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Oral history interview with Belle  
Baranceanu and Hilda Preibisius, 1964  
August 1

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## Transcript

### Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Belle Baranceanu and Hilda Preibisius on August 1, 1964. The interview took place in San Diego, California, and was conducted by Betty Lochrie Hoag McGlynn for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's New Deal and the Arts project.

The original transcript was edited. In 2021 the Archives created a more verbatim transcript. 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

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This is Betty Lochrie Hoag on August 1, 1964, interviewing Miss Belle Baranceanu, and Miss Hilda Preibisius in Miss Baranceanu's home in San Diego, and those names are spelled B-E-L-L-E, B-A-R-A-N-C-E-A-N-U, and H-I-L-D-A, P-R-E-I-B-I-S-I-U-S. [They laugh.] I'm going to interview Miss Baranceanu first, and then Miss Preibisius after that. Miss Baranceanu, you were one of the active members of the project in San Diego. You are a muralist, a print maker of block prints and lithographs, that I know of—maybe more things. You do portraits and different kinds of easel paintings. You're a teacher and a lecturer. And most of these things you did on the project also, but before we talk about that, I'd like to have a brief biography of your life. Would you be good enough to tell us where and when you were born?

BELLE BARANCEANU: That's it?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: I was born in Chicago in 1905, and what do you want me to tell you now?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, where did you have your schooling?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, I was graduated from the Minneapolis School of Art and did a year of post-graduate work there, and then studied with Angarola of the Chicago Art Institute in Chicago for, oh, a little over two years.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You also had a Mr. Richard Lahey?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, Richard Lahey and Morris Davidson.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And Cameron Booth, correct?

BELLE BARANCEANU: And Cameron Booth, with them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Were—I only ask this because I wondered if they particularly interested—influenced your own work. I imagine they did.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, I think that Lahey did, some, but I think the greatest influence, the greatest—the man I learned most from was Angarola, and that was why I went on studying with him. I started with him at the Chicago—I mean, at the Minneapolis School of Art, and then went to Chicago to study with him.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Because I had lived in Minneapolis in between.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And when did you come to California?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Sometime during the depression. It was the early '30s.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Early '30s. And you—by the time you came to California, you were already a very active artist. I know you had won many awards and had exhibits.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, yes, I had—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Would you like to tell about some of those?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, I had, by that time, exhibited nationally and internationally, in most of the major art galleries in this country. I received a Clyde M. Carr prize at the Chicago Art Institute.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was that for your street scene that you—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —let us microfilm?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yeah, and I got an honorable mention for prints at the Denver museum and the silver medal at the California and Pacific International Exposition here. That was in 1935. I won the first prize in graphic art at the—that was in the San Diego Art Guild, 1941 annual, and the Library of Congress owns two of my prints.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Do you have a mural there?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Not at the Library of Congress, I have in Chicago and Minneapolis, Los Angeles.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Are those in homes or—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Lowell, Massachusetts.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Lowell, Massachusetts. That's interesting. Were these in homes or public buildings?

BELLE BARANCEANU: The ones in Chicago and Minneapolis are—one was in a business building in Minneapolis, and in Chicago, they're in homes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Do you remember the names of them, for the record?

BELLE BARANCEANU: [Inaudible.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] if some future student wants to do your life, for instance, [cross talk] they would want to go and see these. That's why we'd like to know the names.

BELLE BARANCEANU: It isn't something that I would boast of—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You wouldn't want them to see?

[They laugh.] [Cross talk.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, or care to have them see. [Cross talk.] I don't remember the name of the company in L.A. Isn't it awful? It was a shipping company of some kind, and in Chicago, it was a children's room in a home.

[05:17]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: In a school?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, in a home. And in Minneapolis, it's just a decoration that was done over a mantel for a family named Singer.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: S-I-N-G-E-R?

BELLE BARANCEANU: S-I-N-G-E-R.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was this of their children, or a landscape?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, no. As a matter of fact, it was a Dutch—an old Dutch scene, I guess you'd call it, because it had a Dutch background and [inaudible] figures in the foreground.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This wasn't the one that you did later in the school with the children,

and the Dutch—

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, that's a—

UNDISTINGUISABLE SPEAKER: What is your interest in Dutch? [Laughs.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, it isn't that I'm interested in Dutch, it happened to be what the people asked for. The one in Lowell, Massachusetts was commissioned by one of the architects here in town. And it was for a Dutch restaurant.

UNDISTINGUISABLE SPEAKER: I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: And I really knew very little, or, I should say, nothing about Dutch life. So, I had to do quite a bit of research.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I imagine you know a lot now about it.

[They laugh.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, I know how they listen to the Edam cheese. [Cross talk; inaudible]—good.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Does that appear in your mural?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes. It shows a man—

[Cross talk.]

HILDA PREIBISUS: I don't remember seeing that.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —whether it's—did you see the mural?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I saw pictures of it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: When you were working on it, when children were watching.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, I have really no good pictures of it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that's too bad.

BELLE BARANCEANU: It is.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That was quite extensive, wasn't it? Round about two walls.

BELLE BARANCEANU: It was 35 feet long.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that quite large for a mural? There weren't many figures—

BELLE BARANCEANU: I had done one 40 feet. The longest one was 40 feet.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Someplace in my notes I had that you did work for the walls at the Library of Congress in Washington?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, I wish I had.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I wondered because—[they laugh]—it hadn't been that other material.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, it's prints.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Prints, for them.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yeah. And not for them. They bought one print when it was exhibited—I think it was the Academy of Design in New York.

HILDA: Is this one of the animal blocks?

BELLE BARANCEANU: One of the animals, and I don't remember how they got the other one.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, we'll come to those later, then, when we talk about those animal

prints particularly. I don't know—perhaps I should read through some of these in case you've missed them. I haven't really checked them off very well. You've exhibited at the Chicago Art Institute, Los Angeles Art Museum, San Francisco Museum of Art, John Heron Art Institute, Indianapolis, San Diego Fine Arts Gallery, of course, many times, and at the Metropolitan Museum, the National Academy of Design, Library of Congress, Carnegie Institute. Oh, goodness. I think the Art Institute of Chicago in 1926, '27, '28, '31, and '38.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Where are you getting all that information?

[They laugh.][Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Kansas Art Institute, '27. Golden Gate Expedition in San Francisco in '39.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Is that at the Palace of the Legion of Honor?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, it would be. And Carnegie Institute in '43, Library of Congress in '43, '45, and '46, National Academy of Design in '43 to '46, the Artists for Victory show in '42, the Denver Art Museum, '45.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Is that at the Metropolitan?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I don't know where it was.

BELLE BARANCEANU: There was one at the Met—no, it couldn't have been the Artists for Victory —[cross talk]—the Metropolitan. No, there was one at the Metropolitan.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Chicago Society of Artists in '31, and the L.A. Museum was '27 and '28, and San Francisco in '41.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I didn't realize it was that far back.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I think that's all that I have. Oh, did I have the John Heron Institute in Indianapolis?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Which is a great many exhibitions. And you told about the prize, the Carr prize in Chicago, and of the collection the Library of Congress has, the prints you mentioned, and San Diego Fine Arts, of course, there's many of them. Millard Sheets owns one. Reginald Poland, and Dr. and Mrs. Robert Worthington in Topeka, Kansas. Was that a mural, or a painting?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, those were—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, children's paintings.

[00:10:12]

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, in Topeka, Kansas, I think he has some prints and paintings. I can't remember what he had, but I know that he had some.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The—Mr. and Mrs. Louis Paskowitz [ph] of South Dakota and Galveston, Texas.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, that's New York. Galveston, Texas and New York.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, and New York. And then, the Metropolitan Museum. And I'm happy to say I own one. Which I love.

[They laugh.][Inaudible.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: I came across it when I moved, and of course, I didn't keep track of these things so that I would have the material for you. I don't remember who sold it. It must have been a gallery, because I don't remember selling a—one of the prints, I don't even know which one, to a countess someone in Hawaii.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, how interesting. You don't remember her name?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, [laughs] I threw all the papers in a box when we moved, so I haven't unpacked a lot of those things yet, no. I didn't think anybody would—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: When you come across them, I hope you will let me use those again.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —be needing them. I will. Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. That would be interesting. Well, you say you came to California with your family. You told me before that they moved out here during the depression time.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you begin teaching at that time, or were you painting professionally when you first came?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh. When I first came out, I—yes, I was painting professionally when I came, and, of course, I had hoped to teach here. I had been out here before. I had been in L.A. before, and I thought that with a better recommendation from the director of the Chicago Art Institute, I would get a job at Chouinard's. [They laugh.] But they told me they had the Hofmanns. They wanted—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What do you mean, "had the Hofmanns"?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, they wanted European. Was I European? They weren't interested—

UNDISTINGUISHABLE SPEAKER: Like Hans Hofmann?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, he was here.

BELLE BARANCEANU: They weren't interested in young, American artists as teachers. They wanted, evidently—I don't know whether I should say this—[they laugh] —about Chouinard's. [Cross talk.] Oh, much more impressive to have someone from Europe, so—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Even though you had a good European name, it didn't—

BELLE BARANCEANU: [Laughs.] A good European name did me no good, and I had taught in Chicago.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Well, isn't that a shame. So, did you gravitate to San Diego, then?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, my father moved. I struggled along in L.A. for a year with the family moved here—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: —and finally, I just gave up the struggle and came to live with them and paint.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Started your studio and you've been here ever since.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, and I've been here ever since.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, shortly after that, the Federal Arts Project was started. Oh, I'm sorry, at first the Treasury Department Federal Works Progress was begun before the WPA, and you had one of the government murals in the San—La Jolla post office to do. That was probably the first thing that you did on the project, wasn't it?

BELLE BARANCEANU: There was something else I did before, and I don't know which project that was through. There was a large painting of California, that is, Southern California. It was all the things that impressed me about this area.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Under the Federal Art Project?

BELLE BARANCEANU: It must have been federal.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: If it were earlier, it must have been.

BELLE BARANCEANU: It was earlier. And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: An oil painting?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, it was a large oil painting. It was about 12 feet high, and narrower.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You know, at that time, leading artists were asked to contribute pictures to it. Perhaps it was under that—[cross talk]—they were asked to turn in one picture apiece, I believe.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I painted, oh, another landscape from one of the hills looking down over the bay and all that, and then I think—I don't know what order these things came in. I did quite a bit of painting before, and then I got the La Jolla post office.

[00:15:00]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was that competitive?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, I just got a letter asking me whether I had time to do it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, how exciting.

BELLE BARANCEANU: And I said, Time? [They laugh.] I'd drop everything for that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And it's a most beautiful mural.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Do you like it?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, yes indeed, I do.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I had a lot of fun. Of course, it was a challenge in a way, because of the very even distribution of space.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I don't know if you noticed that that door cuts—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That door in the middle.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —cuts it right in the middle.

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —it's been the bug-a-boo of all the mural artists on the project—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, you know, every time I tried to build the composition around it, it had a tendency to fall apart. I've never had to work so hard to get all this organized. Then, too, the La Jollans wanted La Jolla, so I climbed Soledad Mountain. [They laugh.] [Inaudible]—with my sketchpad. I made the sketches as I went up, of the little bridge and some houses, and roads that lead over a hill and seem to just drop off into eternity, and the coal and the ocean beyond. It made a lot of good material, compositionally.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. It occurs to me, it's almost like one of the Braque or Picasso compositions in space, isn't it? It was a matter of volumes.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, and you had to—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The way it came out with those red towers and the cubes and—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, the cubes and the—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —pattern that it would form.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Upside down, it would make a good abstract painting without thinking

of any subject, because it—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, yes. Because I think of abstract paint—even though I have to incorporate all of this, but it was rather amusing when I sent the—I had to send the sketch to Washington to have it approved, and they wrote back and wanted to know where the roads went. [They laugh.] Because they go right up, and then you see the ocean beyond.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

BELLE BARANCEANU: So, I wrote back and said, They go over the hill. [They laugh.] But they wanted to modify it. They wanted more perspective, and I didn't want all that nonsense in it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I wanted good design. If I'd make it narrower, it would weaken my line across, and I needed as much power as I could get to hold it across that doorway.

[Cross talk.][Inaudible.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: I said, Yes, and did what I wanted.

[They laugh.][Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —and Michelangelo's nose again. Same old story. And still you managed to achieve reality of the actual places you've sketched, because you told me about people coming in the post office—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —and bringing in their husbands and children to see their house and their bridge.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, they recognized the area. Of course, you can do that and still have your abstract composition good.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

BELLE BARANCEANU: That's the important part.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was this real fresco done directly to the wall, or was it—

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, no. [Cross talk.] They didn't—see, the post office was already in use, and they didn't want me plastering [laughs] a painting over the post master's door, so—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Where did you work on it?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Where?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Out here at—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, the big building in the—no, it was too large. I had to do it in one of the buildings in the park.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you have a helper or was it a one-woman job?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, no, it was a one-woman job. I like to work alone.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It must have been good paints, too, because the colors are beautiful today, still. They haven't faded.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, yes. Rembrandt. [They laugh.] If it's worth doing, it's worth doing with good material. I—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. Sometimes you can't be sure you're getting good materials.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, you can't.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Some of the artists told me they had trouble with diluted paint.



BELLE BARANCEANU: In my student days, I painted something that I liked very much, and I don't even remember what—must have been wet, or something like that. Cheap paint. I painted something and put it away with a stack of other pictures. I took it out and the color was practically gone. It was just all one color, and I decided then that if it's worth doing, you do it with good material.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The best that you can get.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Pottinger Colors is supposed to be very good.

[00:20:06]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Pottinger?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Pottinger.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: P-O-T-T-I-N-G-E-R?

BELLE BARANCEANU: I-N-G-E-R. I'll tell you who recommended them to me, this Los Angeles man, named—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: A muralist, or?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, he teaches at Chouinard's, I think.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Downtown?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Fietelson?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Feitelson. That's it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He's at Art Center.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, is he at Art Center now?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Excellent teacher.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, at Art Center. Yes, I think he's good because he likes my composition.

[They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He's a delightful man.

BELLE BARANCEANU: He is, and he's well informed. I like him very much.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: But he was the one who told me that Pottinger's Colors were good and much cheaper than the Rembrandt and Winsor Newton, so I've been using them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good to know. After the La Jolla mural, you did frescos in a fine arts gallery wall, I believe—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, two of them—and this was a fawn picture. Now, was this still federal, or was it—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes. No, I don't know what—yes. Oh, I'm sorry, no, it wasn't. That was a city thing.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, it wasn't a federal project?

BELLE BARANCEANU: It was a competitive thing. I was doing the large mural in the Hall of Education—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —when I had to interrupt that to do the other.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'm sorry, the Hall of Education. That is neither the Roosevelt School, nor the La Jolla School.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, that's in the park.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, the Hall of Education is in the park?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, it's in the park.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What is the mural that was there?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, it—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, of course.

BELLE BARANCEANU: The Development of Man [*The Progress of Man*], or something, it was called. I started with the caveman all through the various civilizations to today.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Was that under the Federal Arts Project?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, I think that it was.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Or was it WPA?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Was that on—that was Federal Art?

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I think only the post office was the treasury, then the rest of this is all federal.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes. Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I can't keep the two things straight.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes.

BETTY HOLF: Did you have helpers on this? You probably did.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I had a man who—I don't remember what he did. He didn't paint. I wouldn't let him paint.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mixing paint?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, [they laugh] I didn't have him all the time. I had him for a while, and I think what I did was to use him for a model. [They laugh.] I used arms and head and various positions and that sort of thing. He was supposed to be a helper, but that was the help, because he couldn't paint.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I don't think, unless you train a person, that you can get them to paint as you do.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Of course not.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I only knew one person in my life, and that was Angarola. We could start a mural, I on one side and he on the other, and we'd end up—[they laugh]—so that you couldn't tell who did which. But I think it's because he was my teacher.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes. You were doing, in that case, what he told you.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. After that, you did the Roosevelt School next, I believe.

BELLE BARANCEANU: The Roosevelt Junior High, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: Were you able to get in there?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I haven't had time to go to the schools, on this trip. I've just seen people [laughs]. I'm going to have to sneak into town without telling anyone I think and just go places.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, from the standpoint of composition, I think that it was much easier to do than the one in the Roosevelt Junior High School, because there again, I had this long, narrow expanse of wall going all the way around the proscenium arch, and it was very hard to build it so that it would move around.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Are you speaking of the Hall of Education one now, or the—

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, this is the one in the Roosevelt Junior High School.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that's Departure of Portola [*Portolá's Northern Expedition*], isn't it? Roosevelt Junior High is—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, that's Portolo, and—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Building of the First Dam.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, *Building of the Mission Dam*.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: With the wonderful workers that move away and—

[Cross talk; inaudible.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: Building [inaudible]—just forcing the eye.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And that was how you got them across arch.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, that has no arch.

[00:25:00]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

BELLE BARANCEANU: What it has is two large panels—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The side panels.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —the whole height of the auditorium on either side of the stage.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Whereas, in the La Jolla auditorium, it went all the way around the top.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, that one I've seen.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Narrow spacing, so that—[cross talk]—I had a hard time pulling the composition around.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, actually the one in Roosevelt High School was two panel paintings, is what it, in effect, was.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And they were oil on canvas.

BELLE BARANCEANU: It was oil on canvas, but it was done there.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, it was?

BELLE BARANCEANU: The reason they had me do that was that they weren't sure of the structure of the walls there, and they wanted to be able to remove them if they had to. I don't remember just what the architectural problem was. So, I painted them right there, and, of course, you always have to consider the architecture in relation to what you're painting.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

BELLE BARANCEANU: So, it was rather nice to be able to do it right there.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, aren't you very glad that they were, because one of the things that I've found, talking to artists about their works on public buildings, is that after this length of time, buildings are beginning to go, and it's all this question about how to preserve the paintings.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes. It's—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: In some cases, they can, and in some cases, they're not really able to.

BELLE BARANCEANU: It was an older school. I don't know about the La Jolla Junior High. That was casein right on the wall, but it looks—seems to be in good condition, the last time I saw it, except for some gouges in it when they moved furniture on to the stage for plays, I think, or something. But it's not badly damaged.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I wondered, one time when we were talking about the one that you had done on the outside wall, which was under the SERA [State Emergency Relief Administration] in 1935. Now, that would be the one in the park, the one with the fawn.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes. [Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —the SERA. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But you had said that was true fresco because it was—

[Cross talk.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, that was true fresco.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, then, is La Jolla high school true fresco, too?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, that's a dry fresco, it's casein whereas the other is—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh,

[Cross talk.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, that was pigment, yes, on wet plaster.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I did one for the Fine Arts Gallery in wet plaster that I plastered myself.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You did?

[They laugh.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: I—

[Cross talk]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's why the pictures of you were always in coveralls. You were really doing a lot of the hard work.

BELLE BARANCEANU: [Laughs] Well the coveralls came in when—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You were [very cute (ph)][laughs].

BELLE BARANCEANU: It's part of the problem, because there were no suits for women in that—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Slacks hadn't really come out in those days.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, not at the time. I wanted a one-piece suit. This was when I was working in the Hall of Education. That building wasn't finished, and it was very cold, [laughs] and there were 40 men working in the building, and when the foreman or somebody came in and talked with the architect, he told the architect, She isn't going to paint on that scaffold in skirts,

is she? [They laugh.] So, of course—

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The architect told you and—

BELLE BARANCEANU: So, the architect told me, and I went down and got what the architect called—was a tent. Because the smallest suit that I could get, the smallest men's suit, had the seat of the pants way down to my knees [they laugh], but under that I could wear a ballet suit to keep me warm, and I also wore a suit of my father's woolen underwear. And this is funny, because the day that I wore Father's woolen underwear—I wore this suit because I was so cold—I fell through the scaffolding [laughs].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, no.

BELLE BARANCEANU: And let out one grand howl, and all these men came and didn't know what to do. Fortunately, the architect came, and he just picked me up and carried me over to first aid, and he was sitting in the room when the doctor was undressing me. [They laugh.] And I said, "John, would you please go out?" It was bad enough to be embarrassed by the doctor—

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Not having him discover your father's underwear. [They laugh.]

[00:29:57]

I might add, for the tape, Miss Baranceanu was trained as a ballet dancer before she took up painting a long time ago, and that was why she'd know about the warmth of the ballet suit. [Cross talk.] And also, there's the influence of that in your painting in high school in La Jolla High School, which I thought we'd bring up later. [They laugh.] The interest in dance.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, yes. Well, the interest in the dance. Of course, it's one of the arts, and I had the seven arts on my wall.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Of course.

BELLE BARANCEANU: So, it would be—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: At least we know you enjoyed doing that section of it particularly, I'm sure.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, yeah.

[Recorder stops; restarts.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Before we go on talking about the Roosevelt and La Jolla High Schools, there was one point I wanted to clear up about the other two murals. The one that was done at the Exhibit of Fine Arts on the Palace Garden wall, at the east end was one that was done in a hurry with the woman and the fawn [*Girl with a Fawn*].

BELLE BARANCEANU: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And it was a competition mural under SERA in 1935. The true fresco—

BELLE BARANCEANU: True fresco.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —you were just speaking of, and it's now destroyed, and—[cross talk]— I know you weren't very happy about it.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, I wanted to do another one over it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: But was the wall destroyed?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, the wall has been destroyed, so, it's just fine with me.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And then the other one that you mentioned, I didn't understand under the name you gave it. I have the Palace of Education at the Exposition.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The mural of The Development of Man [*The Progress of Man*]?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is that the correct name for that building?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And that is still in existence, of course.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] and then the Roosevelt School was the next one in 1938.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And after that came the La Jolla School, and this is the one over the—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Along the proscenium arch.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What kind of arch?

BELLE BARANCEANU: The proscenium arch.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, I never can remember that word. [They laugh.] And that is a most interesting one from a compositional standpoint and the development of the art—of course, the idea behind it, the fact that you used many people that you were fond of, both real and fictional, in it. And that has not been written down in any of the books, and I think it would be nice if you told us about those yourself, as they go round.

BELLE BARANCEANU: The people—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, who are in it. It starts at the lower left, I believe, with the people reading, doesn't it?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Or with Literature—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

BELLE BARANCEANU: And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I could read Emerson but the other ones I couldn't read.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Emerson and Mary Ledingham, who was a friend of mine from India, a poetess. And what else did I have there? I think the Bhagavad Gita.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Right.

BELLE BARANCEANU: And the people on it were the writers. I just borrowed Dr. Worthington, really, as a model and he's not a writer, but I needed a man.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Who is he?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, Dr—

HILDA PREIBISIUS: He's a psychiatrist.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Worthin—would you spell him, please?

BELLE BARANCEANU: W-O-R-T-H-I-N-G-T-O-N.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: He's the man from Topeka, Kansas. He was head of the Menninger Hospital—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —for some time, and—so—I think the other man was Clarke, wasn't it, Hilda?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: James?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Was it James Clarke? And I put hair on his head.

UNDISTINGUISHABLE SPEAKER: Oh, who—oh, Jim Clarke, the writer—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes.

[They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I bet he doesn't know he's in that, or—

BELLE BARANCEANU: I think he's—

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Did he pose for it?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I did it with him in mind. I don't remember whether—yeah. [Cross talk.] [They laugh.]—put his hair on. And let me see, the next is the Theater and that's with Katharine Cornell—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Romeo and Juliet [are portrayed (ph)].

BELLE BARANCEANU: Romeo and Juliet, yes. And I don't remember why I didn't use any specific actor with her. I—he's synthetic.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: And then as we go around the bend—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —there, the dancer was Kreuzberg.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Harold?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, Harold Kreuzberg. And the girl—the two girls are for the sake of composition to get that mask as I wanted it, but he—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Out of the corner where you were turning it.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yeah. Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's difficult to work the bend.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes—to get those lines to move out.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

BELLE BARANCEANU: He did at one time—I saw in the Chicago years ago, and he had a partner who was very wonderful. I don't remember who she was, but I added these two.

[00:35:03]

And at the top is the Orchestra, with—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Stokowski.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —Stokowski.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you know him or—

BELLE BARANCEANU: No. No. I didn't know him personally.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —conductor.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I did get a lovely letter from Katharine Cornell though. So—[They laugh; cross talk]—that she thought it was so very nice.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, could we photograph that for the archives? That would be a wonderful thing to have.

BELLE BARANCEANU: You mean the—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The letter from her.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I don't know where I'd find it. So, if I do find it—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I can send it to you.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It would be very nice to go—

BELLE BARANCEANU: And what's next? The Painting.

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The woman—[The great head, the great eye (ph)]—

BELLE BARANCEANU: It's supposed to be a part of a fresco painting—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: —and the big eye is the eye of a friend of mine, and of course, the painter is the rear view of myself with longer legs because I've always wanted to be taller [laughs].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. And the eye—do you mind telling me your friend's name?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, Alice Sue Hardin—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Alice Sue - she might as well go down for posterity. [They laugh.] H-A-R-D-I-N or E-N?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, I-N.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I-N. And you on the scaffold, and I think, isn't there a man?

BELLE BARANCEANU: And then there's —

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: A bit higher.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —a helper. He's handing me a box with paint, supposedly. I don't—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was he your real helper?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, he wasn't. I used him as a model.

UNDISTINGUISHABLE SPEAKER: How about the architect?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, the architects come down later. I didn't use the architect for this. Then, of course, Don Hord doing his fountain—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: *Guardian of Water.*

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes. The next one was Sculpture. And for Architecture, I have John Matthias. This is the fellow I had to—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He would—

BELLE BARANCEANU: —get out of the doctor's office

[They laugh.]



BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Can you spell—M-A-T-T-H-I-A-S?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And he's an architect in Pasadena?

BELLE BARANCEANU: In Pasadena, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And who is the man with him?

BELLE BARANCEANU: The man with him—I needed another man—was Dr. Andreen [ph], who was the principal of a high school at the time, and he, too, was bald, but he wanted hair, so I gave it to him.

[They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, you balanced your composition by having hair on men on either side.

[They laugh.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, you know, it's so cute. I asked him if he would pose, and he said, Oh yes, he would be delighted. So I came into the office and sketched him, and then he said, Could you please put hair on my head?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is he spelled A-N-D-R-E-S-E-N?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, I don't—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Andreen. I don't know how he spells it. Do you know?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: A-N-D-R-E-E-N.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Is it? Thank you.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good. Now, is he the one who's seated? Isn't one of those figures seated? Are they both standing?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, they're both standing over the—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Board.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —drawing board. He's the one who's facing and the side view that curves in is Matthias.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see. Let me get this straight to go with the picture that we have. And you told me once before quite a delightful story about the night that was the opening presentation of the mural and Donald Hord was there. And afterward you came up and asked him if he'd noticed something that you'd done to his picture—would you mind telling it for the tape? [They laugh.] I just love it.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I told him that I hoped he didn't mind my having taken liberties with his architecture. [They laugh.] Or that is, his sculpture.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —and he said, Well, what did you do? I said, Well, I moved, for the sake of the composition, that is to get to be more architectonic, the little finger on this woman's hand, so that it carried the eye where I wanted it to go. And he said, You know, Belle, that was originally designed that way, but in the chiseling, they had cut that little finger off, and he had to create another finger, it was the only way that that he could cut it. It was where there was still stone to cut.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that amazing?

BELLE BARANCEANU: I thought that was amazing.

BELLE HOAG MCGLYNN: Didn't that make you happy you were a painter and not a sculptor?

[Cross talk; inaudible.]

UNDISTINGUISHABLE SPEAKER: —paint over something.

BELLE BARANCEANU: But with your casein paint, you can make mistakes that you can't change.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, really?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, it's a very disciplined medium, and the awful part of it is that here you have this great big wall, and you have to paint it with little brush strokes. You can't take a big brush and paint a large area, it curdles, I tried it.

[00:40:13]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: So, is that a tedious—

[Cross talk, inaudible.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —watercolor then?

[Cross talk.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: In any of your fresco you have that problem.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Incidentally, speaking of painting over, when I was at Messenger's yesterday, he showed me a perfectly beautiful Reiffel painting which he had discovered in a school being used as a bulletin board with thumbtacks all over—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, no.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —and it's absolutely an enchanting thing. It's a scene of the hills in the foreground, with fruit trees in bloom, and you can imagine what he did with the light on it all, and it feels—

[Cross talk.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: Very lively.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —and Messenger's going to be able to repair it. I'm so happy.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Isn't that wonderful?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And also, I want to tell you that he showed me a lovely lithograph of yours, which was very much like your La Jolla post office. It's the same type of scene at the La Jolla roof looking at, and it was done in 1950. You probably don't even remember doing it, but it's one of his prized possessions.

BELLE BARANCEANU: The same kind of composition, you mean—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Like the La Jolla post office where you're looking, kind of—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Down? Oh! [Cross talk.] I know what that is. That was done in Los Angeles. It's part of Elysian Park, just—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, it is?

BELLE BARANCEANU: —where there's some roads and trees.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Certainly could be, yeah.

BELLE BARANCEANU: [Inaudible] is way off in the distance.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Right.

BELLE BARANCEANU: It's just the edge of the park.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I thought perhaps it was La Jolla.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, maybe the moon—[Cross talk.] Yes, it could be the La Jolla. Well, it's California.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. I just brought it up while we were thinking of the Messenger and then while we're talking still about this La Jolla High School, I wanted to ask you if you happened to know who did the sculptures on the gymnasiums there? They were obviously done under the Project period. The librarian has promised to look up the old annuals and see if she can find it, and I haven't found—

BELLE BARANCEANU: I remember—sculptures in the gymnasium?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They aren't very good sculptures, but on the outside it—

[Cross talk.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: I've never been—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —freezes over it—boys and girls, you know, basketball or something, and it's the same vintage [inaudible]—

BELLE BARANCEANU: I've never been—I didn't know they had a gymnasium. I never was anywhere but in that auditorium.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see. Well, I thought possibly it was done while you were working on your mural, you might have remembered who did the sculpture was—

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, no. I used to come in there in the morning and I'd work until dark.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: So that I never knew what was going on, except when I lost my skink when I took him out in the sun.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You lost what?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Do you know what a skink is?

[They laugh].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No, an animal?

BELLE BARANCEANU: It's a little lizard—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, it is?

BELLE BARANCEANU: —that is about so long, and it's like spun glass. It's the color of your earring—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, my goodness.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —and they love the warmth of your body. So, he would sit on my shoulder while I painted, as if he were watching. Then he'd walk around the other side and watch. Well, I thought I'd give him a treat and take him out in the sun while I eat my sandwich for lunch, [they laugh] and he jumped into the bushes and disappeared.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. And you never found him?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Never found him.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, maybe now there are little baby skinks all over the campus.

[They laugh.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: So few people know about them, and it's a California lizard. I've never seen it—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It isn't a chameleon?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, it's not a chameleon because its little feet are just like spun glass, almost transparent and not, sort of, like gray and then it builds up into this beautiful blue in the body, just luminous.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Getting back to the murals, not long after the La Jolla one, you did one not on the project, but we certainly should mention because you did it.—It was 1943 Congressional Church in Old Town, San Diego. I don't—I haven't even seen pictures of it, but I know that you did murals for that church.

BELLE BARANCEANU: It—oh, yes. It was an anonymous contribution. I mean, I never knew who gave the money for it, but the minister had asked for something pertaining to Christmas. So, I did this abstract painting of, oh, the Christ light enveloping the Earth at Christmas.

[00:45:03]

[Inaudible.] And this was funny, the Minister came when it was done and he said, Couldn't we have some camels and wise men coming out of those rays?

[They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you give him some?

BELLE BARANCEANU: I said, I'm very sorry, but this is it. Of course, after Reginald Poland, who was the director of the Fine Arts gallery, then, spoke at the dedication and praised it, this man felt better about it, but he was really upset because to him it didn't mean Christmas.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: After all those Christmas cards with the works, he wanted it all for his church. [They laugh.] Toward the—we're going to get back to the curriculum work that you did after I talk to Hilda. But, the project was sort of petering out when the war started. And in 1944, you did the equivalent of a mural for Fifth War Loan Drive, which was shown in the backdrop in Marsden's Department Store window.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, I did several of them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, did you?

BELLE BARANCEANU: For all the windows—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —in the entire store.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And this wasn't a federal thing, I suppose?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No. That was commissioned by Marsden's.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, by Marsden's.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, it's just so interesting what happened to them. Would you tell a little bit about it anyway, because—

BELLE BARANCEANU: You mean what they were?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, not—the way they were treated.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, the way they were treated? Well, the man who was the head of the window display, the head of the artwork for Marsden's cut them up to use that material again for something. I don't know what. I had done one that I liked very much. It was the first one where a —it was—all these things were taken from actual war experiences, like the bombing of Tokyo—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: And I had this huge plane in the foreground and little ones in the background, and Fujiyama beyond. And then below, the huge billows of smoke from oil tanks

and that sort of thing blowing up. And another one was of searchlights; I don't remember who did what in that. And men and guns to get all that excitement into it, but this one I had put a lot of work into because there was a man on a limb and very tropical jungle setting throwing a hand grenade into a Japanese patrol. And I thought that after they were through with it, I'd buy it back and paint out the war part and make it all into the landscape, because I had put a lot of time and energy in it. Well, when I came back to ask for it, he said that they had cut it up.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I almost wish I hadn't asked you to tell that story again.

[They laugh.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: He had no taste. This might sound egotistical of me, but I know his work. It was just terrible.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: He would ask my opinion of it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, before we go to the curriculum, I want to kind of bring your life up to date after the project. I believe it was after this you started teaching at the Francis Parker School.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, I taught at the Fine Art Gallery.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I knew that you taught there in the summertime.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yeah. But I—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was that a full-time class?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, no. But I use to teach every summer there before I went to Parker—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And then you've been at Parker for—since the '50s sometime, haven't you?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh. I think it was since '48 or something, '49. But before that, I did those medical illustrations for Dr. Huff [ph]. I illustrated his two books on gynecology. And did some murals for—oh, this cute, I must tell you this. Bogher, one of the architects here in town, was doing a— what I'd call a bar but he was afraid that I wouldn't do a mural for him if he didn't say that it was a very high class club.

[They laugh.]

[00:50:04]

So, I did this mural with a Cambodian background motif. Because I just love Cambodian dancers [they laugh] and then had his nude white [ph], draped around—dancing in the foreground. And he came in. I don't know whether this should be for the record. I thought I had a lovely creature. And he came in and he looked at her and said, She needs larger breasts. [They laughs] So, I painted them. My cousin was living with me then and said, [Inaudible] they look as if they'd deflate if you stick a pin in them.

[They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was he happy with this?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, he was. I couldn't stand the sight, of course. [They laugh.] Because it was out of balance.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. I guess there's lots of trials and tribulations of advertising art that—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, there are. There are. Well, in advertising and even doing murals, because what you think is good, your architect might not. And when the architect approves as— well, in the case of this man who— the architect who so liked the design that I did for the up— the front of the theater.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: This great big theater, and then—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible]—a theater near San Diego—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes. In San—it was near San Diego State. It was the campus theater, and the architect was pleased. But when this big Texan who was building the theater came in, he wanted—what do they call these high-stepping girls?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Who turn batons? Anyway, he wanted legs.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: This didn't have legs. So, I lost the commission. All this work for nothing. And that your problem.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: That was the nice thing about the Art Project. There wasn't much dictating.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Dictation?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No. You had quite a bit of freedom.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's a wonderful thing.

BELLE BARANCEANU: It is.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes. Miss Baranceanu, you were very active with the curriculum project which was in San Diego, a combination of the Federal Arts Project and the city schools. And we of course talked to Helen and Jim Clarke before about this, and I think it's one of the most thrilling things that came out of the Federal Works Project. And Miss Preibisius also was active in this, and so before we start talking about it, I think I'm going to take time out for a minute and talk to you, particularly. [Inaudible.]

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Miss Preibisius did some of the most beautiful illustrations that were done under the Curriculum Project. We've already, on microfilm, shown some of her wonderful stippled, pen-and-ink drawings that were done as illustrations for a book and also one of the custom plates in watercolor, which she'd done. I would—before we talk about the work, I'd like to ask a little bit about your own life, where you were born and when, and where you were educated.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I was born in Findlay, Ohio in 1901.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Would you mind spelling Findlay for us?

[They laugh.]

HILDA PREIBISIUS: F-I-N-D-L-A-Y.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Ohio, 1901?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You went to school there?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No, I came to San Diego with my family in 1904.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You're almost a native Californian, then.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Almost a native daughter, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You grew up here and went to school here.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And did you go to art school at all?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No. I grew up like Topsy art-wise.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You did?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I think that's amazing.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: She was an—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I've seen your work. I just can't believe it. [Laughs.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: I told her she was an artist in her last incarnation.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, she must have been.

[They laugh.]

HILDA PREIBISIUS: So—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, had you done any artwork before the Project came along?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Oh, yes, yes. I had made decorative drawings from the *Ladies Home Journal*—

[00:55:05]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, really?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: And *McCall's Magazine*.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: How interesting.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: And for greeting card companies. Things of that kind.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, [clears throat] excuse me. How in the world did you happen to get into that when you're way out on the West Coast?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Well. [They laugh.] I just noticed they used certain types of drawings, the spot drawings.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HILDA PREIBISIUS: And I thought, well, maybe I could do something like that. So, I did. I tried. And the thing that might be interesting, I made two drawings, one of them was half done when I got the rheumatoid arthritis and was laid low for almost a year.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, no. Really?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: But I did finish. I did finish that particular one and four more and sent them to the *Ladies Home Journal*, and about two weeks later—we lived in the country at the time—the package was returned to me.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: And I was just heartbroken. I needed a lift of some sort.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: And my brother Lewis [ph] said to me, Well, sis, maybe there's a letter inside. So, we opened it up, and I didn't have much heart.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: But I did. I opened it up, and there was a letter inside saying they had kept two of the drawings and a check [for weeks (ph)] will go forward to you in a short time.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: May we have some more of your work?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Wasn't that wonderful?

[Cross talk; Inaudible.]—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Okay. [inaudible] I might add to the tape that Miss Preibisius has had this arthritic condition with her hands. And in spite of the fact that they have been cramped from it, has been able to do this wonderfully detailed work. And I cannot imagine how could you—how she could do this if she didn't have any trouble with her hands. Because you—

BELLE BARANCEANU: She couldn't do it any better. You know, it—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Just couldn't be. And it's such fine work. It's just amazing. Were these costume pictures?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Just design?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Some of them were.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Because your costumes on the Project were always so beautiful—[cross talk.] I wondered if you'd had experience with *Ladies Home Journal*, particularly doing costumes.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No. No. I always wanted to design costumes for a ballet company.

[They laugh.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: Maybe you will for the San Diego Ballet sometime.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [That would be fun (ph).]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you work for a greeting card company here in San Diego or freelance?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No. This was in Boston.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Boston line of greeting card. Incidentally, Ethel [ph] worked for the same company in Boston.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Really?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is she a Project artist?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No. No.

BELLE BARANCEANU: But she's a fine artist. She's a very fine painter.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good. Well, we won't get her name for the issue [ph]—[They laugh; inaudible] project.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No. No.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. Well, with that—that was—the fact that you'd always wanted to do ballet drawings [ph], may have been one reason that you and Miss Baranceanu became such



good friends when you met each other on the Project. Since you knew about her ballet, was it?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, I don't think that she did any ballet then.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No.,

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] didn't get any done.

BELLE BARANCEANU: But it was the beauty of her line and the wonderful sensitive quality that she had. I just couldn't believe that anyone could draw like that that hadn't studied for years, really, people—you—well, of course, in teaching I've learned that you just can't teach some people.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It has to come from the feeling—

BELLE BARANCEANU: It has to come from within. And she just was wonderful.

HILDEA PREIBISIUS: Thank you.

BELLE BARANCEANU: You were. Oh, I'd sit there and just drool over these wonderful drawings.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Well, it was a mutual drooling.

[They laugh.][Cross talk, inaudible.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: Her animal prints!

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, what were the first things that you did for the Curriculum?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: The very first things I did were the costume plates, and they were done for the history and drama departments in the city schools.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And about how many did you do, or do you even remember?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Oh, my. Possibly 50.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: My goodness. And how were these used? In classes?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: They—as I understand it, Miss Perry, the art supervisor—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's Lotta [ph] Perry, isn't it?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Lotta [ph] Perry. Took the drawings to the schools.

[01:00:02]

BELLE BARANCEANU: They were not in the library?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I don't remember. that part.

BELLE BARANCEANU: The lending library?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I don't remember that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They were used as illustrative to texts that were read or something?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yeah, yes. They were covered with a—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Sort of a cellophane?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yes, it was transparent.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Oh, I remember when that came in. And it used to get tucked when the weather was hot—[they laugh] —and loosen up when the weather got cool in the night and make wrinkles over the pictures. Saran, wasn't it? The Saran [inaudible].

And then after—well, you tell me some more of what you did on the Curriculum.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Well, after that they wanted someone to do the legends. The Mayan bird

legends, and—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Had Mrs. Rosada [ph] written her book already?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yes, it was a translation from the original Mayan legends.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: She translated it. And they seemed to have difficulty getting someone to give that feeling of—what's the word I want? Well, it was an illusion fantasy.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HILDA PREIBISIUS: That was what they couldn't seem to get. They got the original, but not the authentic Mayan feeling.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: They didn't have the fantasy.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HILDA PREIBISIUS: And I realized that I couldn't have it either unless I went home, away from all the commotion there at the Project.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HILDA PREIBISIUS: So, they allowed me to go home and work them out.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Work on the [inaudible]?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yeah. And I remember my mother brought in a spray of wisteria from the garden, and she put on one of Debussy's records, "Clair de Lune."

BELLE BARANCEANU: How sweet.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: And that's all I needed.

[They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, you certainly caught that feeling. And they're such delightful stories. I think the illustrations are absolutely perfect for them.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Thank you.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They have that fay quality, and the delicacy and charm.

[Cross talk.] Did the children love them in the schools?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Do they still use them there, do you know? [Inaudible].

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I don't know. I don't know whether they—I understood they may have replaced them with something more authentic. Someone came along who didn't—perhaps didn't care for the fantasy, so much as the authenticity.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They don't—they can't sell them anyplace, of course—

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —because they're part of the school.

BELLE BARANCEANU: But even in the authentic drawings, wouldn't they also be fantasy, because they're imaginative things, they're imagined?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: But they're so heavy.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, yes. The Mayans—[cross talk]

HILDA PREIBISIUS: —the thing that bothered me—

[Cross talk; inaudible.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: —a likeness, almost, of the East Indian, the Hindu. Don't you think so?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, and the same delicacy—

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I don't—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —that's in the story. That's what's so interesting.

UNDISTINGUISHABLE SPEAKER: Persian even? Persian drawings. I thought she was a Persian.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yes, they do look very Persian. That's right.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: The—someone at the project—I believe it was Mrs. Clarke. Someone there—  
or Mr. Clarke—suggested that I send it to some publisher, so I sent them to McMillan in New  
York.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, did you?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: And I received a letter back immediately that they were very much  
interested in the drawings.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HILDA PREIBISIUS: If they could have the manuscript, they would like to look it over. So, the  
manuscript was—the school sent the manuscript to them, post haste, but something happened.  
They just—somehow, the two didn't jive. They didn't seem to care to publish it after that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, this may be a matter of the time. You know, sometimes—I  
understand publishing houses get ahead on certain types of things.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: That could be.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And they won't do them, and that probably could be resubmitted to  
them, or to another company, and still put out there. You know, they're timeless in their spirit  
both the drawings and the stories. I tried to get one of the Curriculum—other books that had  
your cover on it, you know. I didn't—don't mean to say I tried to get it. I went to a secondhand  
store and ran into one of the copies of one and was so thrilled [inaudible]—

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Oh, really?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, but it had no cover. Somebody had torn that off [laughs].

[01:05:04]

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Oh.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: So, it was all the rest of it, so that's why I've been going to secondhand  
shops around here, hoping I can find some more of those, because they're ones that people—  
[cross talk]—had stolen from schools and just had put in the Goodwill.

BELLE BARANCEANU: You know, I had met someone at a party not so long ago who said they  
had the sketches to my Roosevelt Junior High mural. I said, That can't be, because I thought I  
had—but I don't have them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Where did they get them?

BELLE BARANCEANU: I don't know. They must have taken—you know, those things had to be left  
with the school—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's strange.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —city schools, and they evidently knew someone who knew someone.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Miss Preibisius, did you do any of the other Curriculum books?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Do you remember the names?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: *El Camino Real*.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, yes.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Belle did the cover, and I did the illustrations. And there was one for Mexican clothing. I enjoyed that very much.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I didn't get to see that one.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I had the original drawings someplace—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: —and I don't—I'll have to look for those.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I want to backtrack just one minute and explain to the tape that the drawings which you've loaned to us to be microfilmed from the Mayan storybook are not the original plates that are used in the book because you had redone them.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And I didn't understand why you had redone them.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Just to keep them as record for myself.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see. You didn't—the original plates weren't burned at the Visual Education building?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I don't know.

[Cross talk.]

UNDISTINGUISHABLE SPEAKER: They were the property, you see. They were—things we did on the project, we had to leave with the Project.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I re-did blocks.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HILDA PREIBISIUS: You see. We couldn't take those things.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And I was going to ask you—well, I might as well interrupt now and say that you did many of the covers. I'm now talking to Belle. [They laugh.] You did many of the covers for these, too, including the most exciting group of block prints, and were they wood or linoleum blocks, your animal covers?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Linoleum and one of them was rubber, which I'd never recommend again. Once, someone wanted me to try it. I don't know why. Oh, yes, I do know why. Rubber stands up longer. You can make more impressions, but I'd never do it again.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Hard to cut?

BELLE BARANCEANU: It's harder than wood.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Does it crack?

BELLE BARANCEANU: It doesn't crack.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh?

BELLE BARANCEANU: It holds your blade back as you cut, so you never know quite how long your line is.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, these covers of the animals are very, very beautiful and are collector's items. In fact, the Library of Congress has one of the cat and foxes. These are two different plates, and Metropolitan has the baboons.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, it was exhibited there. They don't own it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I thought they did own it.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, no.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And then, the skunk was on tour with the Federal Projects Examples of Works.

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, that wasn't the Federal Project. That was the American federated art—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

BELLE BARANCEANU: American Federation of Art. They have scouts who go around to the various museums when there are exhibits, and they pick out pictures to exhibit—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: —at other museums, and they'll have a whole exhibit, perhaps, of prints going around the country that they have selected from various galleries.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, were you ever—[cross talk]—were your original blocks burned in that fire, or do you know?

BELLE BARANCEANU: I don't know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, you still have some here. Are these copies that—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Those are mine.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —you made later, just like Hilda made copies of hers?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I cut my own.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: So, you still have all of those.

BELLE BARANCEANU: So, I have it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see. And you have your originals? I mean, you have the pen and inks that you made the originals—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes. The prints, I understand, that were not out on loan to the schools, were in the library—were burned.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, it would be the blocks that would be the great loss, though, because they—

[Cross talk.]

BELLE BARANCEANU: No, they can't make more, because—[inaudible]—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What were some other things that you did on the Project?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Well, that was just about all. Most of my time was taken up with the costumes and the illustrations.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And this—I believe the Curriculum Project was begun in about 1936. Do you remember how long it lasted?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: 1930—just before the war, wasn't it?

[01:10:04]

[Cross talk.]

UNDISTINGUISHABLE SPEAKER: I don't remember dates. Two years. Was it two years that I was on?

BELLE BARANCEANU: I don't know how long. I was trying to think, because during the time that I would have to have a mural approved, I would be turning out all sorts of things.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: And then what did I do? Three murals on that? I did the Roosevelt and THE La Jolla, and the post office wasn't on it. The Hall of Education, but I don't—I have no sense of time.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I wanted to ask you what the translator of these Mayan myth thought of your illustrations?

UNDISTINGUISHABLE SPEAKER: Mrs. Rosardo [ph].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I haven't been able to find her to talk to her yet. Wasn't she thrilled?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Oh, I don't really know.

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You didn't know her at all?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Really?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I had never known just what her reaction was.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: How amazing—[cross talk]—but I would think she would have sent you flowers [laughs]—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Didn't she ever say?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: That I can't remember.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, you've probably just forgotten—

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Maybe.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —because she must have been really excited about it. She would have to be.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Of course, it was kind of taken out of her hands, because there was a time limit set. The schools were screaming for the book. [They laugh.] They had a time limit.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: So, Hilda, hurry up and get to work.

[They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Since then, have you done any teaching?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No. I illustrated several books for Margaret Pumphrey. Mine were—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Do you mind spelling—P-U-M-P-H-R-E-Y?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: That's right. R-E-Y. They were histories of California, Southern California.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This wasn't on the Project?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No, no.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This was a private thing. Were they children's books?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yes, one of the books is still in print since 1939.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, for goodness' sakes. What is the name of it?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: *Under Three Flags*.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I think I've heard of that.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'll be able to get that in a library again, you know [inaudible]. Do you remember the names of the other two?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: There was just another one. *Yucca Ranch*.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And have you done any other book illustrations?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Have you done any more of your costume plates for anything?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No. I took up easel painting after that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's what I was going to ask you about next.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They're the most delightful mixture of Redon and I—just a wonderful fantasy lightness that you had in your illustrations.

BELLE BARANCEANU: She has a beautiful quality.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, it is. Well, Mr. Messenger showed me such a beautiful one last night of a tree with the Big Dipper [cross talk] and the night sky behind. [Cross talk.] And then, I'm so grateful to be able to have pictures taken from your snapshots. The other ones that I haven't seen look so interesting.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Thank you.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They remind me more, I think, of American poetry than any other artist, actually. They have the feeling of Edgar Allen Poe, you know, the same mysticism [inaudible] Ryder.

BELLE BARANCEANU: They do have a mystical quality.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's like—well, if you're getting back to artists, again, it would be Ryder, wouldn't it? Blakelock and [inaudible].

BELLE BARANCEANU: There is a Turner painting called *The Storm* that makes me think of it. Are you familiar with that one?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, and it makes you think of the copper well with the [gold bow (ph)] coming out.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes. Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Very much.

BELLE BARANCEANU: And I think it's the most—that Turner is the most contemporary thing that one can imagine. Always—

[Cross talk, inaudible.]

HILDA PREIBISIUS: When I finished making it, I said, "Oh my, I've done a Turner!"

[They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was that a surprise for you?

BELLE BARANCEANU: Had this one in mind when you realized that?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No, I don't remember that. I don't remember ever having seen it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Who owns that painting now?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: It's just been in the Fine Arts Gallery, and—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's being exhibited there.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Then it's a recent thing [ph] [inaudible].

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Right. You'll be interested in the fact that Dr. Ziff [ph] from UCLA is doing a new book on Turner.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Oh?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He's in England, I believe [inaudible] his research, and everyone at the department over there has been interested in his work for a long time. Watch for it when it comes out.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes.

[01:15:02]

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I think that this would be a good time to talk in general about what both of you feel the benefit of the project was to the artists in this community and the work that was done. Would you like to—

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —make any remarks about it?

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I believe it gave them an opportunity to develop along lines that perhaps they didn't know they had an ability for. And, for instance, with myself with the illustration. I didn't dream anything like that. And I think both Belle and I feel that it gave us an opportunity to do something we wanted to do very much, to be with people who were very compatible, and also to earn money, which was very necessary in those days.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Yes, and at that time, no matter how good an artist you were, you couldn't make a living. You just couldn't. No one wanted art.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No one needed it. They wanted food.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, of course.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I can say for myself; I have always felt that it was the most—the happiest time in my whole adult life.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I've heard this from so many artists, and it's been interesting coming into the San Diego community where I didn't know people before, going from one group to another, finding that there's a bond between—among all of you, even though you don't see each other, which is true.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: That's true.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Very, very strong.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Such affection that came from working together at that time.



HILDA PREIBISIUS: That's true.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's quite a wonderful thing.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I think it is.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's almost a brother-sister feeling about the work you're doing. You're all so interested and eager to know and it never would've happened—

BELLE BARANCEANU: That's true because there was a sharing. Now, before the Depression, I know when I was living in Chicago, I felt there was a community of artists, and there was always that exchange of ideas. Someone would come in and show them what you had done that day. But then, when the Depression came, and I came out here, there was no contact with the art world at all. There was no chance to exchange—no chance to do anything.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BELLE BARANCEANU: And then, to work with these people who were interested and doing the same thing you were doing, and the chance to do it—to do the things you want to do and know how to do, it was wonderful.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And you must have also had a lot of playing together. I was interested in reading some of the newspapers about things that Mr. Field had started when he came in, not only having the artists in the Spanish Village exhibit their crafts for the public, which was a wonderful thing, but things like the Charade Ball they had. Were you both part of that?

BELLE BARANCEANU: No.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: No, I don't remember that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: There were pictures in the paper about it. Surrealistic ball, and the artists that came—

BELLE BARANCEANU: Was that of the artists at that time?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Apparently, it must have been. It was for the Spanish Village.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh. Because we have had—through the art school in Cornado, they have had annual office balls that were, oh, terrific.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes. Bonnie Lewis [ph] told me about those.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Yeah, yes. But that was after.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, this was shortly after Mr. Fields had established the Spanish Village, which I believe was done under the Project, although maybe it was just an offshoot—

BELLE BARANCEANU: I don't know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I don't know either. But it certainly was exhibiting work of artists who were on the Project.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Oh, it was?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I think many of them who were on the Project.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I had tried to work there once. I think this was after the Project was over, and I found it too distracting. People came in and talked to me while I was trying to work, and I can't work that way.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes. I was surprised that the artists worked together. I hear many places, they did their work as you did, Hilda, at home, and then just brought their work in.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Clears throat.] Excuse me, I'm losing my voice. [They laugh.] Belle, you wanted to tell us some of the philosophy of painting that came out of this. This would be a good time.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Well, I don't know whether that came out of it, but it's something that I've always believed.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: We'd love to hear it.

[01:19:55]

BELLE BARANCEANU: I feel that all art, or all of art, has to have organization. After all, the universe has order.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Right.

BELLE BARANCEANU: From the cosmos to the micro-cosmos to the atom, really. And in visual art, this is the relationship of line, form, mass, color, and movement. The degree of greatness of a work of art, whether it be ancient Cambodian or contemporary, whether representational or non-objective, may be measured by how well it is organized. That is, to what degree each of its parts is significantly related to every other part and to the whole. Today's informed man, living in Einstein's physical world of relativity should not find it difficult to realize that such relativity, relatedness, organization, is the essential of every art, even that one which ties every man to art. The art of living.

Of the importance of visual art to organizing relationships and living, S. I. Hayakawa, semantic authority, says, "To stop looking at things separately, to see them related or organized, as in a great painting, helps one lose the delusion of self-important individualism and gain social relatedness, an interdependence that makes living a fine art. Because significant satisfying relationships are natural, that is inherent in the nature of things, they may be discovered in areas that are not despoiled. When found, they serve to inspire an artist to create significantly organized material, whether it be representational or abstract expressionism. For that reason, I like to work and learn from children. Uninhibited by limiting particulars, they can put the universe on a horse's tail."

[They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that's wonderful.

BELLE BARANCEANU: The other—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's very nice.

BELLE BARANCEANU: The other thing just goes into more detail. I don't—it might be a bit repetitious, but just on children—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I think it would be interesting to hear it, because you've been working with them so much.

BELLE BARANCEANU: I went to an exhibit some time ago of paintings by Japanese children, and I hadn't really thought about this before, but I thought, What a universal language painting really is. You don't have to know Japanese to understand the painting, or you don't have to speak Italian, and so on.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's a language of itself.

BELLE BARANCEANU: A language, yes. So, I had thought about that, and then I thought about the business of teaching art. "Teaching is a creative act. The child and the situation inspire the activity. A normal child is born with every quality that a creative human being needs. He has imagination, the feeling to rise above the earth and rationality. He has perception, grasping the essence of a thing seen for the first time. He has insight, feeling the vibration of human emotion before they become visible. He has enthusiasm, applying himself freshly and eagerly to each new task. He has spontaneity, reacting to light and its steadily changing aspects."

And then, there was this other thought that we function at only a fraction of our potential, and I like what Herbert Reed says about this: "From our standpoint in the phenomenal realm, in which we live and have our being, we can only perceive the value of a transcendental realm, and perception is the essential link between the two realms. We can only become increasingly aware of these values by educating the faculty of perception, to the end that may have the quality of universal insight." Of course, I always liked Reed. [Laughs.]

[01:25:03]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes. So do I. I think the children who have had you for a teacher are very fortunate.

HILDA PREIBISIUS: I think so, too.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'd like to see an exhibit of their work sometime.

BELLE BARANCEANU: Thank you. Oh, I have some slides that were given to me for my birthday. They're of my children's pictures.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]