



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Eloise Spaeth,  
1973 February 6-March 9

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Eloise O. Spaeth on 1973 February 6 and March 9. The interview was conducted by Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

## Interview

PAUL CUMMINGS: This is on. Say it's the sixth of February 1973 Paul Cummings talking with Eloise Spaeth.

ELOISE SPAETH: Do you want me to tell my age?

PAUL CUMMINGS: No, we have that anyway.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. It's all right for you to have it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's all right. It's in a record somewhere. You were born in Decatur, Illinois.

ELOISE SPAETH: Decatur, Illinois.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right, and do you have brothers or sisters? Are there many or a few of you?

ELOISE SPAETH: I have one brother who is two years older than I.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And do—

ELOISE SPAETH: And I loathe Decatur, Illinois. I moved away when I was five. Do you want me to ramble?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. Go on and ramble.

ELOISE SPAETH: My father was a lawyer, and he became ill and we had to move to a drier climate, so instead of picking some attractive place like Tucson, he picked Oklahoma City.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh my goodness.

ELOISE SPAETH: And Oklahoma City was quite the raw place then. They did have oh, the Skirvin Hotel, you know, 12 stories high, but that was about it, and the Indians used to come down to meet the train, and I had faith in my father forever after because on the train going out, I asked him if there would be any Indians, and he promised me that there would be, and in the morning when I pulled up the curtain in the sleeper, we were parked in the station and there sat three old squaws with their babies on their back.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Watching the train.

ELOISE SPAETH: Watching the train.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh that's fantastic! I often wondered why they would do that. Maybe it was just something to do.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, it was something different. I suppose they hadn't come in too long off the reservation. There were Indian children in my classes at school, very wealthy Indian youngsters who came.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Definitely oil wells.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Well, how long did you live there? What was it like growing up there?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, we lived there until I was ten, and actually it was fun growing up there. It was not as frontier as I make it sound, you know. We had to go to dancing school every Saturday and my brother would carry my little shoe bag of dancing slippers and deposit me and play hooky from dancing school. It was all very you know, normal. I do remember some exciting times driving out through the country with my father and seeing oil wells at night booming, and that was fun.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of schools did you go to?

ELOISE SPAETH: There I went to private Catholic schools, and also to a public school a couple of years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And then what did you—

ELOISE SPAETH: I started violin lessons which I was burdened with for years and years. My mother was trying to make a violinist out of me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were you interested in music or was it her—

ELOISE SPAETH: It was her idea. It was a nice instrument for a girl to play. She neglected the fact that I was practically tone deaf.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh really? So that wasn't very much fun. Were you interested, or was the family interested in other cultural activities besides music?

ELOISE SPAETH: Not really. My father was a great reader and the pictures on our walls were actually rather mediocre, as I remember them, you know. My parents never took their heads out of books long enough to see what was hanging on the walls.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of things—what kinds of books rather were there around the house?

ELOISE SPAETH: Mostly history books. My father loved to read history, especially the history of Ireland and England.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Going all the way back?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh yes, definitely, going all the way back. My mother as I remember read mostly current novels.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you read much? Were you interested in any of those or other things?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh yes. Oh, I remember spending days in the library reading the Little Colonel series and then when I was ten, I went away to school and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: To which school?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, at that point my mother became ill. It seemed like people were always becoming ill in my family, and we moved back to Decatur, and so I was sent to a convent boarding school in Dubuque, Iowa because my aunt was the Mother Superior of that school, and I spent all my high school—the rest of my school days there until the day I graduated at 17, even to the point of spending one summer vacation and a couple of Christmases there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: My goodness.

ELOISE SPAETH: And I loved it. It became my second home and I wept when I graduated, but my aunt was an English teacher and through her I really grew to love especially English literature.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was her name?

ELOISE SPAETH: She was my father's sister and of course, her family name was O'Mara, as mine is. She was Mother Louise Genevieve.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How was it having the head of the school being a relative? Did that bother you with the other girls?

ELOISE SPAETH: It was terrible, yes. In the first place, we weren't especially compatible, and also she felt it incumbent upon her to be very strict with me, to the point of being rather unjust.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So there would be absolutely no favoritism.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. And I remember her slapping me in front of the whole study hall one time because she thought I was being a little fresh in my answer. But she had turned me over when I arrived there at the age of ten, which was pretty difficult, you know, for a child, never been away from home. She put me in the hands of another nun because naturally she was very busy, and this woman became sort of my second mother and raised me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was she?

ELOISE SPAETH: Her name was Sister Mary Genevieve, and you know, I loved her as much as I did my own mother before I left there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of studies did you have? What kind of atmosphere was that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because that was still what? Pre-World War I probably.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. Actually I remember August 14th, the year the war broke out. That was one summer I was spending there. And I remember the excitement of the nuns in community in the evening. They used to sit out in the garden in a circle, you know. The great buzz and then the church bells ringing and all this kind of thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How much were you involved with the town?

ELOISE SPAETH: I guess I was about 11 years old, 10 or 11 at the time. With the town?

PAUL CUMMINGS: After you got older? Or was that not—

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, we would be allowed to go on Saturday afternoon with a chaperone. We would go do different things. We could go to plays, the proper kind of course. I saw my first musical, Rudolph Friml, and sometimes serious plays, things like that. Or as we grew older, we could go on Saturday afternoon without chaperones and all this kind of thing downtown.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like going to a girls' school like this all the time? Was it large or not?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, I guess there were about—there were day students and boarders.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh right.

ELOISE SPAETH: And I guess there must have been 300 or 400.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it was a fair-sized school out there.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, and perhaps 100 boarders. Oh no, I loved it. I loved the whole atmosphere of the place.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was fun, huh?

ELOISE SPAETH: I can honestly say that my—some of my happiest days were spent there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh. That's good. And you went on to Millikan University after that, right? Was that directly or how did that—

ELOISE SPAETH: No, after that, when I went home, I decided—well, actually my family couldn't afford it at that point because the idea was that my brother should have university education and my parents couldn't afford to send both of us, and so I was allowed to go to New York. I thought at that point I wanted to go on the stage, and so I was allowed to go to New York, and I started studying at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

Of course, my mother went to New York with me and found a proper place for me to stay, and I went to the Academy for a short time, but in those days—well, in the first place, I think you know, I was just romanticizing it. I don't think I had the talent at all, and as I remember the school, it was quite dull. I met a young man there who, we used to pal around together a little and he felt that—he talked it down and I was impressed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: And so I just sort of drifted away and then I realized, you know, that—I always had the feeling—I knew that I could wire home for money at any time, and my parents would send it, but I did have enough pride, as long as I wasn't following out the plan that I had told them I wanted to follow, that I shouldn't—I should be on my own, so I spent about six months doing a little bit of absolutely everything, and you know, keep body and soul together and having a grand time doing it, discovering New York.

Oh, I would go down Hester Street and wander around all through the village, and in the meantime, I had a series of little jobs—addressing envelopes one time, working in a jewelry store. I have forgotten. None of them lasted. I must not have been very good at them or else I thought I was promoting myself.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But they were all just kind of fun to trot out and look at.

ELOISE SPAETH: And fun to try, and I still had a passion for the theater, so I would go to Gray's Drugstore, the basement of Gray's Drugstore. They sold the cut-rate tickets, and I would spend an awful lot of time at the theater sitting up in the gallery.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you—acting school didn't say too much to you, or you didn't really get into it then?

ELOISE SPAETH: No

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it was just another thing.

ELOISE SPAETH: That was just another thing, and then my mother wrote and told me that she felt I should come home. Well, of course, the truth came out and that I should come and spend a winter at home, that I hadn't been home with them, which was true, since I was ten years old, and my brother was away and she didn't even say a winter, she said for a few months, so I thought that was the least I could do, and I went home.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The halls of New York in the back of your mind.

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh yes, I always knew I was going back, but I did take a business course. I didn't take a business course, I took typing, so I could help my father a little in the office, and that's what I did, and I simply had a good time because I was the new girl in town. Although I had been born there, I actually hadn't been there except for a few vacations since I was about five years old.

And so I just had a marvelous time going to the parties and the dances—

PAUL CUMMINGS: All the activities.

ELOISE SPAETH: All the activities.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, what—you know, what were you interested in? Were you interested in art then or literature? You followed the theater obviously when that was available.

ELOISE SPAETH: When I got back to Decatur, Illinois, there were concerts and as I look back at them, rather good concerts at Millikan University. And well then, I went to Millikan, so that I would go to the concerts and things like that there, but it was through a couple of men whom I met—I say men because they weren't the college boys, they were young lawyers in the town, mature young men, and they were all very much interested in the current literary scene, and through them, I became indoctrinated with H.L. Mencken and you know, we would follow the *Mercury* and we would have you know, and I would have dates and go out with them. We would spend our evenings talking about the literary scene.

And so it was stimulating enough. Actually I think my mother was very smart because I think she knew that I probably would have a good time when I came home, and I got so I didn't miss New York. You know, I thought at first that if I stayed away for two months, that was—

PAUL CUMMINGS: The world would stop.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you go to the University for? To study specific things or just to do the liberal education?

ELOISE SPAETH: To do the liberal education, but the emphasis was on literature.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know, in the years of schooling, were there any—

ELOISE SPAETH: But I only went for one year.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, yeah, were there any instructors who you particularly remember? Either at the University or the other schools that were—

ELOISE SPAETH: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —important to you one way or another?

ELOISE SPAETH: No. The only one, the only instructor I ever had who made any deep impression on me in those formative years was my own aunt.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh really.

ELOISE SPAETH: And she gave me—filled me with such a desire, and I had a history teacher or two, but again in the convent. One history teacher in particular who made history come alive, you know, at a time when—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Learning numbers and dates.

ELOISE SPAETH: —at 14 years old I was studying Roman history or Medieval history, it can be awfully dry, and at the school in the library, they had—they really had a very good library and—but another thing that stimulated my love for history was they had a set of books, I have forgotten the title, but it was romanticized history, is what it was. And I went through the whole set and found it just thrilling, you know. I fell in love with Carlotta and Maximilian and Rudolph and oh, Henry the Second.

PAUL CUMMINGS: All the romance.

ELOISE SPAETH: Just all of them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, yeah. How long did you live there then? Did you stay there with your family for a long time?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, the next year. That's why I didn't go on to school, because I met my husband, and in fact, I think it was the—at the end of the year when I came home, and they were doing—it was quite amusing, the way I met him. In those days at that time, it was the fashion for different communities—this sounds ridiculous now—but they would hire a producer, or some producer sold all the towns in the middle west on the idea of doing a history of their town?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh the pageants. Yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: And so somebody came into Decatur and because I had been to New York and had gone however briefly to the Academy, I was chosen to be the "Spirit of Decatur". I remember out on a barge in the middle of Lake Decatur freezing, all done up in chiffon and declaiming.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh wild.

ELOISE SPAETH: And I'm sure nobody could hear me. Then out of that grew the invitation to play the lead in this movie, the History of Decatur, and they were—in filming that in our park, quite a beautiful little park, they needed a good-looking car and my husband had a Packard touring car, so they borrowed his touring car, and he drove out to the park in the touring car, and waited around while we shot the scenes out there, a little romantic scene of some kind. And he asked to take me home, and I said no, that I had to go home with the gentleman who brought me out, but he asked if he could see me the next night, and I said yes, and so that was it. He saw me every night after that practically.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh wild. What was the movie about? I didn't know they made a film about the—

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, I don't know. They were rather silly things, always with a romance. This one was more interesting than most I think because I remember, we went over to Rantoul, to the air base and shot some scenes there with the result that I was invited to stay with General Wheeler, I think his name was, for that weekend, and he and his wife had a party and I think I had my first taste of alcohol. It was during prohibition, and at the party, they brought out a big granite dishpan with a cake of ice in it and poured alcohol over it, and poured ginger ale over that, and I didn't like the taste very much, so I actually didn't—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Didn't carry on with it.

ELOISE SPAETH: —didn't carry on. You know, I had practically nothing to drink until after I was married, but we were married eight months after that. I was married in October, so of course I just gave up the whole idea of school.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you continue living there, or you went—

ELOISE SPAETH: No, we never lived there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —to St. Louis or something, didn't you?

ELOISE SPAETH: We went to St. Louis immediately after our honeymoon. We—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did St. Louis come up?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, my husband was working there, and so when we went on our honeymoon to Cuba, actually, and New York, and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you pick Cuba? That's an interesting place to go then, to have gone then?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, we went—the original idea had been to go to New Orleans, get a boat and do some of the islands, and I don't know what happened. We had to, for one reason or another, change our plans and Cuba seemed to be the nearest place. So we went there and spent a couple of weeks, and I will never forget it, and I'm so delighted we did because then it was just a charming place. But we had always intended to go to—to end in New York, and my husband asked me what I wanted to do in New York, and I said go to the theater every night and every matinée. So we did.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a lot.

ELOISE SPAETH: For ten days.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh my goodness, that's a lot of shows.

ELOISE SPAETH: Absolutely great.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's terrific. Did you do other things too, or was that really what you did in New York?

ELOISE SPAETH: You know, I can't remember anything else. I can't remember going—oh, I do remember going to a couple of nightclubs and places to dine, but I don't remember what we did in the day, whether we went to the museums or concerts. My husband's family were very musical. His father was an organist, and the whole family played. They had an orchestra in the family. Otto wasn't very good at it. They gave him a clarinet to play, and then they built an organ in later years in their home, a pipe organ and Gross Papa as he was called, and Otto's older sister played all the time.

So he was brought up on serious music, and I do remember going to a couple of concerts in New York.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So how was St. Louis and why? Was it because he had a job there and was going—

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —that you went there.

ELOISE SPAETH: And so we moved directly there, and it was rather lonely for me at the time because in the first place, I became pregnant right away and I couldn't move around too much and it wasn't until much later I grew to absolutely love St. Louis and still love it. But the—we didn't become a part of the art world in St. Louis. We used to go to the museum. We did toward the end, we lived there I think it was 14 years, but when we went to St. Louis, the museum was terrifically static. There were no big collectors except Lyon Burger Davis.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh yes, right, right.

ELOISE SPAETH: And the man whose imprint was on the museum at that time, I don't think he was the president, but he was always there in the background whether he was the president or not, was an architect by the name of Louie LaBeaume. And everything had to be done in a very rigid way. It wasn't until several years later that when Meyric Rogers came, that the museum began to open up and they began to have contemporary exhibitions and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, how did you get interested in art and the museum and all of that? Was it—

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, through my husband because he had had TB and was out in Colorado, and when he was out there, he met Boardman Robinson.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh yes.

ELOISE SPAETH: And that whole crowd at the Broadmoor Art Academy, and he began buying little oh, drawings and modest things from some of the artists out there, and through them developed an eye because his family were just completely taken up with music and had no feeling at all for the visual arts either.

But he really introduced me to the art world. He said later that, you know, he introduced me and I picked up the ball and started running with it, and am still running.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous.

ELOISE SPAETH: But it was great because we enjoyed collecting together, and going to exhibitions together, and we began as soon as we could afford it, buying you know, modestly.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was St. Louis like because you lived there practically through all of the 30's, didn't you?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was the Depression difficult there? Was it noticeable in the art culture community?

ELOISE SPAETH: Really, I don't know. We had gone abroad when the crash came and we had intended to be abroad for about a year.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was the purpose of that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Just to go abroad.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just to travel for a year.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. We had been abroad once before, just a hurried trip, and it was at such a point in my husband's financial life that he could, and so we took our one child who was four then and off we went, and we were going to rent a castle on the Rhine I guess. We had some kind of—he had some kind of romantic idea about going down the Rhine and finding a place to settle for a while.

We had been abroad about three months, we hadn't gotten to Germany, we were in Paris, when I became ill. I became pregnant and was very ill, and there was nothing for it but to come back home. But we had been away during most of the crash, and it fortunately had not affected us because in order to do this year trip, my husband had taken care of his business in such a way, I guess he sold some of the bad stocks, but our friends, most of our circle of friends were hit very badly and I know that we always had, you know, great times, but they weren't—no spectacular parties or anything like that. Everything was done on a modest scale because that was the way everybody lived.

And it wasn't until Meyric Rogers came to the museum that—

PAUL CUMMINGS: When was that, roughly would you say?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I don't know, it must have been '32 or '33, or some time like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just into the 30's.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. Although I couldn't be sure. You know, all those years run together, that we began paying any attention to it, and even then—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why was that? Because you made things more accessible, or did you know him—

ELOISE SPAETH: No—he just livened up the whole place.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: Even in changing the hangings, making it more welcome looking.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Took the dust off it, as it were.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. And we were—we were rather interested in sports. My husband rode in the Bridle Spur Hunt and used to go hunting all the time and played golf a lot and that kind of thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you had lots of activities.

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, we had plenty of activities in a very, very amusing, fun group of people, some of whom are my close friends today, still, the ones that are still around.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's nice, that's nice if it continues, you know, all these years.

ELOISE SPAETH: It is, you know, it's absolutely wonderful because my youngest daughter went to St. Louis as a bride.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh really.

ELOISE SPAETH: And when I go to see her, why, I simply see all my old friends and we have great times.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's terrific, so it gives you one more city to have.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, where did you—you went to Dayton or something after that, didn't you?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. Well—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were you that active in the museum there or not?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, I wasn't at all active in the museum there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You just—you went and looked at things.

ELOISE SPAETH: Just—yes. And they didn't have, you know, all that many openings and things like that. In fact, I think—I can't even remember whether Perry came the year we left, or the year after we left, because it was Perry Rathbone who really started things moving in a big way. For instance, one of the first collectors he started was Mrs. Mark Steinberg.

Well, when we knew Mrs. Mark Steinberg, she had—they had one of the show places, they had a Harry Linderberg house that was absolutely beautiful, but full of hunting prints, you know. And Perry started her collecting and really I think it's all, practically all due to him. I don't know how much collecting Meyric Rogers stimulated, but Perry was the one who really started it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Built it up and got it going.

ELOISE SPAETH: Built the whole thing up. Buster May may have been collecting in those days, but I doubt if he was collecting much because he probably was about my age.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, I can't—what I know about him is I see him at the lectures.

ELOISE SPAETH: And you know, he would have been in his early 30's. I remember going back from Dayton to St. Louis on many of my trips back, going to see Buster Mays' collection of German impressionists which he kept out in the barn or his father's garage. There may have been some in the house, I don't know, but that was where I went to see them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why was that?

ELOISE SPAETH: I don't know whether—well, he had—he couldn't have hung them all in the house, and I suppose his parents didn't want them in the house.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was his storage—

ELOISE SPAETH: Or not that many, anyhow.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: But I really became active in the arts when I went to Dayton because for some reason, I had been there only two or three months before I was asked to go on the board of the Dayton Art Institute

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh really? Did you know many people there or how—

ELOISE SPAETH: Didn't know anybody when we went there, but we did have introductions and people came to call on us, and we immediately almost fell into a circle, and I had gone to the museum in St. Louis often enough so that—heaven knows, there wasn't much in Dayton for one. So I started going to the museum all the time and before I knew it, I was asked to be on the board.

And then I was asked to do some cases that they had in the front hall, two big cases, and you know, I could do whatever I wanted with them. I asked a friend of mine, a woman, great taste, she knew a great deal about the decorative arts—much more than I did.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Her name was Mrs. E.M. Thacker and she worked on the cases with me because the cases were full of porcelain or you know, the decorative arts, things that we got from collections in Dayton, and there were—there was considerable wealth in Dayton. There were no collections as far as painting was concerned, but people would go to England, to Paris, to Germany to buy—

PAUL CUMMINGS: They bought furniture.

ELOISE SPAETH: —furniture—

PAUL CUMMINGS: And decorative china.

ELOISE SPAETH: —and Waterford glass and all the decorative arts. You know, they would spend \$25,000 for a chandelier, but if they had to pay \$500 for a painting, they would think they were being held up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Why was that, do you think?

ELOISE SPAETH: I don't know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because I know that when I lived in Minneapolis and even in the early 50's, I would go to these homes and they would have phenomenal furniture, and the carpets and the rugs and the silver and everything was exquisite, and the walls would either be empty or which was very peculiar, or they would have just some little thing a decorator might put up, and they couldn't understand continuing the whole activity.

How did you like getting involved with a museum because you did become a trustee, didn't you?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. Well, one thing led to another. Because the then director, Siegfried Wayne [phonetic] didn't care at all about the contemporary scene, and I was becoming interested and Mr. Spaeth and I would go to New York a great deal, and we would go to the galleries and so on and so forth, so I kept urging him to have contemporary shows.

And all he would have—there was a little art school connected with the museum, but he, you know, he would have the work of the faculty and the school and occasionally a show of—from some of the art schools around. Cincinnati of course, had a good school, but that was all he ever wanted to do, and finally one time I suggested a show that had some scope to it, and I was going to New York and he said well, all right, if you will select some things, so I did, and the show was a great hit.

And so little by little—

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was that? What exhibition was that?

ELOISE SPAETH: I've forgotten what that first one was, but little by little, he just gave me authority and finally gave me a big gallery which we named the Gallery of Modern Art or something like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Contemporary.

ELOISE SPAETH: Contemporary art, yes. And that was my gallery and I did with it what I pleased, and I would get my shows together oh, for six or eight months and just tell him what I was doing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And he would let you go ahead?

ELOISE SPAETH: And he would let me go ahead, and by this time I had met some of the museum directors around. I had met Phil Adams who was at the Columbus Gallery, and then there was a director in Zanesville and I had met Siple in Cincinnati. He was a rather forbidding person. I didn't—or I don't know that he was all that forbidding, but I wasn't especially simpatico with him, but—and they used to say, my goodness, we wouldn't let an amateur loose in our museum like that.

But it worked both ways because if people didn't like what I was doing, and of course, lots of Daytonians didn't, Siegfried could say oh, you know, that's just Eloise, we sort of let her.

PAUL CUMMINGS: We give her room and she plays.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, room to play in, but in the meantime, you see, I had met some artists like Walter Kuhn and Alexander Brook, people like that, and they were very helpful.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, was this as a result of your husband's interest, or was this now your own interest, or was it kind of mixed up at a certain point.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, no. I became just as interested as he, but certainly every time we went to New York, we started making the rounds at the galleries, and he was interested for me and encouraged me because I really wasn't happy in Dayton. I missed my friends in St. Louis and Dayton did have the small town atmosphere in that everybody who had gone to school together—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Still lived there and knew each other.

ELOISE SPAETH: —still lived there and knew each other, and you would go to a dinner party and everybody, as my husband said, started talking about the little red barn. You know, they would all joke with each other about you remember when kind of thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: And which left us out in the cold.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ELOISE SPAETH: And there were very, very few people who really spoke my husband's language. He was interested in—he was interested in politics, he was interested in economics and what was going on in a serious world, and there were men in that group who were interested but they would never show it at a party, you know. You just didn't mention things like that at a party. You were supposed to be light and gay, and he couldn't stand that at all.

You know, it just bored him to death, so that we didn't become a part of that group in any close sense.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, what about the other people on the board of the museum because you obviously saw them through meetings and one thing or the other. Were they interesting to you?

ELOISE SPAETH: Not especially.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Not particularly, no.

ELOISE SPAETH: One or two of them were, that was all.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was it about the museum directors, since you have mentioned that you found them interesting?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, a couple of them used to come occasionally to speak and I met them and Phil Adams I found had an absolutely beautiful little museum and very, very lively mind, and it was through him that I met Walt Kuhn, and then when we would come to New York, we would spend time with these artists, and then I was having my children's—one of my children painted, and Alexander Brook came out and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know, it's interesting because how did the meeting of the artists affect you? Was it in any apparent way or direct way? Or do you think it was just kind of an indirect—

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I liked what they were doing, and some of them just became my friends and then when I really—I was terribly serious when I found out that I had been given this authority to run this room the way I pleased, I was very serious about it and I had Edwin Alden Jewel who was the number one critic on the *Times* come out and speak at one of our openings, and again through him, you know, when we would come to New York, we would meet other artists. I met Kuniyoshi I think through him and a number of artists and we had Grant Ward one time, and these people would stay at my house, as it were.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you got to see them in a different circumstance.

ELOISE SPAETH: Got to see them in a different way.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did the city take to this, when you had Jewel out, was it a well-attended lecture? Did people like what he had to say? Was it—

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh yes, they always had a good audience. And of course, some shows were really beautiful. Now, for instance, I had an exhibition called "Little Masterpieces", and again I relied on Walt Kuhn a great deal. He got Mary Harriman's beautiful *Little Bathers*, three or four things from Mary Harriman, and then he told me to write to Leonard Hannah in Cleveland, and you know, I had no fear and no compunction about this, and I would just all right, he tells me to write and ask to borrow a masterpiece, I'll write.

And it worked in so many cases.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I know I was looking through the list of those exhibitions, and it's really incredible, the number of them.

ELOISE SPAETH: The funniest one though was the Wright Ludington exhibition that I had.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was during the war, right?

ELOISE SPAETH: This was during the war, and Wright Ludington was a private in the Army stationed in Columbus and he came over to see a show that we had. I had forgotten what the show was, but on Sunday afternoon, the servicemen used to come in from Wright Field and the director of the museum did everything to attract them and music was playing, and he even had, to our horror, big bowls of potato chips around. They would drop on the floor and be ground under, but Dayton's living room was his slogan. His museum was Dayton's living room.

Well, I saw this private walking around looking intently at all the paintings, and I went up to him and I hope I wasn't patronizing, I think I said something like "Do you like these pictures, soldier?" Well, we got into a conversation and it was Wright Ludington whose name actually meant nothing to me at that time, but we started talking and he said that he went to the museum in Columbus all the time and well, eventually we became friends and he used to come over occasionally to parties that we had, and I asked him, having by this time known about his collection, if he wouldn't let us borrow some, and he sent us beautiful things, beautiful things—three or four Picassos, glorious ones, two figures I've forgotten the formal title of it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, how did that go over? He was and still is—was an interesting collector at that point.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, you see by this time, we had only been in Dayton a couple of years when the war started.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right.

ELOISE SPAETH: And then Dayton became an entirely different place. I think next to Washington, it was the most exciting town to live in in the country because the whole allied purchasing mission was there—the Brazilians, the Dutch, the French, the English, the Australians, everybody and they had that great photographic laboratory there. They had top people from Hollywood. They were beginning—they were exploring all kinds of reconnaissance photography and that kind of thing.

And anybody in Dayton who had a spare room would rent them to these officers who had no place to live. They didn't want to live in the barracks on the field, so we had a third floor that had four bedrooms and a big room that we had used as a children's playroom, and we rented that to five Australians, four Australians and one New Zealander and they lived there all during the war. If one would be sent home, he would be sure—

PAUL CUMMINGS: That somebody else would take his place.

ELOISE SPAETH: —somebody else would take his place, and it was true with lots of people, and so the—we had much more interesting audiences at the museum lectures, and people are coming to the museum, and I could experiment more and have more—I won't say *avant garde*, we didn't use the word then, and things weren't all that *avant*, although some of Picasso was, and we would be sure to have an audience for it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, one thing that interests me are the artists that you mentioned like Walt Kuhn and the others. How did you know—some of them are still friends of yours, because you have known them for quite a while—Bouché and I lost my list here.

ELOISE SPAETH: Various people at one time or another came out. Louie Bouché came out, and through us, Alexander Brook got other commissions in Dayton.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What at the same time, did you visit their studios in New York when you came here to see them?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh yes, and we would invite them out for dinner or they would invite us down and we became friends in the real sense of the word.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think that knowing the artists had an influence on your ideas as opposed to if you had just had read books?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh definitely, definitely.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was there a discernible way that—

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, they would broaden your whole horizon. As you sit with a group of artists who are having a discussion, you are bound to pick up something, whether they are arguing or agreeing, and—but as far as my

own education and appreciation of art, I got from two men, aside from my husband. And actually Otto wasn't all that knowledgeable. He learned as I learned in a way and that was from Phil Adams and from Walt Kuhn.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did that education develop? How did that—was it just through—

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, every time that we were together, which was frequently, we would—the discussion always revolved around the art world. And then I began, after I had started that gallery you see, I began going to the museum association meetings and then while we were still in Dayton, I was asked to go on the board of the American Federation of Arts.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was that through the museum association meetings or how did that happen?

ELOISE SPAETH: Why I was asked?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh. Who was the president then?

ELOISE SPAETH: The president was Juliana Force. I don't know. I don't know who.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Somebody proposed you.

ELOISE SPAETH: Somebody proposed me and I remember my first meeting was in Juliana's marvelous old apartment over the Whitney.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, on 8th Street.

ELOISE SPAETH: And Hudson Walker and I were the two new members of the board, and I think Lloyd Goodrich had been asked to be a member the year before. Phil Adams was a member. I think Millikan was a member. It was quite a distinguished board, most of them museum directors, but they decided they needed a couple of lay people and I think that's why Hudson and I were asked. Fringe McLaughlin [phonetic] was on the board too.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you find that your experiences on being on the Dayton board was a help?

ELOISE SPAETH: I'm sure it was a bit.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Once you got on the FA board.

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you do as a member of the Dayton trustees?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I was in a very interesting position because—and I think in a very fortunate position and I imagine I'm one of the few people in the country who have sat on a board representing both sides because while I was a volunteer, I was a full-time volunteer practically and the librarian and the superintendent and the janitor and everybody, the registrar and the secretaries were all friends of mine and I worked with them, and I would go to a board meeting and when anything was brought up about the staff, you know, I was really on the staff's side most of the time because I knew what I was talking about. I had had to work with the janitor and the superintendent.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You saw it everyday and saw how things happened. Well, do you think—what could you have accomplished though as a trustee in Dayton? Did you have to sustain your own ideas for the exhibitions you had, the galleries to the trustees, or was that just the arrangement you had with the director?

ELOISE SPAETH: Nobody ever—the trustees may have complained, but they were polite about it. I never never heard anything. I think secretly, even if some of them didn't like all my exhibitions, they were secretly a little proud of the fact that they got a lot of publicity and people came and names came and the one exhibition that I was truly proud of was the religious art exhibition.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, I was going to ask how did that come about?

ELOISE SPAETH: That came about because I, as a Roman Catholic, was questioning the fact that my church which had been the leader in the arts for centuries—

PAUL CUMMINGS: For so long, right.

ELOISE SPAETH: —had fallen into such a state, and really had the worst art in its churches, and I began to wonder why, and if it was because artists no longer painted religious subjects, or could I help stimulate them to paint things, and then get the priests and the ministers to—

PAUL CUMMINGS: To pick it up.

ELOISE SPAETH: To pick it up and show them, put them in their churches rather than buying the awful Barclay stuff, and so I decided that the only way to do this was to put on a show of contemporary religious art and find out what there was, and absolutely everybody discouraged me. My museum friends, the dealers, everybody but my husband discouraged me.

But I found, when I started going around to galleries, that many an artist had painted, had felt a compulsion to paint a painting that had religious subject matter, or some feeling, spiritual feeling about it, but they weren't taking them to 57th Street to sell because the dealers wouldn't—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Couldn't sell them.

ELOISE SPAETH: —couldn't sell them, wouldn't take them. So I just kept at it and it grew and grew, and finally it ended with my taking over five galleries in the museum, and we even built a little chapel because by this time, I had become interested in religious architecture and my husband was a member of the liturgical arts board and through his interest in liturgical arts, we met some of the contemporary architects who were doing things. They weren't the big names, but for instance, Barry Byrne was an architect in Chicago, and I have forgotten who he studied under. It wasn't Frank Lloyd Wright, but it was a good man.

And he had done a church in Cork, Ireland, of all places, a contemporary church that was way out for those days. I think it was finished just before the war in 1938 or something like that, and we had seen photographs of it, so we asked him to design a chapel in one of the galleries, which he did. And it was highly successful. It was sort of an ecumenical chapel. We called it The Workers Chapel, and Emil Frei in St. Louis designed—and a couple of his young men—designed windows for us, stained glass windows, and it was called the Chapel of Christ the Worker.

Well, you know, this was all pretty impressive and it—we got—the Met gave us that beautiful Epstein, *Madonna and Child*, and I discovered a fascinating crucifixion by Picasso at the Modern they loaned me, and it grew and it became quite—we got a great deal of coverage, a great deal of publicity on it. Frances Henry Taylor came out and opened the show and all the art magazines covered it.

Aside from a gallery at the World's Fair in Chicago—I guess that was '32—of contemporary religious painting, it really was the first exhibition of contemporary religious art in the 20th Century.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long did it take you to organize that once you got going?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, it took a long time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: I just—I got into it so deeply that I couldn't get out, and my husband realized this, and he was marvelous and he helped me with his moral support, and also with some practical support. For instance, when it came to the catalogue, he asked a printer friend of his in Dayton—he had a big typesetting plant—to please move in and help me, you know, because—

PAUL CUMMINGS: So everybody pitched in.

ELOISE SPAETH: —the whole catalogue idea just threw me. I could write the forward and tell what I was trying to do, but how it should look and that whole process of setting up a catalogue, you see, was just beyond me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You hadn't done catalogues for the other exhibitions then?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, they were little sheets.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The brochure things.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, just the little brochures.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you know, how did that, the religious art exhibition affect the museum because it was such a unique kind of an exhibition? Did you get a lot of people who came especially to see it?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh yes, oh yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The attendance was—

ELOISE SPAETH: Bus loads came down, a whole bus load of seminarians came down from Cincinnati and we really had a great attendance. I would like to see one of the registers now to see who was there. I kept a

scrapbook on it, but not of the crowds that came in and the school children that came in, and the colleges from around, and all that kind of thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But what kind of effect did it have on the religious community? Because they obviously heard about it.

ELOISE SPAETH: None at all as far as I know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really? It's interesting, so the public responded, but not—

ELOISE SPAETH: It had in ways that I will never be able to measure. For instance, I remember young—having a very interesting talk with the seminarians from Cincinnati who came over and were so eager and excited about the whole thing, and in fact, my husband went over and talked to—he was becoming more and more involved through liturgical arts of the whole subject of art in the church—he went over and talked to the Archbishop of Cincinnati on the theory that he should introduce at least art appreciation courses in the seminaries and give these boys some background because they were the ones who were being trained to go out and be the pastors and would have all that money to spend.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And would make all the decisions.

ELOISE SPAETH: To build churches and make the decision on what went in them. Well, he got absolutely nowhere with the Archbishop who said that their schedules were so full as it was.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I have often wondered because on Lexington Avenue there is that gallery that sells things—have you seen that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What do you think of that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, all I can say is that it's the best we have.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It isn't—yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: Most of it is bad modern, there's no you know—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, yeah, and it is not even bad modern sometimes. But what kind of reactions did you get from the artists when you asked them for work that would go into an exhibition like this?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, most of them were pleased if they had it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did many of them do special things for you or not so much?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, and I didn't really encourage that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you relied on something already accomplished.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: More natural.

ELOISE SPAETH: But then we were—for instance, a whole—I won't say a whole group of artists, but many of our leading Jewish artists had done fine things. Take Ratner. The whole story as he would call it of the crucifixion, the whole story of the mother of God, the virgin, the Madonna, appealed to their poetic sense. They weren't moved by it religiously. I suppose it was just a poetic myth to them, but nevertheless, it appealed to them.

And Ratner had done some fine things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh yes, lots and lots of them.

ELOISE SPAETH: Quite a number.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did Frances Taylor like it because he, you said, opened the show? What did he have to say about it?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, he praised it. He gave the opening talk and praised it, and I think he felt it was a commendable venture, I really do. Dan Rich came down from Chicago to see it. I think they were all absolutely astounded that I could pull it off.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really get the quality things together and—

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —make something out of them.

ELOISE SPAETH: And it was beautifully installed and hung. Now, there again, my husband was smart enough to know that we needed professional help, and we turned the installation over to Barry Byrne, the architect who did the chapel.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh good. Wow.

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PAUL CUMMINGS: This is Side 2. We have been mentioning your husband's interest in liturgical arts society, right?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That do publication. How did he get interested in that? What was his interest, and how did they treat your exhibition because it obviously went into them?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh well, they were excited about it, and very—this is what liturgical arts had been working towards, so that Maurice Levine [phonetic] came out. I think he gave a talk. We had a series of people talking during the time of the exhibition, and he ran a piece in the *Arts* on it. One interesting thing, I had an opportunity to correct Bill Lieberman when he was curator of prints at the Museum of Modern Art, because he had an exhibition of the Chagall watercolors.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean the windows and things?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, it was the Old Testament series and through Maurice Levine, Chagall was in this country at that time, you see, because it was during the war years, and through Maurice, I got those original watercolors to show on the proviso that they would be shown together in their own little gallery. So Barry Byrne made a charming simple little gallery for them, and then Bill showed them about three or four years ago at the museum saying it was the first time shown in America. I called him up and told him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: A little late for the first time.

ELOISE SPAETH: He was very nice about it. I sent him a catalogue.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. But what other of those exhibitions that you did there are outstanding in your mind that you remember particularly well?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, I would have to go through my scrapbook. The most outstanding one from the standpoint of the quality of the paintings were "The Little Masterpieces", where I went to Leonard Hannah and Harriman, and then I had another interesting exhibition based on the Howell Collection in Cincinnati, and it was early works of established artists, and you know, in the Howell Collection, I can't give you the identical gradations, but I think they have the third oil painting Peter Blum ever did, and oh, Bodine, Dickinson, those people of course, but the very early paintings of Sheeler, a very early Kuniyoshi, and it made a fascinating show.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You got some things from abroad for those exhibitions too, didn't you? Wasn't there a Van Gogh in the group that you had that was touring or something?

ELOISE SPAETH: Work with me. I had Van Gogh in exhibitions. Now whether it was in the small exhibition—

PAUL CUMMINGS: I thought there was a small one that was traveling around the museum in Holland that you have.

ELOISE SPAETH: I may have.

PAUL CUMMINGS: One thing that I'm interested in is as you became involved with more and more things—you have been with the AFA and the museum—how did your relationship with the artists develop? Or did that affect it as you became more active in the museum association and all these things?

ELOISE SPAETH: It didn't affect my relationship with the artists for a long time and it didn't affect it at all with some. I had a break with Louie Bouché, not with Louie himself but his wife years later after we moved to New York because she wrote me a very indignant letter one time saying that I was siding with the powers that be at

the Museum of Modern Art, and that I was all on the side of the museums and not on the side of the artists anymore, and you know, all that kind of thing, which was ridiculous. I wasn't at all, and I like to think my preoccupation has always been primarily with the artists.

But aside from that, and one or two other artists whom I think felt a little bit that way.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It gets more difficult as you get more involved.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, they felt I was allowing the museum directors, all these friends of mine, to influence me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Not let them—

ELOISE SPAETH: I was on their side rather than on the artist's side.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh. Well, you had mentioned your husband was interested in politics. Were you ever interested in or active in any politics?

ELOISE SPAETH: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The whole—the art activities have really been your major activity.

ELOISE SPAETH: Uh-huh. I like to think I'm interested but only as any citizen.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, right, no, I mean as an active—

ELOISE SPAETH: I have never take—

PAUL CUMMINGS: An active thing.

ELOISE SPAETH: Get out on the stump.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about East Hampton because you have been going there for quite a while, right? Did you start going there after you came to New York or before you came to New York? How did that—

ELOISE SPAETH: No, after we came to New York. We had gone from St. Louis and from Dayton to the Cape because in those days, you simply went away for the summer, and there you were, and while we were at the Cape, in those summers, I used to see some of the artists up in Provincetown, but when we moved to New York, we wanted a place that was more accessible that we could get to on weekends.

[Phone rings.]

ELOISE SPAETH: So we had to give up the Cape.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What brought you to New York? Was this because of your husband's work?

ELOISE SPAETH: He had been working with Wright Field all during the war. He had Government contracts, and when the war was over, there was no reason for us to stay in Dayton and neither of us really wanted to and we thought for a quite a while, you know, we could go anyplace as far as that was concerned.

But we decided that most of our interests were right here in New York. We were very much involved in the art world, and the people that we really liked a lot like Walt and some of our friends, were right here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So this is where you came.

ELOISE SPAETH: And he was going to retire for a year or two at least, until he found out what he wanted to do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He had become active with the AFA too, hadn't he?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, yes, that's a long story. Better talk about my beginnings with the AFA first.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were you involved—you were involved before he was?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh yes because you see, while I was still in Dayton I became involved, and the moment I became a trustee, I was put on the exhibition committee and Juliana Force was the head of it. I had said before that Juliana was the president when I went in. I don't think that was true. I have forgotten who was president of AFA.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But—

ELOISE SPAETH: But she was the head of the exhibition committee.

PAUL CUMMINGS: She was busy.

ELOISE SPAETH: And she put me on the exhibition committee, and then when she became very ill, she asked me if I would take her place on the exhibition committee as chairman, and I did. And that was a most interesting and rewarding experience.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you do actually on that committee?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, in those days, AFA was poor. We were so poor that we didn't—we couldn't even afford to go out of business and settle our debts, so we struggled along.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ELOISE SPAETH: And every trustee worked. Rennie Darncore, Lloyd Goodrich, Henry Hope, all those people ran the magazine. They really ran it and the exhibition committee, the exhibition committee had to get the shows together. Tom Parker was the executive head, the director. He wasn't even called that, but Tom, you know, he was in the big leagues and didn't know how to play the game is the only way—he was a bookkeeper at heart, I think. He had been you know, and I shouldn't say this about him, he was a wonderful person, but he had been in small Government jobs I think for a long time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, that's interesting.

ELOISE SPAETH: He had that kind of mentality. Hudson Walker knew him, and knew him well, and Hudson would be able to talk about him in a way that I can't, but I do know that when we would have meetings, he would be aghast at things that we would propose, that we knew if we all got together, we could see them through.

And so we simply took the initiative

PAUL CUMMINGS: And did it.

ELOISE SPAETH: And did it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. Did you organize many exhibitions?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, we would sit around and talk and say well now, could we get together a water color exhibition of say, and we would name a group, and well yes, maybe we can because we can borrow so many from the Howell Collection, and then this and that and what else can we do and get, and we used to trot around to the galleries, and sometimes there would be idea shows that we would work on, and other times, occasionally, we would get an exhibition that somebody else had done.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And offer it to—

ELOISE SPAETH: And offer it but by and large, we would make these up ourselves. Sometimes we would assign one to a board member, for instance Henry Hope might do a show for us of young printmakers in Indiana and of course, so many museum members—or I mean directors and curators were on our board, so that we would call Dan Rich and you know, could we have this or that, and we need an exhibition and that's the way we worked.

The first time the State Department came to us, they wanted us to put on a show in India. The Indians were having a big exhibition of contemporary works of Europeans and Americans, and we had about three months to get this show together, and they gave us \$5,000 I think, something like that, an incredibly low amount even for those days. So we simply and with this show, my children call it mother's Indian Christmas, because I was the one left to run around and do most of this, and we went to the Brooklyn Museum. We couldn't with that amount of money, we couldn't afford to have things sent from Chicago or God knows where, so we borrowed right here, we borrowed from some of the artists, and the show was an absolute smashing success. One of the reasons being that the Indians had seen European art, but they hadn't seen contemporary Americans. They may have seen a few in New Delhi but not in a provincial town. It went to eight towns I think, but when the publicity came back, it was oh, the Americans, a whole page of the New Delhi Times, they had half a column devoted to the Europeans, and they had five reproductions of American works.

You know, in those days, we really, really had to do it ourselves.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know, it's interesting to see what has happened to that organization from the outside since—because I have known it for a long time that way, but how have you seen it because you have been on the inside of it for so long.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I think it's absolutely terrific the way it has grown. I think it's great. It is not as much, personally it is not as rewarding as it was in the days when you know, we were really doing it, but on the other hand, nobody has the time to really do it anymore, and we grew beyond that. We needed a professional staff.

As a matter of fact, when Tom Messer came in—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did he get there, because he had been in a museum in the Southwest.

ELOISE SPAETH: Tom was the director of the Roswell Museum.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, New Mexico.

ELOISE SPAETH: And we needed a director of exhibitions, someone to work on exhibitions because we had gotten to the point where we could afford a little more staff, and we realized that we needed the professional know-how of one man who would give all his time to it, and Tom applied for the job and got it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you know him before that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Never met him until he came up to my living room at 640 Park where we were living then, and Tom and I were very closely together but it was at that time that the—I think the president then of AFA was Sam Smith—no, it may have been Rudd, Tom Rudd of Utica, and Tom was an extremely good administrator and realized that AFA had grown to the point where we had to really step into a more professional kind of set-up as far as staff was concerned.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's not so long ago though, is it?

ELOISE SPAETH: It must be 16 or 17 years ago, it seems to me. Tom became director of exhibitions and became director of AFA before he went on to Boston.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think the AFA still serves the same purpose it did for so many years? I mean, it's quite costly to organize an exhibition now and travel around the country.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I don't think there is quite the need for the exhibition service that there was, especially in the last few years, because arts councils have been organized in so many states, and they do, frequently do exhibitions themselves. I still think there's the need, but as you say, they have become terribly costly.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just the insurance on some of those is tremendous.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know, I would like to go back to the East Hampton thing which we touched on a moment ago. You have been involved with Guild Hall out there for a long time.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did that develop out of the artists you knew who lived there or was that just something to do in the summers?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, Guild Hall had had an art program of course ever since they had come into being, and it had been moribund for a long time and then a couple by the name of Larry and Roseanne Larkin took it over, and this was just before I got there, shortly before, and they knew a great many artists, and the artists helped them. Jackson Pollack was a friend of theirs, quite a number of people, and they sort of brought it back to life.

And then one year, they wanted to give it up, and then I don't know whether the artists themselves out there formed a group and put on the exhibitions for a summer or two, but then they discovered how much work it was and they didn't want to give up their time and their studios, and we had moved out there and of course, the artists at least knew of my involvement in the arts.

Well, I was asked to go on the board, and then I was asked if I would take over the summer program, and I did for four or five years, and I think they were highly successful, if controversial.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's always good.

ELOISE SPAETH: The mainstay of the population out there, very, very conservative as far as the arts were concerned. They were absolutely shocked at some of the exhibitions we put on there, but I went on the theory that it was a community organization and that once during the season everybody in that community had a right to see something that they liked, some kind of art that appealed to them which didn't make me happy with

anybody, popular with anybody.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So most of them wanted it all.

ELOISE SPAETH: They wanted it all the time, or they would forget. The conservatives would say well, you have had that stuff forever, all those wild paintings. And I said don't you remember our history of early American art show last year? Oh yes, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right.

ELOISE SPAETH: It was difficult, but we did have some good shows I think. The museums and the galleries, Mr. Spaeth and I were still collecting a good deal at that point, so that all I had to do was to walk into a gallery and they would, you know, be very nice and give me almost anything, not that some of them wouldn't still today, but —

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think the fact that you were collecting makes a difference in putting together shows and doing things like that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, humans are humans, and you know, if you have been in and spent a great deal of money for picture yesterday, and you come in today and ask to borrow one for a show, they are a little more likely to say yes than if you walk in cold and have never purchased anything or been in their gallery before.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Well, but also you had been going to the galleries for a long time, so you must have known—

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —everybody.

ELOISE SPAETH: I know most of the dealers, but I did that for three or four years and it really was, you know, it was an awful job and it was no summer vacation, and I think my whole family were very, very patient because I would have to—I would install the shows and just do the whole thing, and then when I gave it up, then I simply stopped entirely. I think there is absolutely nothing worse than breathing down the—the former chairman breathing down the neck of the new chairman.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right.

ELOISE SPAETH: And so for three or four years, I didn't do anything. Now I am very active. We have a different set-up but I'm very active.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You spent what? The whole summer out there?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, and long weekends in the fall. We spent several Christmases there until—there were 19 of us at the last one, and we gave up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's lots of people.

ELOISE SPAETH: We had to have two houses, one for the bad children.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You had—one of those houses is designed by somebody?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, George Nelson and Gordon Chadwick designed it, my dream house.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you pick them to do that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, we visited three or four architects and saw their work. I remember talking to Philip Johnson and he said "Oh Eloise, you could never afford me.", meaning that—

PAUL CUMMINGS: He would just spend so much money—

ELOISE SPAETH: —you would just never question him, and also at that time, Philip was doing pretty much the flat top modern, and I just knew I didn't want the square box, neither of us did. Well, we were divinely happy with our house.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Good. What is it like to have an architect build a house for you? You know, go through that whole activity. How did you find that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, it's great fun if you have an architect with whom you are simpatico. It's as important as a woman having the right baby doctor.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's going to work, otherwise it's a problem.

ELOISE SPAETH: Otherwise it's a problem and you fight every step of the way.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, we built three houses from scratch, and as far as the architect is concerned, it was always pleasant.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's good. That's unusual.

ELOISE SPAETH: Different when you have to do a round with builders. That wasn't always a happy experience.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you find building out there in the Hamptons? Was it easy to get contractors and to get things done or was it—

ELOISE SPAETH: Of course, that part of it was always in the hands of the architect but—well, building the first house out there was pure joy because the builder was a marvelous man who delivered like he was supposed to. Everything else, it was pure hell the second time because the builder cooperated when he felt like it, had taken on too much work and you know, that kind of thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He had crews running from one place to another, and nothing gets done.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. I absolutely love the house. Every time I walk upstairs I—I live on the second floor. I just get a flip out of my house.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's terrific.

ELOISE SPAETH: So I think that's recommendation for the architect.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You got involved with the archives through who? Richardson, right? Or is that not right?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, I presume so. I have a feeling it was Ted who recommended me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh, uh-huh. How did you come in contact with him?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, again through the museum association meetings. I used to go to these meetings and all the time, and I enjoyed them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was from the days in Dayton.

ELOISE SPAETH: From the days of Dayton right on through. And so many of these, of the directors became friends of mine and you know, I would frequently have a party at one of these meetings and we would all get together and—in the early days, I remember having parties at the Chicago meeting, and you know, and we would all have great times.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you find them now because the organization has grown a great deal, hasn't it?

ELOISE SPAETH: The organization has grown a great deal and I don't go as much anymore because I was more deeply involved then. I enjoy them when I go, but of course, it's another generation and there are lots and lots of attractive bright people there, but I don't know most of the younger ones. I know more than most people because of the—of writing my book and going around the different museums, but you know, I used to be able to pick up the telephone and call almost any museum director in the United States, and I would know him. I might know him casually, but I would know him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you come to write that book the first time around?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I knew the museum so well, and their collections, and that was because while I was chairman of exhibitions, I made it a point to go around the country, and one time my husband and I went over the whole United States.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, you had that land yacht.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, and he was president for a very short time of the Federation, and it was during that period that we decided that we would go to all the different museums and find out from them how AFA could best serve

them.

It was a remarkable trip when we would go to a place—well, take for instance Los Angeles, when we went to Los Angeles, Rick Brown had just become director but anyhow, he invited the heads of different chapters of AFA all around that area—Pomona College, and so on and so forth, Long Beach, to come, to come to a round-robin session and we sat and talked, and they talked about how AFA could best serve their needs. This was the kind of thing they wanted.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What they wanted.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, and we took that report back to the trustees. Not too much was done about it, for the simple reason that AFA didn't have the money to implement all the different programs that were called for. Nevertheless, it was a good idea and they were all grateful for it because people would say, "Well, you are the first face we've ever seen from AFA you know."

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's real.

ELOISE SPAETH: It has just been a letterhead before. In that way, I got to know the different museums, and also if we were in a town for any reason, I would go to the museum naturally, but also go with the eye to see what they had, if they had anything we could ask for, for our traveling service.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you decide on the land yacht idea? How was that built?

ELOISE SPAETH: That was my husband's idea and I fought it tooth and nail. He wanted a boat, and our children were at such an age that while I would be holding one by her little skirt to keep her from falling overboard, the other one would want to be at the Yacht Club dance.

And I don't know, I had never—neither one of us, coming from the Middle West, had ever had anything to do with water. We had never sailed and my husband couldn't even swim and I thought this is ridiculous unless you can really be a part of that boat, if you have to hire somebody to do everything, and I fought it, and so he just decided on the land cruiser and he went to a ship builder and he designed the whole interior of it and put it on a Greyhound body, or wrapped a Greyhound body around it. We had a galley and two heads.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The whole thing.

ELOISE SPAETH: The whole thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like living in there and traveling with him?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, it was great traveling in there, you know. We had two drivers. We could drive across the country right through the night. You could park anyplace. It was self-contained. You didn't have to go into a camp or anything like that, but could park on the main street if you wanted to.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of reaction did you get from people across the country when you appeared in this?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, people didn't know because we purposefully had it painted grey, and we did have to put special on the outside, or private, but even the curtains, which were a beautiful shade on the inside, on the outside, they were backed in grey, so you were by before people realized. Sometimes going through the desert, they might see me sitting with a sweater on because we were air-conditioned and they were in their little car.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I mean when you were in a town, did people come to visit you there or see you?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, we had a ship-to-shore telephone, and actually we had a great deal of fun with it. My daughter was at Yale getting her MA and I remember one weekend she took it, and Tubby Sizer and who was it, there was one other professor. It wasn't George Hamilton. Crosby, Sumner Crosby took the class. There were 14 in the class visiting all the New England museums, and the coach would sleep seven and the—well, the girls slept on-board and then the boys slept at a motel.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh my Lord.

ELOISE SPAETH: And then another time, AFA had a board meeting in Philadelphia, a dinner meeting and we all went down on the coach and came back on the coach. I remember Frances Taylor and Lloyd Goodrich got into a terrible fight on the way back. When Frances found out that he and Lloyd were going to be the last two on the bus going home, we dropped them up Park Avenue, he got off when we did at 66th Street and took a taxi. Oh. They had a terrible fight. Poor Rennie Darncore was trying to make peace between them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long did you have that?

ELOISE SPAETH: I think we had it five or six years. The whole idea was that Mr. Spaeth was traveling across the country a good deal. That was his excuse for building it. But then when we moved to New York, he went back and forth to Dayton for almost a year, and that was great because he literally would pull up in front of our apartment and he would be in Dayton maybe an hour later than the train. It seems unbelievable but there it was.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was just right straight through.

ELOISE SPAETH: It would go right straight through the night, but keeping those two drivers and housing that big thing in New York, it became quite expensive, and the real driver, the number one driver named James Whitcomb Riley, he had a million miles driving behind it but you see, I couldn't use him for anything. If I could have used him in the house as a butler, but there he sat. He would drive us in the car if we needed to go anyplace, but you know, I didn't need a chauffeur all that badly, and we couldn't go on all the parkways. We could go on some but not all of them.

And so we were really just using it to go back and forth to East Hampton and it was just too much of a burden.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's terrific.

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PAUL CUMMINGS: Hello. It is the 9th of March 1973. This is side 3 of Paul Cummings talking to Eloise Spaeth.

I think if we could go back to a couple of things we talked about a little bit before such as the American Federation of Art which you were very involved with for a long time. That was really one of the things we had talked about, your earlier years with them. They have something called a collector's club, right?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, that was started about ten years ago.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh.

ELOISE SPAETH: Actually the whole idea was my husband's, but the American Federation of Arts has forgotten about that, but he thought it would be a good idea to get people of similar—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Interests.

ELOISE SPAETH: —interests together and exchange the ideas on collecting, and I did bring it to the board one time, but they weren't quite ready for it, but a few years later, they did adopt it. It was very successful in the first few years. Then it went into the doldrums for a while, and just now, actually just this spring they are picking up again and have scheduled two very good programs for the spring, so I think they are on the way again.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, is that made up of members of the AFA or outside—

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You have to be an AFA member.

ELOISE SPAETH: You have to be a member of AFA. You can bring guests to the meetings. They usually have two or three meetings a year and people meet for cocktails and they can visit and discuss anything they want, and then they have dinner and it's usually tied in with visiting a collection, or having a speaker talk about some facet of the art world.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But they as I remember, once used to give works of art to various museums, didn't they? Or was that something else?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, they—I'm not—I don't—I think they are still doing that, but they were given a grant, an anonymous grant with which to purchase works of art and give them to museums.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see, I thought the members of the club would give things.

ELOISE SPAETH: No, no, this had nothing to do with the collector's club.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How has that gone over the years from your point of observation?

ELOISE SPAETH: The AFA?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, the collector's club as a statement.

ELOISE SPAETH: The collector's club.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So is it up and down.

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, up and down and it depends on how, you know, bright and imaginative the current chairman of it is.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about the AFA? Because you have been allied with that so long and seen so many changes there and different directors.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, there have been many changes. At one time shortly after I went in, they really were so poor they couldn't afford to go into bankruptcy. They couldn't afford to close their doors, they had to keep on. A great deal of the zest went out of that for a few years when they ceased publication of their magazine.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right.

ELOISE SPAETH: Which was a great magazine. On the other hand, the tail was wagging the dog, and every cent had to go into the magazine, and there was very little left for what we really were established for, and that was sending exhibitions around the country.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, how did they start up again? Because I know at some point it seems that all of a sudden they had catalogues and lots of things and—

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, very, very slowly they built it back. And I think they—it's due to careful management, getting a president in who cared, and being careful of the quality of persons they hired as director and I think that AFA really turned around when Tom Rudd became the president. Lawrence Smith had been president before, and you know, had tried and had done a good job. I don't mean to denigrate Sam at all, he worked terribly hard, but when Tom came in, he got us a grant from the Carnegie. It was for only \$15,000, but nevertheless, that was an important \$15,000 at that time.

The Carnegie years, many, many years before, long before I was in the picture, had given a large grant to the federation. I think it was over \$100,000 and they felt that it hadn't been spent wisely.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So they were very cautious.

ELOISE SPAETH: And so they were very cautious and it took a great deal of persuading on Tom's part to get them to give us this grant, but they did. And then a short time afterwards, we had begun to be successful enough so that we felt that we needed someone other than volunteers to run our exhibition program, and eventually we hired Tom Messer who was then director of the Roswell Museum, and Tom came up as director of our exhibition program.

He worked with a minimum staff, and with the exhibition committee as we had always worked. But a combination of those two men—Tom eventually went on to be director of the Federation.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right.

ELOISE SPAETH: But it was—I think it was the work of those two men that really turned the Federation around.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And got it going again.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, that wasn't so long ago though, was it?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I guess it must have been about 15 years ago, anyhow.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: If not a little longer.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because he was in Boston after that, wasn't he? Messer?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And then he has been at the Guggenheim now for what? Almost ten years or something, isn't it?

ELOISE SPAETH: Almost, I would say, but then after Roy Neuberger came in as president, he was able to raise a

good deal of money.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Had he been a member a long time before that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, he had been a board member, not as long as I had, but I think Lloyd Goodrich and I are the oldest in point of time, board members of the Federation.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was it—it must have been very difficult through say the late 40's or the early 50's to raise money for it, wasn't it?

ELOISE SPAETH: It was, it really was. And it is still not a terribly easy thing to raise money for.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It has such a—it seems to have such a good name now and so much more active.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, that's true.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And they do more—they have activities that go into other areas of society.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know, you might think it would attract other people, but it still is—I guess fundraising is always difficult.

ELOISE SPAETH: I should say.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You have done a lot of that over the years, haven't you?

ELOISE SPAETH: Fundraising?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh.

ELOISE SPAETH: No, I haven't really. I'm not good at it, and I've never been involved in it directly until I started the trips with the Archives, and of course, that is direct fundraising.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right. How did that come about, all the air lifts and things?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, you know there was a great Flemish show in Detroit.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh yes, right.

ELOISE SPAETH: And that show was to have been in New York City. Ted Richardson actually worked on the show. It was his show but James Rorimer had promised to take it. And the Rorimer decided at the last minute not to do it, and it made us all so cross here in New York, all of us who were looking forward to it, that we just decided we would charter a plane and go out and see it, and get enough people together so that we could charter a plane, and then we decided well while we're doing it, why don't we make it a benefit for the Archives, and because the Archives then was headquartered at the Detroit Museum so it was all very logical.

And then we decided we had to go a little beyond that and do something special.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But that was a success.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ELOISE SPAETH: Like going to a private collection and having Mrs. Ford give us cocktails. And then it was such a success, that on the plane coming back, people said well, where do we go next?

PAUL CUMMINGS: You had started something.

ELOISE SPAETH: And Peter Pollack and I ran that. Peter was working for the Archives then and we said to ourselves, well, if we have done this so successfully, a one-day trip, and raised a good deal of money, why don't we really become ambitious and go to Europe. It's just as easy to organize a trip to Europe as any place in this country; almost as easy.

So that was the beginning.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Terrific. Now it has always been open only to members of the Archives, right?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It has never been open to the public or anybody?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, only to the members of the Archives, and of course, that's one way of getting members.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right. How did you select the various places over the years that you would go? I mean, you have been to so many places.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, you know, our first one, we started with the capitols of Europe, Rome, Amsterdam, London and Paris, and then we just thought it would be nice to go to Spain and Portugal, and you know, and then after that, we became a little more daring.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What's the most ambitious one that you put together, do you think?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, oh by—the Russian one, definitely because no culture group had ever gone to Russia before, and there were 117 of us.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That many people?

ELOISE SPAETH: And it took a lot of doing and it was very frustrating because we didn't know until we got there how things were going to fall into place. We had written to the Minister of Culture, we had written to the head of Soviet/American relations, and I had actually made a date to meet the head of Soviet/American relations at a certain time at the hotel when we got there, but I wasn't sure he was going to show up or not.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fantastic.

ELOISE SPAETH: But she did and when she approved of our group and really discovered that we were on a culture bent, that that was our one interest, then they just couldn't do enough for us. They gave us a magnificent party in the Kremlin you know, the Palace of Congresses and did everything for us.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It seemed that these trips have always opened up many buildings and collections and things that have been generally unavailable to other people and I suppose that has been a great inducement for people to go on, hasn't it?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, doing the kind of thing that even a person who is very sophisticated in getting around in the art world couldn't do by themselves. For instance, when we went to Spain through our connections, the director of the Prado was very nice to us and gave us a beautiful supper party in the room with the Black Goyas, and had all his trustees there to meet us, and then said now I will turn on the lights, and we all marched upstairs and had the Prado lighted to ourselves.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Fantastic.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, you know, that's worth going for.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you accomplish all of these things?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, just by—sometimes it's sheer luck. For instance, in going to Spain, I wrote out of the blue to our ambassador and told him who we were and what the Archives were all about. Well, he gave a very nice reception at his home for us. I might write to another ambassador cold like that, and then—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Nothing-

ELOISE SPAETH: —and get nothing. As far as the Prado was concerned, we took Phil Adams with us as our specialist in Spanish art, and he knew Sánchez Cantón very well, the director, and I knew Maria Luisa Coturla who has worked there for years in their archives, and you know, a letter to those two fixed it all up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But it's interesting, why a country like that would entertain a group of Americans from whom they might not necessarily get anything. I mean, is it just a good will gesture?

ELOISE SPAETH: It's a good will gesture. And of course, Sánchez Cantón was doing it for one of his peers.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But yeah, it seems to me from the bits and pieces I've heard over the years about them, but that there is a great kind of social—oh, how do I want to say it? It's a very personal kind of activity, the organizing and setting up of all of these things. It's not so much one organization writing to another organization, it's people that you've met or that you've been involved with.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, yes. And of course, we do seek out all the sources that we can, and occasionally I have just gone down to the State Department, you know, to the Eastern Desk and then of course, when my son-in-law was at USIA, he would give me letters so the years that he was there, it was a little easier to get Embassy parties and things like that, although we had done it before.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What do you think that that—that those tours have done for the members? Has it just been a pleasant thing for them to do? Or has it made them more involved with the Archives? Or is it a combination of travel and social and fun and learning and—

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I hope it's a combination of all those different elements. It is social and fun. I'm sure a great many people have learned a great deal. I mean, they have been exposed, the ones who have gone on several trips, and I hope that it has born fruit, and we have seen it bear fruit in some ways, in their purchasing. They do quite a bit of buying.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They do? You mean during the course of a trip?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, in the—going to galleries and buying.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh, so there is a lot of kind of practical results to the host country, you might say.

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh yes. Well, Bill and I have often thought it would be simply wonderful, of course it would be impossible to do, but if we could put on an exhibition of everything that had been purchased. You know, I have a painting that I got in India upstairs, and I have one that I got in Greece, and other people have done the same thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That would be interesting.

ELOISE SPAETH: What happened in the Russian one, because that sounds as if it was so tentative until you really got there. Was there much that was planned ahead of time?

ELOISE SPAETH: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That you were sure about?

ELOISE SPAETH: No. We knew we would be at the mercy of Intourist and that they would show us pretty much what they wanted to show us, but we knew we would get to—you know, they would have no right to let us in as an art group if we weren't going to get to the Hermitage. We knew we could see those highlights.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right. But what—you know, this is a large group to travel with too, wasn't it?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's quite a lot of people.

ELOISE SPAETH: Our first trips you see, I think for the first four trips, we chartered a plane, and we took 100 on each trip. You see, we raised over a million.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Through the—

ELOISE SPAETH: Through the trips, and on those first trips, it was—did I say a million?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh.

ELOISE SPAETH: I think it's a half-million, but on those first trips, we were assured of \$50,000 for the Archives with 100 people each giving \$500 to the Archives. But then of course, after that, everybody and his dog started planning trips.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. But now you have started doing them around this country, right?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, we are doing our first one. We have had a few, you know, overnight trips, but we are doing our first one in this country, our Texas trip.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right. And I think that will be a great success. Everybody in Texas is being very helpful and nice about it. I think it's going to be absolutely wonderful.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Terrific. You have belonged to so many organizations it seems, but all kind of well-defined. The Museum Association you've been associated with.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I belonged to that for years, and while I was head of exhibitions at AFA, I used to go all their meetings. In fact, AFA for quite a long period of time, had their meetings just before, and once in a while, even overlapping the association meetings and they finally asked us not to—the Museum Association asked us not to do it because we were drawing too many people. Our convention was drawing too many people away from them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh really! [They laugh.] Why had they been so close together before? It was just convenience?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, it was convenient certainly for the people who wanted to go to our convention, and wanted to go to the association also, to be able to come to one spot and participate in both.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You have been on their board, too, haven't you?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, not on the—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Or council?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, not on the Museum Association.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You have just been a member.

ELOISE SPAETH: I have just been a member.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What is that, and of course, you got to know all the museum directors through it.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. Actually I got to know the museum directors around the country very well through the exhibition program, and then for a very short while, Mr. Spaeth was president of AFA.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

ELOISE SPAETH: And we made a trip around the country, almost the whole United States.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was on the famous land yacht.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, visiting museums.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was that just a museum trip or were there other reasons for that?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, it was purely to see what people out in the field wanted from AFA, and you know, how we could service them. For instance, when we went to Los Angeles, they called in chapter members from all around, all around Southern California. They got together quite a group to talk with Otto and me, and tell us what their problems were, and we tried to figure out ways that we could service them, help them.

Of course, the pity of it was that after you gather, after we gathered all that information, there really AFA, they didn't, wasn't geared to doing it. They didn't have the money—

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean to satisfy all those, yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: —to—you know, to just go out and do the things that would have helped, that their chapter members wanted.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, isn't that true of all organizations? People always want more than they can get—

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But you wrote your book, your museum guide book. Was that part of the plan, or was that an after—

ELOISE SPAETH: No, that had nothing to do with any organization. I just got fed up with—I knew the museums so well, and the treasures that were in them, and the history of some of them, and it used to infuriate me that all of my friends would go to Europe, and knew the European museums, and knew nothing about anything West of the Hudson practically, and I just thought that—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Time had come.

ELOISE SPAETH: —that the time had come to write a book and tell them about it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That has been very successful because you've revised it again, and—

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, and I'm about to revise it the third time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh good.

ELOISE SPAETH: Harper & Row came to me a few weeks ago and asked me if I could get the rights away from McGraw-Hill. McGraw-Hill did the second edition. Harper & Row had done the first, and the reason I went with McGraw-Hill the second time was that Harper & Row weren't prepared to do a paperback.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

ELOISE SPAETH: And I wanted it done in paperback and I was told that McGraw-Hill would do it in paperback. Well, then they changed their minds and did it in a hard cover instead of paperback.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you were stuck.

ELOISE SPAETH: And I was stuck with it. And they didn't do it very well, and they were in such a chaotic state at that point that I had five editors working on that book. I would have one for about three months and then he would either be fired or leave, and then I'd wait another three or four months until they got another editor.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Got another one.

ELOISE SPAETH: And it was ghastly, and they didn't even do a very good printing job on it. It was a great disappointment, and Harper & Row, I was quite happy when they came back to me and said they felt that it hadn't been done right, and they would like to do it in the third edition, so that's where I am now. I have to start all over again.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There is a lot more in the museums now, isn't there?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What will you do? Will you travel around to see them all again?

ELOISE SPAETH: Most of them. I saw every museum but one in that book it is written about.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which one didn't you see? I don't remember that.

ELOISE SPAETH: I didn't go up to Seattle, but I will this time, but I had made up my mind that the book was not going to be a mail-order book, that I wanted to go and get the flavor of the museum myself. Of course, there were some I knew quite well, and some I didn't know, especially—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, there are some new museums and some that have grown and changed a lot too.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. Oh, they have all sprouted wings.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. That will be fun. There was one thing I wanted to ask about in this long list here. Somewhere I saw a note about—an award to young architects that you had set up or your foundation—but I have never had it clarified in print anyplace. What was all of that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, Mr. Spaeth and I set up a foundation for the furtherance of—and the betterment of, contemporary religious art because we felt that was a neglected field, and we felt that with our art interest and connections, we could do something like this. And in setting up the foundation which was to help ferret out talent, young architects, we gave an award every year through the Liturgical movement which is a movement in the Catholic Church for the promotion of a better liturgy and promoting the arts. It is a liturgical art movement and Mr. Spaeth was president of the Liturgical Arts Society for a while too, and so we set up that award for the best church architecture during a given year.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you still give it?

ELOISE SPAETH: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was it given very many years?

ELOISE SPAETH: I think it was given six or seven years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How many years were those awards given?

ELOISE SPAETH: I think they were given seven or eight years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh. Do you think they accomplished much or was it sort of—

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It did. It wasn't an uphill battle or—

ELOISE SPAETH: No, no, it wasn't. I think they accomplished a good deal.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did it have—did you think it had influence in the liturgical circles, or was it just something the architects or various people were—

ELOISE SPAETH: No, I think it had influence.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah?

ELOISE SPAETH: Driving around the country and seeing a great many of the churches, you wouldn't believe it, but it did within a small, an elitist circle.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I have often wondered why you know, and it goes back to your exhibition again which I was thinking about the other day, why the quality of liturgical art is so uninspired and just incredibly bland these days.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I think the priests and the ministers are to blame for a good deal of this because in so many instances, they are not—they may be bright and holy men, but they don't come from a cultivated background, a great many of them, and they are young men that go into the seminaries. They never—

PAUL CUMMINGS: That takes years and years.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, and some of them come from almost peasant origins. They have no time for any kind of art education.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I thought there used to be some sort of committee among the bishops or something where they would pass on things, or select things or something like that. Is there? Or does that not make much difference?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, I think each bishop in his parish, he won't allow anything to be built that he doesn't like, and again, you know, it depends on his own taste. The Damineos [phonetic] wanted to do a beautiful little chapel down in Houston. Philip Johnson was to design and the Bishop thought it was too modern, didn't like it, and wouldn't let them build it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So that's what happened to that, huh?

ELOISE SPAETH: Uh-huh.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But there are some—you know, some groups seem to build very modern churches, and others not.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, the Catholics build the best and the worst, I think.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And not much in the middle.

ELOISE SPAETH: The Episcopalians, you know just what they're going to build. You know, it's safe, it follows tradition, and then the rest of the Protestant sects, some build good churches. There is an awful lot of bad modern of course being done. But I think Breuer monastery church at Collegeville, Minnesota is great. He has built another beautiful church out in South Dakota someplace.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So that that really, you know, from your point of view, had some effect.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, yes, I think it did.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Those awards. I'm always curious when big institutions like that are affected by people on the outside. One thing we haven't talked really very much about is what must be an enormous number of artists that you have come to meet, come to have known over the years. Are there any that have been particularly close to you or that you have been particularly interested in or associated with?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, of course, the one that comes to mind is Walt Kuhn who was a very close personal friend

and from whom I learned a great deal.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When did you meet him?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, I was still in—still working at the Dayton Museum when I met him. In fact, he helped me on a few shows that I did out there, helped me to acquire loans and gave me lots of advice.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you find so interesting about him?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, he was a terrific personality, very, very positive, but a great force. You know, if you believed in him and his sincerity and his knowledge of the American art scene certainly during his lifetime, you could learn a great deal.

One time, it was before we moved to New York, and I was in New York and he took me and two or three other people down to a restaurant. He took Phil Adams who was in town and a couple of newspaper men and myself down to a restaurant way down around the Bowery called the Son of the Sheik. Oh, it was way below the Bowery. We had dinner there and we started walking uptown, and I walked with Walt and he started talking about American art and its beginnings, and he just kept on and on, and as we walked through the Bowery, the poor old bums would come up and he just—you know, for a dime, and he would just gently brush them away and keep on talking.

Phil said to me halfway up—I was staying at the Madison then up on 58th Street—we walked all the way up to 58th Street—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh my goodness.

ELOISE SPAETH: And in my other ear, Phil whispered and said, "I hope you realize you are getting a real education in American art on this walk."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Now, where did you know Phil Adams from because his name crops up frequently?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, he was the director of Columbus, Ohio when we were living in Dayton, and he came over to Dayton to speak a couple of times and became friends of my husband and me, and his children were the ages of a couple of ours and so we saw a great deal of him, and then when he went to Cincinnati, we still saw him, a great deal of him. He was very helpful also in educating me and he was a member, on the board of AFA also.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's fascinating how all these things kind of weave into the fabric.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about other artists? You know Colleen Browning, do you not? Did you know her somewhere along the line?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. Yes. And I guess Alexander Brook, we saw a great deal of Alec at one time, and of course, in East Hampton, I know a great number of artists, although out there, I purposefully didn't become as close to the artists as I would have, if I hadn't been working at Yote [phonetic] Hall and chairman of their art committee for so long. I felt in that position it was better to be a little withdrawn.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So there is enough politics out there anyway.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. And to just go ahead and put on the exhibitions as best I could, and not become involved with one particular group or one particular artist, you know, to make them all my friends in a more casual way.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because there are so many factions out there.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, and I—I tried and still tried to keep out of all of that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, during the early 50's, you had some exhibitions of your collection, or aspects of it. How did you like that? What kind of experience was that, having—

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, it was very pleasant. I mean, the museum director friends, really. I have forgotten who did come to us first.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Utica did one.

ELOISE SPAETH: Utica did one, Princeton did one.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Phil Brooke.

ELOISE SPAETH: And they were all pleasant experiences.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How is it like to see these paintings hung in such different surroundings since you lived with them? You know, did they look different to you?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes. Well, yes, they do. I think the most unusual experience I ever had in that regard was we owned a Dali. It was called *Birth of a New World*, and it was a nativity scene, and I dearly loved it. I thought it was Dali at his best, and Nagler asked for it, for Dali's show, and so we gave it to them, and I went in one day to see it, and it was early Monday morning and there was no one else in the gallery, and I was in the back gallery looking at the picture, studying it against those red velvet walls, and somebody walked up behind me, and I was conscious of someone standing behind me looking at my picture.

I turned around just a little, and I saw that moustache, you see, and realized it was Dali. Well, I just walked away. [They laugh.]

ELOISE SPAETH: You know, if it had been any other artist, and I had recognized him, I would have said you know, I can't tell you what this picture means to me and how much I like it and so on and so forth, but this was just after his fur-lined teacup and the window at Bonwit Teller's and all the shenanigans, and I just couldn't bear to have my reflection, my feeling for the picture spoiled by meeting him because he was just a show-off and an attention-getter at that time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, that's fantastic. But you never met him then?

ELOISE SPAETH: Oh, I met him later, but I—I never talked to him about the painting. Mr. Spaeth had a very nice time with him one time. We were staying in Rome and he met him in the bar at the Grand Hotel, and it was when Dali had gotten religion back again—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: —and was painting over in Rome, painting oh, quite a number of Madonna's and things like that, and he had had a—been received by the Holy Father and he was full of all of this, and I think Otto told him then that we owned that *Birth of a New World*. He came upstairs and told me that he had been spending an hour with Dali in the bar.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He seems to be a great one for bars. People meet Dali in bars everywhere.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, one thing I was going to ask you about the collecting. When you bought paintings and sculpture, have you had any particular idea or plan?

ELOISE SPAETH: When we started collecting, we decided that we would buy Americans only, more or less contemporary Americans because we could afford to buy the good Americans, where we couldn't afford the prices for the French, but we soon discovered that if you fall in love with a work of art, you can't ask its nationality. So we gave that up in short order, and that's why you see an Egyptian piece there and a Walt Kuhn there, and a Picasso there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Well, so there was really—it was what? Just an emotional attachment to these particular things?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So there is no intellectual—

ELOISE SPAETH: No, no.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —scheme of saying we will collect this period or these people.

ELOISE SPAETH: No, none at all.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And that kind of thing.

ELOISE SPAETH: We stayed with Americans pretty much, but of course, there was a period when we bought French, the Cézanne's, Courbet, Carot.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know, there is so much sculpture here. When you really start looking around you don't notice it right away, but when you do, it's everywhere. Do you have a particular feeling for three-dimensional

objects?

ELOISE SPAETH: I love sculpture, yes. I would have more of it I think if I had anyplace to put it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because there are lots and lots of pieces, you know.

ELOISE SPAETH: Out in the country, I would—I would really like to be able to have some rather monumental sculpture, but it seems a little silly because my grounds are small and then you know, it's gotten so you don't want to call attention to your place.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, that's true.

ELOISE SPAETH: From the outside.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. There are lots of problems with that. What about things—because you have had—there have been a couple of sales from the collection. Were they done just to change things or—

ELOISE SPAETH: No, let's put it this way. There are a few things that we sold that I wanted to sell. I wish I had most of them right here right now.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I know. It's strange how they linger in the back of one's mind. Maybe that's what makes them fascinating. I wonder if there is a way of oh, how can one say? Kind of describing your activities the last few years with the Archives and even things like the UNESCO Commission.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, UNESCO was a very frustrating experience.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh really.

ELOISE SPAETH: I wouldn't have missed it, but as far as any art involvement is concerned on the American commission, it is practically nil.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why is that?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, there are so many priorities and the visual arts is just the stepchild. They couldn't see that a well-organized exhibition traveling around could be a good will ambassador, could speak for itself and tell about the country of its origin, as well as any book could. They were always giving money for libraries and even financing art books, that UNESCO series, of course, but when it came to putting a show together, I tried to get them to do a show that would be I thought just ready-made for them.

Todd Caplin [phonetic] I think it was who did an exhibition with George—oh, I can't remember his name at Yale—one of the famous teachers.

PAUL CUMMINGS: George Hamilton?

ELOISE SPAETH: No, no, not George Hamilton. Kubler I think, on South American art and where it related to our Southwest, and this was a didactic show. It was architecture as much as art and it was a show on panels.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it could travel.

ELOISE SPAETH: It could have traveled easily with—I would have wanted a few original works to travel with it, but this would have been a very simple thing, and I should think things that other nations would have loved to have seen. But no, it just wouldn't—

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long were you on that commission?

ELOISE SPAETH: Two terms. That's all you can be on.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh. Is that a large group of people on that, do you remember?

ELOISE SPAETH: It seems to me there are a hundred commissioners.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh heavens, no wonder it is hard to get something organized.

ELOISE SPAETH: My involvement over the last several years as far as exhibitions and the actual art object of course have been through Guild Hall in East Hampton.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you find doing exhibitions there? Is it difficult or is it easy? Do people lend things willingly?

ELOISE SPAETH: Quite willingly. Of course, we are restricted terrifically by our budget but on the other hand, we get a great deal of cooperation. The first years that I did it, really took on, was the chairman, we did some rather ambitious shows. We did one, a history of American art, a brief history, but I had wonderful cooperation from the museums here. Brooklyn gave me some of their beautiful primitives, and even people like Vildenstein gave me some beautiful early Homers, and then the contemporary end of the show, we drew on Jackson Pollack and he was still alive then and all of the men out there.

It was very rewarding. Of course, you make lots of enemies.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Why wasn't I in that show?

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes, and you know. The ones who were in the show love you, and the ones who aren't, don't.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right, right, all is that way.

ELOISE SPAETH: Uh-huh.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But what about the whole, kind of resume idea of a description of all the activities you've had with all the organizations, what has it sort of meant to you as far as experiences and ideas of things, but you certainly have known such a broad range of people from the artists, museum directors, collectors.

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, all I can say is that my involvement and Mr. Spaeth's too in the art world did a great, great deal to enrich our lives, and if it were nothing more than our collecting, our lives would have been enriched because fortunately we had similar tastes, so there wasn't any difficulty that way, and it just—every time you went abroad, every time you went to a new town in this country, the first thing we did was to go to the museum or look up the galleries. It just gave another dimension, and I was fortunate in having a husband that shared it with me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, do you think that—you know, one thing that interests me is that you have traveled abroad so much. What kind of reaction do you get there being a representative of American culture and American organizations, or as an individual who is informed about what happens here? Do you get questions from people?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, the people that we meet, especially on our trips, we always try to meet the artists and the museum people and as a rule, they are very curious about what's going on over here, especially the ones who either live far away like in India, or the ones behind the Iron Curtain.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you meet many artists in Russia on that trip?

ELOISE SPAETH: Well, we met a whole group of artists, but they were the artists that we were to—

PAUL CUMMINGS: The official artists.

ELOISE SPAETH: That the officials wanted us to meet.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's always a problem in going there I guess.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There is a pattern for those who come to visit and that's hard to break through that.

ELOISE SPAETH: We did go to the studios of one or two artists who were a part of the official group, but when we got to their studios, we saw paintings that were free-er, you know, and weren't the—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Proscribed.

ELOISE SPAETH: —school of social realism.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah.

ELOISE SPAETH: I don't think so. It seems to me I've been covering, we've been covering—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Covering all the high spots, hopefully.

ELOISE SPAETH: —a great deal of ground. I enjoyed being on the friends of the Whitney board when it was just—when it—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just started.

ELOISE SPAETH: —was evolving, and you did have the feeling that you were helping with their collection, not only supporting it financially by your contribution, but they had acquisitions' committees, and you worked with the curators in making the selections. You always knew that the final selection would be the director of the Whitneys, as it should be.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

ELOISE SPAETH: But you did have a feeling of participation. That was very enjoyable.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What happens do you think when organizations like the Friends of the Whitney all of a sudden grow and become—

ELOISE SPAETH: They get too big.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They lose their personality.

ELOISE SPAETH: They lose their personality. I'm still a Friend of the Whitney. You know, I pay my dues, but I don't even go to many of their—it's all too big. It's pointless.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. I joined it once for a while, and it was just like going to some enormous corporate meeting.

ELOISE SPAETH: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They had lost all the charm.

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