the foundries have been having trouble.

HM: Yes. Roman Bronze still goes on in Long Island City. But they will not do any complicated castings. They just refuse them. So the complicated castings have to be done in Rome, Naples, Madrid, or Paris, where they have very good foundries. They have very good foundries in Madrid, curiously enough.

PC: Oh, really.

HM: Where they've done work extremely inexpensively, and very complicated work, too.

PC: They may get a lot more work because prices have just gone up and up.

HM: I think so, yes. And many sculptors like Walker Hancock, who is our neighbor in the country in the summer, always takes his work to Rome to have it cast. He takes over especially small things. And he ships them over, has them cast there, has his stone work done in Pisa or rather outside Pisa, I mean in the Carrara Mountains up in Massa Carrara or some place like that. Where he's also done a good deal of work in clay. Of course they work in water clay which you have to keep wet. And he practically revolutionized the village there when he introduced them to plastic coverings for water clay statues. Otherwise you have to wrap them in wet cloths and, if you leave them over the weekend, you've got to come in on Sunday morning and rewet the cloths and that kind of thing. Whereas, if you cover them up in plastic, you just can leave them for quite a long time and they won't dry out.

PC: That's terrific. Du Pont wins again.

HM: Exactly. That's right. Well, Aunt Anna was actually wonderful to me. And she was always sort of the court of appeals in the family. She was the one who loved us without ever getting involved. She was a great trainer of horses and dogs. And she took her nieces and nephews as though they were horses and dogs; just exactly the way children want to be taken, you know: impersonal, loving, kind, strict, and predictable. She was absolutely the greatest person in the world. She was the great person in my childhood, she really was. She and my grandmother. And she was marvelous to me when I was an adolescent at Princeton in high school there. Her Christmas present to me was an invitation to spend my Christmas vacation in her studio in New York on Twelfth Street where I parked out on a couch among all the easels and the turntables and the clay. And she got tickets in the top balcony for all the current plays. How she managed to do all that, take me around to these plays when she was working a busy schedule, I don't know. She hadn't much money. But that was her Christmas present and it was the best Christmas present that I've ever had in my whole life. Oh! She was wonderful. So I'd spend my days at the Metropolitan Museum, or Cooper Union, or places like that; and in the evening we would go and see all the plays there were. And in those days that meant the Moscow Art Theatre, the Provincetown Players with Eugene O'Neill's original productions, and things that have become absolutely historic.

PC: All the classics.

HM: All the classics. And I remember very well seeing the Moscow Art Theatre and *The Cherry Orchard* with Stanislavsky and Nepochekova playing the leading parts with Maria Ouspenskaya playing the German governess. It was an astonishing production. Very different from the current Moscow Art Theatre productions, the Soviet ones, which came here a couple of years ago. Curiously enough, nobody commented on the change. Which is very, very interesting.

PC: Really? Maybe nobody observed.

HM: Nobody probably was so old as I to remember what it had been in the Twenties. I don't know. But certainly it's an entirely different production. All slanted for the Soviet line.

PC: Really?

HM: Which is curious. Because the Moscow Art Theatre on the whole has resisted politics. But Nepochekova played Madam Renefsky as somebody tender, warm, and profoundly silly, but immensely likeable; just playing a great, lovable, Russian fool; that's what she was. And I remember very well when she and Stanislavsky squeezed into her chair as though they were little children, brother and sister, and while the financial difficulties were being explained to them by Lopatin, she was looking at her diamond rings and cleaning the diamonds with her

lace handkerchief. A marvelous touch, which was dropped out. Whereas the woman who played Yubov in the Soviet production that came here was hard, domineering, exact, jumping commands. And the difference was extremely apparent in that outdoor set. The old outdoor set in Stanislavsky's Company was a perfectly absurd piece of stage scenery. It was a backdrop painted with fields, flies and teasers also painted with the most ridiculous fields you ever saw. On the bare board floor there was a pile of hay. And when the curtain rose on this you could not . . . you know, it was one of those utterly improbable road company sets. But when Nepochekova came in, she came in very slowly, drifted in like a summer breeze, all dressed in an enormous white pique dress with eyelet holes, a great big white lace hat, and an enormous white parasol of lace. And it was like a summer cloud moving in and settling on this haystack. Summer came in with her and you believed the whole thing. When the Soviet actress came in she had a very good set indeed, painted with all the latest tricks of illusion. It was extremely well done with levels and all kinds of things, and a small broken down church in the distance. And you could believe it a Russian landscape. But she came in in bright Schiaparelli pink with a furled parasol like a cane which had a sharp point. She emphasized all her lines by digging the sharp point and rapping the floor boards with it. And she was a small, brittle tyrant. Very interesting. And Loparkin was absolutely changed also. Loparkin in the old production was a great, messy rowdy Russian "*arriviste muzhik*," got drunk, was bumptious and disagreeable, but also somehow human and likeable. The Loparkin in the Soviet production was noble, grave, reserved, dressed in a long overcoat like bronze statues of Lenin, always looking on the horizon to the future; in fact really a parody of what Chekhov meant. It was very, very interesting. The one thing in which I think the Soviet production was better in was in the attitude of the young people toward the house. And they left the house toward a new life with no regrets, the world lay all before them and Providence their guide. And that you didn't feel in the old production. There they played up very much the nostalgia. And when they boarded up the windows and Fierce lies dying on the couch and they begin to chop down the cherry trees, it was really an extraordinary moment. And also of course Stanislavsky had that famous exit which was much more effective than what was done now. He had a very tall, high starched collar and, when he left the house for the last time, he sank his neck into the collar so as to make his face flush while he took a handkerchief and gradually crept it up over his face and went out that way. It was extremely effective. Just a trick, but extraordinarily effective, wonderfully effective. It was very, very interesting. Well, I owe that memory to Aunt Anna who gave me that durable present which will be with me as long as I live.

PC: Well, this was all before you were at the Museum -- correct?

HM: Yes, that's right.

PC: Was she involved with you when you joined the Museum, or in the decision to go to the Met?

HM: No, not at all. Did I say why I went to the Museum? No, I don't think I did, did I?

PC: No, as a matter of fact.

HM: Well, that was a very curious thing. You see I met my wife in Annisquam in 1930. Her father had died quite recently (he was a nose and throat surgeon in St. Louis), her mother had hired a house near us in Annisquam. And we met there. Then the next summer I proposed to her and we agreed to get married. But that was the autumn of 1931 and the Depression was scraping along on its rock bottom. So all that winter I took myself around to the various universities on the Eastern Coast and they simply said "throw that man out, he breaks my heart." Even though, of course, I had many introductions and knew a lot of people. But they simply were not hiring anybody. Finally, my brother was on the advertising staff of *Fortune* magazine at that time. He suggested that I go around and see some of their people there. I went to see, I've forgotten his name now, who was very high up in *Fortune* (no, he's gone), who said that what I should do was write sample article; what would I like to write about? So I looked out over the City from the 30th floor of the Singer Building, or wherever it was, there was the Metropolitan Museum in Central Park in the hazy distance. And I said all right, I'll write about the Metropolitan Museum. The only person I knew there was Allan Priest, Curator of Far Eastern Art, whom I knew slightly and whom I knew to be very indiscreet. So I went around and said, "Would you be so kind as to be indiscreet?" Of course he clammed up right away naturally. He said, "I'll take you to somebody who'll fill you with dynamite pills." And he took me to William Ivins who was this tall, strange man; very strange I thought he was at the time. And I laid my cards right straight on the table. I told him exactly that I wanted to get married, I had to have a job that paid, I had to do a sample article for *Fortune*; would he help me? And he couldn't have been nicer. He liked that honesty and that total revelation of exactly why I was there. I took a while to write the article. *Fortune* didn't like it; they didn't want it. They told me that they didn't want that subject for their magazine. I suppose they really didn't like the way I wrote it; I don't know. At any rate I was turned down. About two or three weeks later Ivins sent word to me that I should come and see him. I came to see him in the morning with nothing but this article in my mind. I thought maybe he had something extra to tell me or something of the kind. He said, "Would you like to come and work for me?" I was totally taken aback, absolutely taken aback. And I couldn't say a thing. And he said, "All right, if you don't want to, go." And I said, "W-w-wait, wait, give me a week to think it over." I telephoned my wife who was then working in the Children's Hospital in Boston as a biochemical technician. We had a long talk over the telephone and agreed that I should certainly take it. I did. I

entered into my work in October of 1932 (we had been married the previous June (1932) and spent our honeymoon abroad for the summer). And that's how I got into the Metropolitan Museum. Just fell in head over heels backward without the least inkling of what I was getting in for or headed for or anything. I simply knew I wanted to get married and this was the way. And really it was the best thing that ever could have happened to me. Although if I had not been married I certainly would have flounced out in a temper a good many times. I couldn't afford to do so, I'm happy to say, when I had to pay for diapers and Pablum and then schools. You could eat an awful lot of crow under those circumstances. And I did for fourteen years. And it was a very good thing actually. A very, very good thing. It couldn't have been better. One never knows what is lucky in this world. You just never know. You know, the person you meet on the corner, the telephone call you didn't hear, those are things that change your life, as you find ten years afterwards.

PC: It's amazing. Well, what did your aunt think of you going to the Metropolitan?

HM: She took it completely in her stride. I think she thought it, one might say, inevitable. It didn't surprise her, that's sure. Not a bit. She, at that time of course, was married to Uncle Archer, to Archer Huntington, and he was delighted; he thought that was perfectly fine. Oh, he couldn't have been nicer. Oh, yes.

PC: Did she have much influence or interest in your career, or was it just a family kind of relationship?

HM: It was entirely a family relationship. But of course it was the greatest help in the world to be brought up as a small boy in a practicing artist's studio, in a busy artist's studio. Because it makes the creation of works of art both more mysterious and less mysterious.

PC: More accessible, yes.

HM: More accessible. So that there seems to be nothing arcane in works of art in a sense. Of course obviously the inspiration that goes behind great works of art is always something impenetrable naturally. And the more mysterious the more you look into it. But the making of them and some of the mechanics and some of the reasons for it all of course were perfectly clear to me as a small boy. I simply absorbed that as I absorbed the English language. Which is an immense help.

PC: It makes a difference.

HM: Oh, it makes all the difference in the world. Oh, yes, I owe a very great deal to that.

PC: So it was really the studio experiences with her that are extremely memorable?

HM: Yes. And then also the example of somebody who is so concentrated, who accomplishes so much, who uses every single minute of her time. That was of immense value. It was valuable even to see the way when she came in from paying a call or something like that she would at once take off her good clothes, hang them up neatly, and put on her work clothes. Even a small example like that was valuable for a child. It was valuable to see her typing. She typed just with the two forefingers but with such rapidity and such concentration that that again was the object lesson which was valuable for a child. And I think I owe practically all of my work habits to watching her.

PC: Just work, work, work.

HM: Just work, work, work. And then play hard, forget about it. And then go back and work hard and forget the play. That is what she's done all her life and that's how she's been able to turn out an absolutely fantastic amount of work.

PC: It must be enormous.

HM: A fantastic amount of work. She doesn't rework very much. She thinks it all out I suppose in her sleep, I don't know. But she really makes her revisions before she attacks the clay more or less.

PC: Did she make sketches or things like that?

HM: Never drew; hardly ever drew. I remember her drawing a leopard, I think it was, once and that's the only time I ever saw her touch a pencil. All in the round; she works entirely in the round.

PC: Right directly with the material?

HM: Yes. And an immense graphic memory. When she was young she used to work a great deal in the Bronx Zoo. And up there she did a pair of jaguars climbing down tree trunks, which are in the Metropolitan Museum. One cast of it is there, and there are other casts elsewhere. These things are in different positions but they're climbing down as though they're cats through these big thick tree trunks. To do that she got there early in the

morning, set up her modeling stand, and she was a great friend of the Zoo keepers (of course they all liked her very much indeed), she was there before the jaguars were fed. The keeper would throw in a piece of meat for them, they would be on their high shelves sleeping the way all these arboreal animals do (they sleep high), and they would then start to go over the shelf, to flow over the shelf, to jump down. And, as they'd half flowed over the shelf, the keeper would hold up a broom and he'd say, "Whoo!" and they would stop instantly that long and from that instant she worked the entire day. Oh, a graphic memory equal to none.

PC: That is fantastic. Like a camera.

HM: Yes, like a camera.

PC: Click and there it was.

HM: Yes. She had her own camera apparatus built in her eye. And of course she had great difficulties there. I know once she was in the elephant house and the elephant somehow got annoyed with her and he blocked her exit. And he was really getting very nasty indeed. She had in her pocket I think nothing to feed him, but as I remember the story I think she had some peanut shells with no peanuts in them. So she took these in her hand, held them out to the elephant who took them in his proboscis and, before he'd get them to his mouth and find out they were just shells, she was out of the door and didn't go back again. Another time she was in the camel house and the camel got annoyed with her and regurgitated his dinner all over her, which was full of very sticky spittle. And that suit of clothes had to be thrown away. There was nothing to do with it. she came home a real mess.

PC: Did she travel a great deal?

HM: No. Very little. She spent a couple of winters in Paris. I think it was around, let me see, she was there of course the time we were in Auber-sur-Oise, which was in the summer of 1908 or 1909, I forget which. She was there for the great floods; would that have been 1911? -- I can't remember when the great Paris flood was, I mean the really spectacular flood when really a great deal of the city was inundated. I remember her description of that in her letters. She wrote a great many letters home, very interesting ones indeed. And we gave them all to Syracuse University. She had given her Papers to Syracuse and I found what there was of her letters to my grandmother, and my grandmother's to her, in the attic in Annisquam. I sent them up so that all her correspondence is there at Syracuse. I think it's probably rather difficult for people to consult; I don't think it's been put in order for people to use, but it will be some day. It might perhaps have been more accessible in the Archives of American Art but she had already started to put her stuff there and I thought it ought to go all in one place.

PC: Oh, yes.

HM: And I persuaded my cousin Clara Hyatt to send her mother's letters also so everything about Aunt Anna is in one place.

PC: She still works?

HM: She still works. She's ninety-three. We saw her yesterday. Wonderful. She's just the same wonderful Aunt Anna. Of course she has her better days and her worse days. And yesterday was a day when she was completely her old self, remembering everything, bright, brisk, jolly. intelligent, concentrated, charming, wonderful, wonderful.

PC: She lives in Connecticut now?

HM: She lives in Bethel, Connecticut, yes.

PC: Has she been there long?

HM: She's been there I suppose a matter of fifteen or twenty years. She moved there perhaps ten years before Uncle Archer died. He died in 1955. So she's been there perhaps twenty years rather than fifteen. She built a very nice little studio, very well arranged. It's made of cinder brick with glass brick walls and a good skylight. And excellently-arranged light, a low part in which you stand and back off and see the work, then a high part which has light from the vertical wall, extra additional wall above the ceiling of the low part, which then falls on the part where you can assemble a big statue, a life and a half statue, with a big hoist so that you can hoist things. It's very well-arranged, simple, very practical, very good, really a good working space.

PC: She still works away?

HM: And she still works away. They won't let her climb her fifteen-foot ladders for big figures. So she does little things. But the little things are just as as they were when she was twenty. Oh, she's great. Of course her fingers

never forget. Her mind may forget what happened yesterday (it remembers what happened twenty years ago), but her fingers don't forget at all. She always knows how she's going to do that. I'm told that one's finger memory lasts longer than one's verbal memory -- not verbal memory but memory for events, let's say.

PC: Really? That's interesting. That's fascinating. Well, have there been any other artists that you've had a close relationship with? She's extraordinary because she's a relative.

HM: Yes, she's part of the family. Exactly. Of course I've known a great many artists. Naturally all her friends who used to come and see her and all that. Perhaps the only one I know now at all well is Walter Hancock, the sculptor. We were born on exactly the same day and we live about five miles away from each other in the summer so we always celebrate our joint birthday on June 28 together. Which is very nice. And so we've always been great friends of Walter and his wife and his daughter. They couldn't be nicer people; lovely people. He's a very successful sculptor indeed. Does a great many monuments. And I suppose his speciality, his rather unwilling speciality, has been portraits of recently-deceased important men. And, when one of these commissions comes in, he says, "Oh, another pair of trousers." What is he to do about that? He's very ingenious about it. And he did a statue of MacArthur for West Point last year. And I thought he pulled absolutely wonderful sculptural effects out of a fatigue uniform which, God knows, is not sculptural in itself.

PC: It's pretty dull.

HM: Pretty dull. But he really pulled that off, I thought, very well indeed. So he's always busy. He's one of these very old-fashioned sculptors. Hilton Kramer and those people, of course, wouldn't admit that he's a sculptor at all. But those people will always have their place and will always have work to do, especially when they are not temperamental, when they get their work done on time, when it doesn't cost more than the estimate, and all those things.

PC: Right. Just good craftsmen.

HM: Just good craftsmen. He's an excellent, sound craftsman. Paulanship of course lived down the road a little further in a very pretty house which he moved up from Rockport onto a quarry and with a great enormous barn in which he did the sculpture. And in the garden a very pretty pergola made of huge quarry booms which are enormous logs of -- what would they be? -- some pine trees I suppose, huge, huge logs that made great fat columns and he made a grape arbor out of them by sawing them up. Very pretty indeed. I'd never known Paul very well but of course I knew him casually. I suppose the artist I knew best as a small child was Adelaide Cole Chase who was no relation to William Chase but was a very good portrait painter who had gone to school with my mother and my aunt to the Art Students League here in New York. And she painted all of us. That was also of course a very good thing. She painted a portrait of me when I was about four years old. And she would scrutinize me through her half-closed eyes and she would see something and she would say, "Oh, amusing," and she'd paint away. I never knew what was amusing but some pictorial effect struck her and that was always her rejoinder.

PC: It's amazing you had this whole background that just kind of developed, you know, and there it was.

HM: Yes. There it was. I wish now very much that I had, say, gone to a summer school of painting and drawing. I wouldn't have been any good at it, I don't think, but it would have been nice to try my hand at it. I would have liked it.

PC: But there you were being painted and in studios and everything was going on all around you.

HM: Yes. Yes.

PC: Do you think this was a great influence in your decisions about things to acquire for the Museum or exhibition ideas and all the things that went on in the Museum?

HM: Oh, yes, certainly. It gave me of course an interest not only in flat art but in art in the round. And I think a sculptural sense is somehow rarer than a sense of drawing or painting. At least I think fewer people have it. And that was happily just built into my childhood.

PC: You grew up with it.

HM: I grew up with it. Which is so lucky. And I'm sure that, without that experience as a small boy, I would never have had such a wide interest in the Metropolitan Museum. I really have been sort of interested in more different departments than anybody else there, of any of my curatorial friends.

PC: Oh, really?

HM: They're very funny, they're really very funny. I know that last year Fong Chow, who is head of the Far

Eastern Department, wanted to buy a very beautiful scroll (which the trustees unhappily turned down) of celestial musicians, a sumi scroll about forty feet long, a beautiful thing, wonderful, wonderful. Well, I was fascinated by this thing, fascinated by the way it was drawn. He called in several other curators from other departments, among them Emanuel Winternitz who takes care of the musical instruments, and, when Emanuel Winternitz looked at the musical instruments and had given his report on them, he said, "Is that all?" and went away without looking at the scroll at all. And the others behaved in exactly the same way. They become highly specialized. And I'm happy to say that I was never specialized. One can't be in prints. Because they leak out into everything, into city planning, into the law, into dynastic history, into all the technologies. And it is anything but a speciality. All the other departments in the Metropolitan or in any museum are limited by a medium like painting or armour, or a use like armour, or a period like Greek and Roman, or a culture like the Islamic things. Whereas prints are not limited by any of those things at all.

PC: You have to be a grand eclectic.

HM: Yes. And I always thought that my great virtue at the Metropolitan Museum was that I had a wide ignorance. That's the most important thing I contributed. And, although I never knew very much exactly, I knew where to look it up. And that I think is all that one can be held accountable for nowadays. If I could answer a question by saying, "I will look it up," I thought I was doing very well.

PC: What other departments interested you particularly?

HM: Well, it depended of course on one's personal relationship with the curators. I was always great friends with Jack Phillips who had a great deal to do with Renaissance and modern sculpture and also with the decorative arts in general, but especially sculpture. And Jack would always ask me in to see the things that he was proposing to buy. And we would talk them over at great length. That was enormous fun. Apparently Bryson Burroughs and Ivins always talked over the paintings that Bryson Burroughs was going to propose.

PC: Oh, really?

HM: Always. So that in those days there was a very close relationship between the print department and the painting department. There was no such relationship under Ted Rousseau who, for what reason I don't know, not any antipathy or anything of the kind, only once showed me a painting that he was considering (which was that very beautiful Rubens *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*) which he did not propose to the trustees, I believe, and nowadays is in Detroit, one of the most beautiful Rubens in the country. And he showed me that. We talked it over. But nothing ever helped. And Harry Wehle never showed me anything either. Harry Wehle actually, as I only found out years and years later, was terribly upset when he was looking around for a successor, and Ivins, who was perhaps undone with me at the time, I don't know for what reason, suggested that I be transferred to the paintings department. And that totally horrified Harry. Of course I knew nothing about it until many years later, but I did realize that something had happened, that something curious was up. Strange. I'm glad that transfer did not take place. The curator of paintings in any museum is the most conspicuous person next to the director. He's the person who deals in the most expensive works, in the works that everybody considers their own to judge. When the guards at the front door are asked, "Where is the art?" they point up the main stairs to the painting galleries. That's the art.

PC: Right. And the rest of it is just there.

HM: The rest of it is peripheral.

PC: Well, in the years you were there, the Museum must have changed enormously, through the Depression in the Thirties, and then through the war in the Forties?

HM: Yes. Oh, yes. And the character of the Director of course is changing very much too. Very much indeed. While the Museum is stronger than any director and, in any sort of contest of wills, it's the Director who is broken and not the Museum (that goes for any director at all), nevertheless the director does impose his point of view to a great extent. He has to, naturally; should. Otherwise he's not effective.

PC: I'm curious about just a little bit of history such as the size of the Museum, the number of people. It must be many times

HM: Oh, yes. When I was a boy you paid twenty-five cents to get in on washday and fish days and that meant that you had the place absolutely to yourself. Just a few people gathered together. Which was perhaps a good thing. Because minorities should be considered. Francis Taylor probably sensibly abolished the pay days. They brought in at that time about \$18,000 a year which was of course nothing in our budget. And they kept away a great many people, especially during the Depression. I think he was wise to make it free always. And of course nowadays if one wants to see something in deserted galleries you just go before noon. From ten o'clock to twelve you have practically anything to yourself -- not perhaps the Italian Fresco show -- but even that you could

see at leisure from ten to eleven in the morning. So that the minorities simply have got to get out of bed early, that's all. And I don't think that's a hardship.

PC: No. The hordes of people on Sunday is just staggering.

HM: Yes. It's impossible. You just can't see anything. Like our cities, the crowds have defeated the purpose of living.

PC: What do you think is the purpose of getting those vast numbers of people?

HM: Well, it has two purposes. After all, the purpose with which one has sympathy is the cultural purpose of bringing art to as many people as you can. Whether they go there to keep up with the Joneses, to get out of the rain, doesn't matter. They may be hooked by suddenly seeing something that really talks to them. It doesn't matter why they come in. That's entirely beside the point. The practical and narrow purpose is of course to show City Hall how important this is to the city.

PC: It's used.

HM: And it keeps City Hall making its appropriation which is a very important appropriation. And if they stopped that and if they started charging us for light and heat I don't know what we would do. So that the attendance records are all-important for the annual budget hearings in City Hall. That's the practical purpose. And actually that's a very severe but in the end healthful discipline. And the museums that do not have that discipline usually are remote from the towns that they're in. That is true, for instance, of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts which receives no help from the city at all, which is entirely financed privately, and of course nowadays is doing very badly.

PC: Oh, really?

HM: Oh, yes. They're very short of funds. All private foundations are. But they exist in a world apart from Greater Boston. Beacon Hill goes there and Cambridge goes there. But the South Side does not.

PC: But the trolley stops right there.

HM: The trolley stops right there. It's perfectly accessible. It's more accessible than the Metropolitan is to New York. The only privately-endowed museum that has really managed to become part of the city I think is the Cleveland Museum. Perhaps that's because it runs a very active art school, a school for practicing painters and sculptors. It has classes of school children who bring their little rubber mats and sit on the floor the way they do at the Metropolitan. And William Milliken has always made a particular point of getting in all segments of Cleveland. But that, I think, is the only case I know of a private museum that has really made its mark on the town in general. It's true in a very small way of the Hispanic Society where I also work because there busloads of school children come in and a great many Spanish-speaking children come in from the neighborhood. What reason brings them in one doesn't ask. And it, again, is immaterial, but they do come.

PC: It would be very interesting to find out what they think of that.

HM: It would be fascinating, yes. At the Metropolitan there have been questionnaires put out under Francis Taylor and they found that a great many people, most of the people, were either from out of town or they were resident New Yorkers, repeaters who came often. There were few New Yorkers who came once. It would be interesting to know what this Harlem Show will have done. If that brings in a segment of black New York it will have been worthwhile putting on in spite of all the hullabaloo. The hullabaloo I think was only partly justified. I think it was partly justified because the show really wasn't very well put together. It wasn't put together for moving crowds. And I never saw Arms's other show at the Jewish Museum -- what was it? -- Jewish New York? or East Side? or something like that. I didn't see that. Everybody says that was well done. I don't know. I didn't see it. But the Harlem Show had much too many pictures. It hit you over the head too many times. It suffered I think immensely compared to the similar shows that Steichen put on at the Museum of Modern Art. And there, of course, for *The Family of Man*, Steichen said he looked through half a million photographs. And I can believe it. Spent years. So the result was juxtapositions and progressions that led one on from picture to picture and you kept on exploring. And in the show that he did about this country during the war, I remember there was a narrow corridor in which on the right there was an enormous photomontage of the wheatfields of Kansas stretching out like the ocean. On the left, as I remember, there were the Sequoias reaching up to the fractured sun through the sky. One then came around a narrow door at the end of this small corridor and there on a huge wall was Pearl Harbor blowing up. Of course that really was a great show. That just hit one and kept one going. And that is what should have been done in the Harlem show.

PC: That's fascinating. I didn't see that show.

HM: You didn't see the Harlem Show?

PC: No.

HM: Well, it consisted, I believe, of about six hundred photographs. And where there was a vacant space they would have two small screens with lantern slides that flashed on and you went absolutely crazy. It was the technique of saturation. But finally you were so saturated you were just hit on the head and "let me out; where's the exit?"

PC: I want to go back and do another little chronological thing here. You became Curator in 1946?

HM: Yes.

PC: Was this a great change for you, you know, taking over the department after having been . . . ?

HM: Oh, yes, certainly that is always a great change. Naturally. And it meant that I could run things my own way. I made very, very few changes from what Ivins had done. I tried not to make enemies and sort of manufacture them. That was a certain change. I showed the prints in a somewhat different way. He had always framed prints in dark brown frames which I thought was rather distracting. So I had all the frames bleached so they'd look as near possible like the mats. And that more or less made the frames vanish.

PC: Yes, lightened up the

HM: Lightened up and you put in more prints while it seemed to be less. And then I devised a way of showing prints under Plexiglass sheets that were 30 inches high and 8 feet wide on slanting panels.

PC: Oh, yes, you talked about that.

HM: And that I thought made things more accessible. That has now been abandoned. And John McKendry now shows prints much more, I would say, more stylishly, more artistically in very pretty gold frames usually, or frames tinted some way or other for particular prints. But without explanatory labels and without even the identifying labels; the identifying labels are now on the wall beside the print, which clears the whole mat and makes a print or a photograph look more choice, expensive, more soignée. And that I think certainly has its place in doing things. But I preferred to make things look more informal and be more informative. So that I preferred to write explanatory labels and scatter them every three or four frames or prints around the show. It's just two different ways of doing things. And each person has to find his own.

PC: Did you develop what could be called a basic philosophy of operating a print department?

HM: I would say I probably took it over from Ivins. I don't think I did develop anything. I wouldn't say so, no. What he had done was so brilliant that I saw nothing basic to change in it. A few things naturally one wants to do. One wants to make it easier for people to go into the place. I know that before I went there to work I would see the great oak door in the basement and a sort of swinging "In" sign over that saying "Department of Prints," then a doorbell and a little sign over that saying "Please ring." And I thought oh, not I. Because I had no idea what I would find once I was inside that door. And I wasn't going to let myself in for that embarrassment. So the first thing I did was to cut a little window in the door so people could look in and see what faced them once they had rung the doorbell. And I think that's important. I think people should be able to know what will happen after they've rung that doorbell, or at least have some inkling.

PC: Open the door and be swallowed.

HM: Yes.

PC: Well, they have more exhibition space now than you had.

HM: Oh, yes, much more. We always used to have one show which was a very good show which was called Masterpieces of Printmaking. And that was a show that never changed. It was our permanent pitch. And each print there had a little historical label. And they began from the earliest woodcuts to something of the latest kind running through, say, 75 frames. It was in a skylighted gallery. And some of our best things were included in that show, some of the best Rembrandts and things like that. And it really was not good for them to be under the bright daylight year in and year out. So I took down that show when I took over and we never put it back. I think we probably should have put it back under a kinder light and then changed the fragile things.

PC: Now and then put it up for a year or so and then take it down.

HM: We never had the space to do that. But we had various galleries while I was there and we usually had a gallery for our large informal shows. Then, when the Grace Rainey Rodgers Auditorium was put in, there was a

lobby out of which Egypt had been ousted and it was given to me to put in shows that would interest people in the intermissions of concerts and lectures. So there I put in shows that were easy to look at, that would be amusing. I put in a show of comic strips, for instance, which was little Nemo and Crowley's work which made quite a hit.

PC: An early Pop Art show.

HM: An early Pop Art show, exactly. And it was a fascinating show. All the Little Nemo things were really wonderful. And that was a marvelous show. And that kind of exhibition I put in there.

PC: They were idea exhibitions, weren't they?

HM: They were idea shows. All my shows were idea shows, I would say. They were in a sense visual but not aesthetic if you could make a distinction.

PC: They were didactic kind of

HM: In a way. But I hung things visually. And often, if I wanted to find out what pictures to put together, I would stand them all upside down and then, somehow or other, the cognate patterns would sort themselves out.

PC: That's a new trick. I've never heard that one before.

HM: Oh, yes. One should always look at pictures upside down because then you no longer see the smile on the pretty girl or the gesture or anything like that. And what you are left with is the quality of line, if it's a drawing, the handwriting, pure because it's without significance, it's as though it were abstract, and the way the composition is put together. Then after you've studied the thing upside down you turn it around and study it on its feet and it's a new picture. You see quite different values that you hadn't seen before. I always do that. Always.

PC: But, in the point of organizing an exhibition to hang it, to do that is very interesting.

HM: Yes, it helps. At least I found it helped. It helped *me*, let us say.

PC: That's marvelous. Ivins was at the Museum until when?

HM: Until 1946.

PC: And he left then in 1946?

AM: And he left then; very unfortunately, I think. He didn't want to go at all but he was sixty-five and it was an ironclad rule that one just went automatically. He knew this had to happen. So that, about five years before, he bought a small house in Woodbury, Connecticut. He was not at all a country man; he was a city man, bone and blood. But he forced himself to be interested in tree peonies.

PC: Oh, my!

HM: And he wrote up to Professor Saunders at Clinton and bought tree peonies and planted them and tried to get himself interested in these things.

PC: It takes a thousand years

HM: That's right.

PC: The most difficult thing.

HM: The most difficult thing. And of course these things died on him and he really didn't care about them. Ugh! It was very sad. Then he furnished this house, brought out all their furniture from town and put his money into very handsome French wallpapers which he bought. That was his one luxury. It was a pretty house. And Mrs. Ivins, of course, who was an excellent artist, made it a really charming hosue. But he never should have moved. He should not have changed his habits. He should have stayed in the city. He said he didn't have money to stay in the city. Actually he did. He always talked poor but he did have enough money to do that with his pension. And, had he stayed in the city, he certainly would have been given chances to teach and earn money in various ways in spite of all the enemies that he'd made. But of course there was a new set of people in Woodbury to make enemies of. And he lost no time, alas! He lost no time at all. It was tragic. It should not have happened that way. And it was an awful way to die. Then, when he'd been there about four or five years, Mrs. Ivins fainted one day. A doctor came and examined her and found that she had leukemia and she was dead in two weeks. And that was absolutely catastrophic for poor Bill. Because she had done everything for him. She had absorbed

his rages, she'd arranged his life, she cooked him three-course dinners every day for lunch because that's what he wanted for lunch. This is how one lunched; one did not eat a sandwich. And that meant, of course, giving up her drawing and her painting. And she did. It was a great pity. Yes, indeed.

PC: He must have had a very strident personality.

HM: Oh, yes, enormous. Things had to be He was, as I think I've said before, entirely a lawyer. And he would work out problems exactly the way a lawyer would argue a case, that is, look it all up for the precedents. Once that case had been argued, as it were, he filed it in his mind along with all the legal precedents. When that subject came up out came the entire lawyer's argument. So that he was a fascinating man to listen to if you hadn't heard the lawyer's argument before. But these things did repeat themselves pretty much verbatim. And, if you hung around him for a while, you knew what to expect if any question were put to him by an outsider. Of course one was rather careful not to put that particular question if one was an insider.

PC: That's interesting. Well, they don't have sort of emeritus positions there, do they?

HM: Some people are kept on for special jobs. Gizela Richter was retired and called back to do her book on sculpture, I think it was. Peg Freeman was kept on to write something or other. The only person for whom the rule of retirement had been abrogated is Emanuel Winternitz who was kept on by James Rorimer. He had no successor -- and I don't know what the purpose was. But I would suspect that they wanted to break up the collection or do something absolutely radically different and didn't want a successor with a vested interest in it. I suppose; that's just a guess; I just don't know. At any rate, Winternitz is still there. He's, I suppose, now about seventy. Very active of course and just as bright and good as ever he was. So that was a very good thing he stayed on. He isn't blocking anybody's path and getting anybody's way.

PC: And yet everything is accomplished.

HM: And now he's keeping up the musical collection and reinstating it in basement galleries where I think it will look very well. They're putting it in right now.

PC: Were the recent directors good in your department? Or did they carry on sort of the Taylor tradition?

HM: Yes and no. Of course Francis always said it was the Museum's trash basket. That was just to tease me. That was all right. Provided the things were bought for my department, I didn't care what he called it. They were different to all of us in a different way. They both believed in the maxim of divide and rule. James Rorimer practiced it in the classic way in which you have to be extremely skillful. That is to say, to make a fight with B; you have to be awfully clever to do that, cleverer than he was. Because if you're not very clever, A and B find out what's up and become better friends than before. James tried to make me fight once with the display department, with Stuart Silver, and Stuart and I found out rapidly what the pitch was and we've been the greatest friends ever since. Francis Taylor was much cleverer. He believed in divide and rule by dividing a man against himself.

PC: Oh, that's very skillful.

HM: Very skillful. And he was enormously intuitive and very clever at it. He would say, "Were we right in that decision, do you think?" "Were we wise to have done thus and so?" And he wrote the most wonderful poison pen letters. He wrote one to Christine Alexander which I've forgotten utterly. But I remember admiring the psychological skill of it. And he wrote one to me, which I showed her because she got hers first, which is somewhere in the files of the Museum because I wasn't going to throw that away. He wrote it by hand on a small piece of paper, on the smallest, most intimate, friendliest kind of Museum stationery. And he said, "Dear Hyatt, in your own interest I suggest (this came to me, say, three or four years after I'd taken over as full curator) that you get a New York print dealer to appraise the purchases that you've made since you became curator and submit to the trustees a list of these appraisals with the prices that you paid ." In other words, insinuating that I had forfeited the confidence of the trustees, that there was going to be a showdown, that I had better anticipate it by proving myself innocent. Well, of course I did nothing of the kind. I never answered him. He never mentioned it. And it was simply a seed dropped to see how much of me he could destroy by that little insinuation. He was very clever. He really was bright.

PC: I know the book he wrote on *Collectors and Collecting* just floored me.

HM: I never read it.

PC: Very charming and just full of little darts here and there.

HM: Yes. I have read pieces of it. Yes, indeed, it was read to me, the thing in which he quoted that letter of Roger Fry about Morgan, that really frightful discussion of J. P. Morgan and his mistress. And Francis's comment

was that it was a second-class Englishman talking about a first-class American. Well, that simply was not true. Roger Fry was not a second-class Englishman. He was bitter; he was Bloomsbury; he was intransigent and all those things, but he was not second-class. And I sort of doubt if Mr. Morgan was absolutely first-class; I sort of doubt that, you see. But it was the kind of quip that he could pull off that would perhaps distort a situation but make it unforgettable.

PC: He seemed to have a great flair for certain things.

HM: Oh, wit! A marvelous wit! And one always listened for what he would say about any given situation. Oh, he was great! And he would say "Kunstgeschichtist Horsegeschicht." That was one of his favorite things to say. He was extraordinarily funny. I loved him for those things. And of course he *did* these wonderful things, too. Did I tell you about his calling on the American Ambassador in Rome?

PC: No.

HM: Well, he went to call on the Ambassador in Rome once when he was there, a call of courtesy. I forget who was our Ambassador there. He went into the Embassy on the Via Veneto, waited a while outside, was shown in. The Ambassador was at his desk writing and he wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote, while Francis stood in front of him. He threw down his pen and said, "Well, what do you want?" And Francis said, "Mr. Ambassador, I came to pay a call of courtesy but since that requires two, I will go." That's the kind of thing you wish you had said but who of us has the quickness of mind and the courage to say it. And they told me that he did the same thing once when he was working in the Philadelphia Museum as a young man. At that time the Philadelphia Museum had bought a cloister in pink and white stone from the South of France, very like the Kuksa Cloister, the big one at The Cloisters uptown here. And somehow in these purchases the central font of the Kuksa Cloister in pink and white stone had got to Philadelphia, and we at the Metropolitan had bought a font I think from that region, although I'm not sure it was the Philadelphia cloister one or not. At any rate, they were quite similar and they were made of the same stone. Fiske Kimball, who was then running the Philadelphia Museum thought it would really be nicer, before these two cloisters were installed, to exchange the fonts. He wrote to that effect to Blashford Dean who was then the acting director at the Metropolitan, and sent Francis Taylor to arrange the details. Francis was then shown into Dean's office with this prearranged appointment, and Dean knew why it was called and everything else. Francis arrived on time, was told to wait in the outer office. Over Dean's door there was a transom half open and in the reflection Francis could see Dean at his desk with the *Times* in front of him and he read the *Times*, read the first page, the second page, the third page, the fourth page; for ten minutes. Finally he put the paper away carefully, folded it up, nodded to somebody, and Francis was let in. And Francis said, "Mr. Dean, I came to arrange for the exchange of these two fonts but since the *New York Times* seems to interest you more than the exchange I think I will say no." And went back to Philadelphia. And that's why the fonts are still mixed up.

PC: Oh, my, he really made his point.

HM: And he was a great horse trader. The first time I ever met him was when he was director at Worcester. At that time we were getting together our show for the World's Fair. It was the spring of 1939 and I was sent out to get these various pictures.

PC: Oh, yes, and the traveling around that you did. Right.

HM: Right. And Worcester has perhaps the most amusing of all the American primitive paintings which is of *Mrs. Feake and her Daughter Mary* in very bright colors. And a very pretty picture indeed, about 1700. And the daughter Mary looks like a little ventriloquist's doll. Well, we wanted this very much indeed. It's really the brightest and prettiest picture of that period. So I was delegated to ask Francis if he would lend it. I was shown into his office. And he was rather interested in me, obviously, and was sort of interested in the whole thing. And he said, well, it was on loan to the Worcester Museum but he knew the owners very well and they would do exactly whatever he said to them, so there was no use in the Metropolitan Museum going to them direct; the only way to do it was through him; and he would consent to persuade the owners to lend it *if* the Metropolitan would lend to his Flemish show which he was gathering together the Van Eyck painting of *The Last Judgment* and *The Crucifixion* and some other great early thing we have, and I've forgotten what it was, maybe it was the Altman Memling or something rather spectacular. In other words, he was wanting to swap Man o' War for a cab horse. And I with complete seriousness said I would relay this proposal at home. And naturally nobody at the Metropolitan Museum had the least interest in the exchange. So we didn't get *Mrs. Feake* and he didn't get the Van Eyck. He always believed in trying a horse trade like that.

PC: You must have had a great deal of this sort of thing with the various museums because the Metropolitan has lent a great deal to other museums.

HM: Oh, yes. And I think that's fine. I think that's absolutely fine. I'm sorry that we didn't buy the Rembrandt *Aristotle* jointly with Cleveland. That would have been a very good thing.

PC: So it would go back and forth?

HM: Back and forth. And if one could have had it in alternate years in each place, you know, the word would have got around in Cleveland, "Oh, the Rembrandt is back." It would have got around here the same. People would have looked at it. It would have been a much better idea. If we bought it jointly, we could have bought it for a great deal less -- maybe not a great deal less -- but a bit less. There were other bidders that went up to, I suppose, nearly two million. But it wouldn't have been quite two million three. And I think it would have been a wonderful stroke of a new policy of collaboration instead of competition.

PC: Do you think that will ever happen as the prices get higher and higher and higher?

HM: Yes, I do. It's got to happen. Some day it's got to happen. It's absolutely got to happen.

PC: \$5,000,000 for a da Vinci just can't go on.

HM: Yes, it has to happen. It just can't go on. But of course Cleveland would certainly not have wanted to play because he was from there and he wanted to show his independence here. But nevertheless it would have been a good idea.

PC: How many directors did you work with there?

HM: I came when -- what's his name? -- Just after Robinson died I came. I came in 1932. Robinson might have been dead a couple of years then. And Herbert Winlock was the director. Then when he failed -- it was some time before he died -- but he really broke up unfortunately, the poor man. He had it rather difficult there, poor thing. I was very fond of him. Ivins took over in what was known as the reign of Ivan the Terrible. He was bitterly disappointed when he wasn't confirmed as director, bitterly disappointed, poor man. I think that broke him really. And Francis Taylor was put in instead. And then, when Francis left for Worcester, James Rorimer was put in and stayed until he died.

PC: Taylor was there for a long time though, wasn't he?

HM: Taylor was there for ten or twelve years, something like that.

PC: And then Rorimer was there for a while, Too?

HM: Yes. But it was a great pity that Ivins couldn't have got people's loyalty because he had excellent ideas, admirable ideas.

PC: But he always rubbed them the wrong way with the ideas.

HM: Always rubbed them the wrong way. And unfortunately when he argued with you and you began to yield and see his point of view, instead of then lying back and letting you come around on your own steam, he then redoubled his pressure.

PC: Just rode right over.

HM: Just rode right over. And of course forced you to resist; you could not help resisting. He was psychologically about as inept as a man could be. Intellectually he was brilliant.

PC: We haven't talked about any of the things that went on, oh, in the last half a dozen years that you were at the Museum. Were there any special things that stand out in your mind about those years? Other than the growth of the Museum, or the acquisitions increased greatly, you know, special projects or programs that you were able to do?

HM: Well, it became of course more and more active naturally in those years. And what I did notice very much was a much closer relationship with the public, which I always liked very much. And it was the feeling that more and more of New York was coming in of all kinds of people, a much livelier contact with a much larger, more varied public. And also one thing that happened toward the end was that the staff was sent abroad a great deal more. Now that's enormous. Yesterday John McKendry went to London to see the Rembrandt Show at the British Museum. That would never have happened while I was curator. One would have to put in a request to the trustees several months beforehand and then *maybe* you'd be allowed to go, a little bit because both Francis Taylor and James Rorimer liked to keep the staff on rather short ropes. They didn't like them to be too independent. But Hoving is very different. And Hoving treats the staff a great deal more as though they were a university staff, they have long vacations and travel periods. It's very interesting. I think it's going to have excellent results. I think it's very, very good.

PC: I wonder how much longer he's going to survive the battle?

HM: I don't know. And of course as with all things the expenses mount with this mounting activity. And exactly how the bills for the Centenary that's coming up will be paid I have not the slightest idea.

PC: Well, there's that committee of a thousand people each giving \$1,000 and then there's a corporation.

HM: Yes, exactly. That works, yes. And I don't know what they're going to have for shows. They're going to have a big Degas show in the autumn of course. After that they'll have

PC: There's an American Art show.

HM: The Centenary Show will be given, an American Art Show. And then there's going to be some sort of staggering masterpiece show but I'm not sure if that has gone through. And I daresay that Malraux's resignation will have a great deal to do with that because the French curators will be in charge now and not M. le Ministre. So that the dictates of M. le Ministre were what got the *Mona Lisa* over here, not certainly anybody in the Louvre. But Malraux is terribly bright. I was told that, when they did the big Poussin show about five years ago at the Louvre, he came in to a private preview. They gave him a catalogue which he put under his arm without opening it; he looked around the show, and he looked at a picture hanging up near the ceiling and he said, "Well, if I hadn't seen that in this show I would have thought it was a copy." And it was a copy. They sat up and took notice then. I mean he writes as though he were an *homme de lettres* who never really looked at a picture but actually of course he has. He's much brighter than he seems, not only in words.

PC: Obviously. Otherwise he wouldn't be there.

HM: Yes. But of course what he wanted went. And I think there will be nobody with that authority in the Ministry, in the Beaux-Arts, just as there will be nobody with that authority in the post of the president. So it's going to be very different. And I don't know what that will do to our show.

PC: Are you involved with any exhibition for that Centennial?

HM: No, not at all. My only part in the Centennial is this history of the graphic arts that I'm trying to write and which I hope to bring out before 1970 is over. The writing is now about finished. I've been now about five or six years at it and the writing is practically finished. Leon Wilson, who is the editor, has gone over it for its second, most severe editing; he's done about something like third, pretty near a third or a half of that. A wonderful editor. A marvelous man. He gives me all sorts of marvelous ideas. He's great. Because he will object to the syntax, the arrangement. And, when I come to examine the syntax and the arrangement, it isn't that at all; it's that I haven't thought something through. It's a good deal more basic.

PC: A subtle way of doing it.

HM: Yes.

PC: Let's see, one could go on forever I guess talking about all the people. What are the things that you think of as the most exciting and the most important activities you were involved with?

PC: Well, the two things that I enjoyed were putting together exhibitions and writing. And, of course, while I was working in the Museum, I never could really write because it meant that then I simply had to abandon answering the junk mail, seeing people, just saying to my colleagues in the department, "Goodbye, you keep the store." And you just can't do that. So that I could do it sometimes for a week to get an article done, but no longer. And of course that's the great thing about retiring. I don't have to think about that at all. My time is my own. And that is a giddy joy that I still haven't got over.

PC: Do any of the exhibitions stand out as sort of favorite enterprises?

HM: Oh, yes. Perhaps the most interesting exhibition I worked on was the show of Life in America for the World's Fair in 1939.

PC: Right. You talked about that.

HM: That was great, great, great. Just great fun. Because it was breaking entirely new ground, stuff that everybody had forgotten for a century. And that was most fascinating and amusing to do. Then of course many of the print shows were great fun, too. Especially it was great fun to write the explanatory labels for them. I always enjoyed that very much. One had to think of a reader who was well-informed in a general way, intelligent, not a specialist, and standing on his two feet which are rather flat and tired, and must not be bored. And that was a very good kind of reader to envision when you were writing.

PC: Is there anything you can think of that we haven't touched on that might be illuminating or useful?

HM: What in the world would there be?

PC: You have lots of books and pictures and things -- Are you a collector? Do you think of yourself as a collector?

HM: No, I don't think of myself as a collector. I just picked up things when I was looking for things for the Museum and naturally you see nice things that are at very small prices. Now, of course, I wish I had picked up a great deal more. In fact I wish I'd really invested some of our hard-earned and scarce cash. It would have been an extremely sensible thing to do. And if I'd had any idea that there was going to be this real inflation in works of art in classic taste and a dwindling supply of goods for a growing number of purchasers, of course, I would have acted very differently indeed. But I didn't see that coming. I wasn't bright enough. And so the result is that I have just a few little things which I lend to people if they ever want them for exhibitions. In fact, while I was at the Museum, I much preferred lending my things anonymously to lending the stuff in the Museum because it didn't take anything out of circulation. That's the way I got most of the things matted; because the borrowers would mat them. Very good indeed. but I don't know, many of the things of course are just family stuff that's around. I had a great uncle who was a painter. Many of these pictures and drawings are by him. My father catalogued the jellyfish of the world, *Mayor on Medusa* is about three or four feet of folios on a shelf. Oh, did I say this before?

PC: No.

HM: He used to draw these things. And of course, being brought up (he was born in 1869), since he hit his maturity when art nouveau was going, he made the jellyfish art nouveau jellyfish. They're very beautiful. We have a couple in the hall. And when they came back from proving, from the color printer, he then threw the drawings into the wastebasket. From which my mother fished them out; those that we have are what she rescued. They're very pretty, very, very pretty indeed. There's that kind of thing. Well now, let me see, in the Museum so much more happened. What in the world? -- who else is there who might be of interest there do you suppose?

PC: Are there people in other museums that you've worked with frequently over the years?

HM: Well, of course in American museums we lie so far apart that we don't see each other the way people do abroad. And our European colleagues never understand that we don't know our colleagues well. That is true unfortunately even in the museums on this island. In the Museum of Modern Art I know the personnel quite well. I know Monroe Wheeler from years and years. Grace Mayer I've known for a long time; I'm very fond of her indeed. I've known Alfred Barr for a very long time indeed. Because Alfred succeeded me at Vassar.

PC: Oh, yes, that's right.

HM: He came the year after I did. And then we were in Princeton together. So I've known him a long, long time.

PC: He also lives close by.

HM: He lives in the next block. And I saw him just yesterday, he and Marga, when we got off the train coming back from Bethel and they were coming back from somewhere in that neighborhood in Connecticut. In the Fog I know Agnes Mongan very well because the Mongans are our neighbors in Annisquam about three or four miles away. So we see a lot of them in the summer. And I've always known Agnes. But that isn't because she works in the Fog; it's simply because she's a neighbor on Cape Anne.

PC: It's amazing how the locations will do things like that.

HM: Yes. I must say I think they have some very bright people in the Museum of Modern Art now. Waldo Rasmussen who handles their foreign -- their traveling exhibitions -- struck me as a very extraordinarily intuitive, intelligent, bright man; remarkable. Because he's able to project himself outside the United States and to see us as we're seen from abroad.

PC: That's terrific.

HM: Very extraordinary. And I think the whole success of their international shows is probably due to him, and of course to Monroe Wheeler. But of course he's a very worthy successor to Monroe Wheeler. I was deeply impressed by him.

PC: Were you ever involved with the College Art Association?

HM: Yes. I've been on their board for, oh, I don't know, a long time; oh, a very long time. I was on their board when they were publishing *The Magazine of Art*. And I always go to their meetings. I'm on lots of committees but I can't for the life of me think why. I never open my head at the meetings. It always seems to me in any large meeting that, if I have an idea, somebody else has it too and will express it a good deal better than I. Usually

they do. And, if they haven't, then by the time I've waited it's too late to spiel my idea anyway. So it doesn't matter.

PC: You're an A.F.A. trustee, too -- right?

HM: Yes. And anyway, committees, you know, are worth nothing unless it's a committee of three in which two are sick. That works. But otherwise I think our American system of committees is just dismal. It was Francis Taylor's system. When the trustees would ask him what have you done about this and that he would say, "Oh, I've appointed a committee and they're working on it." That let him out.

PC: He could do what he wanted and the committee went off and did it.

HM: That's right. The committee forgot all about the matter. And I suppose that's the usefulness of a committee. I know that when I worked on *The Hound and Horn* it was extremely convenient to have a board of editors because I could always say that I, of course, thought so and so's sonnet was great but you know Bernard van der Lich and Kirstein thought it was impossible. They could say the same about me. So that helped. It's a convenient administrative dodge. But for getting work done it's no good at all.

PC: It's impossible. So, do you think there's anything else we could chat about? Can you think of anything? We've covered all kinds of things.

HM: Well, let me see. Did I talk about Maria Ouspenskaya in the school and Richard Borislavsky?

PC: Yes.

HM: Because that was rather extraordinary.

PC: You still maintain your interest in the theatre, don't you?

HM: Yes. Very much. Of course the theatre is not very interesting nowadays. You know about the only thing that's really moved me that I've seen lately was *Hadrian VII* at the Mermaid in London last year. I didn't see it here but I saw it there. I thought that was a *wonderful* production. And the Gran Teatro del Mundo in St. Paul's Chapel here. Did I tell you about that?

PC: Yes.

HM: Those are the two things that I thought really remarkable. Otherwise the Off Broadway theatre seems amateurish, terribly amateurish [?]. The critics have quite a different standard of adequacy when they review it. And the commercial theatre on Broadway for a long time hasn't offered me much that I really like. I think probably the dramatic thought of our time goes into the movies. There's more money there. And a producer can set up something that is permanent and, if people don't like it now, they may come around to like it in fifty years. So obviously anybody with real artistic ambitions will go into the movies rather than the theatre. That I should think is elementary.

PC: The poor old theatre is dying again.

HM: Yes, dying again. And will continue to die for several centuries. And of course I think probably has a terribly useful function in bringing up actors.

PC: Well, but fewer and fewer. A lot of them now just want to start in the movies.

HM: Yes. Well, do any of them graduate from the repertory theatres into the movies? You would think that would be the great training ground.

PC: I don't know.

HM: I really don't know.

PC: Some of the repertory theatres do very well around the country.

HM: Yes. Very well. In fact what hope there is, I think, would be in them.

PC: I think that's where the actors come from.

HM: Yes, I'm sure.

PC: We'll see what they do in California where they're building their new enterprise.

HM: Yes. In the old days, of course, if you saw any actor who was any good, his biography always would say that he started in vaudeville, then went to the Ben Green Shakespeare Theatre, Ben Green Shakespeare Players. Then he was ready to go. He was trained.

PC: Right. That gave him everything.

HM: That gave him everything. Vaudeville would attack an audience instantly and then Shakespeare represents the style and variety and suppleness and all those things that you have to have to do Shakespeare even adequately.

PC: Right. It's more of a challenge than Arthur Miller and that crowd.

HM: Yes, yes.

PC: So -- is that it, do you think?

HM: I don't know. I suppose it must be.

PC: We've talked about an awful lot; a great deal.

HM: An awful, awful, awful lot. Well, people come to me nowadays and ask me to stroke my long gray beard and tell me what life was like in the Thirties for a master's thesis. So I'm quite used to having a retrospect.

PC: Right. You've been thinking about it.

HM: And it is curious indeed how impossible it is to give the sense of life when you travel without passports, when dirt roads smelled of horse piss at a watering cart, when in the country the meat cart came around twice a week, the vegetable cart came around twice a week, and you never left the place. In a sense life was a great deal easier when goods were brought to the purchaser rather than the purchaser having to get in his jalopy and go for the goods.

PC: But now you can go to the supermarket once a week and store up.

HM: Well, you have to do to the supermarket. In those days a minimal...

[END OF INTERVIEW]