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## Oral history interview with Ina Sizer Cassidy, 1964 February 13

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## Transcript

### Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Ina Sizer Cassidy on February 13, 1964. The interview took place in Santa Fe, New Mexico and was conducted by Sylvia Glidden Loomis 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

SYLVIA LOOMIS: This is an interview with Mrs. Ina Sizer Cassidy, widow of the well-known artist Gerald Cassidy in Santa Fe, New Mexico on February 13, 1964. The interviewer is Mrs. Sylvia Loomis of the Santa Fe Office of the Archives of American Art, and the particular phase of Mr. Cassidy's work to be emphasized is that which he did under the auspices of the Federal Public Works of Art Projects in the 1930s. Would you tell us first, Mrs. Cassidy something about your husband himself? Where and when he was born, where he was educated, and so forth.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He was born in Covington, Kentucky, November 10, 1869. The son of a—I can't tell about it.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, you said his father was a contractor—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Permanent contractor and builder.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And—who later moved across the river to Cincinnati and established his business there. And Mr. Cassidy had a common school education but entered the Mechanics Art Institute in—what's the name of that now? In Cincinnati.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: It was in Cincinnati. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He must have entered that at an early date as a boy because he took the first prize for drawing when he was 12 years old and he continued there, graduated from that. He came under the influence of Duveneck of Munich who was teaching art, and he had a great influence on Cassidy's early work.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Was that when he learned lithography?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes, he learned lithography. He specialized in lithography and was considered one of the three best lithographers in the country in the business at that time.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And has always been recognized as a master in lithography because they had to—in those days, they had to learn all about not only the sketching and the use of lithographic crayon and the printing; they did the whole thing. And he printed all of his own art lithographs, by the way, later on. And did a great many art lithographs, too after he came to New Mexico, especially. And it's interesting to say—to note that in the fine arts today, some of his later work in lithography, his lithographs are considered the sketches for lithographs, he specialized in theatrical art, theatrical posters. He was one of the top men in theatrical posters and some of his old commercial lithographs are considered—and his sketches, considered fine arts today, and when he started in—he gave up his lithographic work after he came to New Mexico—that is his commercial work and wanted it entirely divorced from his lithographic work, from his commercial work because it was such a tremendous jealousy and opposition to a commercial artist in those days.

So, he assumed the name Gerald.

[00:05:14]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: What was his name before?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Ira Dymond Cassidy.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: And that was the name he used as a commercial lithographer?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And all the time afterward, when he was working—had left the commercial work as a commercial artist, he used the signature Gerald Cassidy with the little sign—Indian sign of the sun—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, the sun symbol, mm-hmm [affirmative]—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: —in between.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh yes, mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: So, it looked like Gerald O'Cassidy.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh [laughs].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Which wasn't out of order because the Cassidy name was in Ireland, it was O'Cassidy.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Originally, yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes. [Laughs.]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well somewhere I saw it Gerald P. Cassidy so that again might have been picked up from that sun symbol.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: That was put in between.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: —it might have been—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, it's good to get that—[Cross talk.]

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Or might have been a typographical error.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Might have been, yes. Now, up to the time he came to New Mexico, he just did commercial work?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Lithography?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: And it was when he came to New Mexico—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He was living in New York.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And New Jersey at that time.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And—but when he did come to New Mexico then, from then on, he became a fine artist. Is that right?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: After several years.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see, mm-hmm [affirmative]. When was it that he came to New Mexico?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He came to New Mexico first in about 1896 or '97. He came out on a stretcher to Albuquerque with TB following an attack of pneumonia, and he was given six months to live.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Hm. A long six months, wasn't it?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Uh-huh [affirmative].

[Audible knocking.]

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes?

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He lived in Albuquerque perhaps 10 years, and then his lithographic work—his commercial work called him to Denver because of better training facilities. And he was living there and became interested then commenced doing his fine arts, and in the lithographic world, as I said, he's specialized in theatrical posters. So, he is accustomed to doing large work, and also, portraits—commercial portraits, and he was pretty nearly as well-known for his portraits as he was for his other work. And he's painted very many portraits of prominent people under the name of Gerald Cassidy.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see. Well, now that was then after he came to New Mexico—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: —that was after he came to Santa Fe.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: —yes, to Santa Fe.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: To Santa Fe, yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: To Santa Fe, yes. And when—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, that was after he came to Santa Fe.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: So, he went back to—where did you say he went back to Chicago?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: No.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, well—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: No, he went up to Denver.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see, to Denver, mm-hmm [affirmative]. And then when did he come to Santa Fe?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He came to Santa Fe in the first week in January of 1912, just after we were—he and I were married. He had married and had a son—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Previous marriage?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: First marriage.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Son died still a child from—I don't know.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: It didn't live to be a year old.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: One of those epidemics. And we knew each other for about 10 years before we were married. His first wife was still living, I knew her. She was a very fine musician, and Gerald was a very good singer, and always took part in singing festivals.

[00:10:18]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And where were you married?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: We were married in Pueblo, Colorado because I had a friend living there and wanted to be married by an episcopal chairman—clergyman. So, we went down to Pueblo and were married there and took the train and came right on our honeymoon to Santa Fe, and it amused us very much because everybody thought that we were an old married couple. [Laughs]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh. [Laughs.] Well, what was—was there an art colony in Santa Fe at the time you and Mr. Cassidy arrived?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Mr. Cassidy—let's see Kenneth Chapman and Carlos Vierra were the only artists in Santa Fe.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And everything was Taos.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see, that's where there were more artists at that time.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: But Mr. Cassidy needed to be near a railroad and express office because he still did some commercial work.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And so, we came down here and then he wanted to paint the Indians, and I wanted to write about them, and Santa Fe was a better center, even than Taos, because we were close to all of the Indian pueblos.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Of course.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And could reach them very easily.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, would you tell us something about what Santa Fe was like in those days?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, it had the plaza and one main street, and no pavement except a brick pavement in front of the old palace—just the length of the old palace. And everybody knew everybody, and it was like one big family.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: How many people were there here at that time? Do you know?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I think something like 3,000, if I remember correctly, not more than that though.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see. Were there very many anglos there who were not artists?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Just the businessmen.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: The number of businessmen that would be in a town of that size you know, and of course they—artists knew everybody.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Of course. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I know that soon after that the artists began coming—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, it was several years before they commenced coming.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, I see.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And I think Randall Davey was one of the earliest.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And Olive Rush came quite soon afterwards, too.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes. I don't remember what year Olive Rush came. The exposition at San Diego, California—California Pacific I think it was called—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Panama California Exposition, I have down here—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Panama. Panama. Panama California Exposition. And Dr. Hewitt [ph] had Mr. Cassidy do the wall of panels—murals of the Pajarito Plateau because the New Mexico had quite a big exhibit there. They had the Indian Arts building and those panels are still there in the what is called now the California building. And Gerald had a studio on the balcony in this Indian Arts building, so that he was right in the center of everything during that time, and that's when he really got started in his fine arts, and he was awarded the grand prize and gold medal for those decorations.

[00:15:00]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Was that the first large mural he had done?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, it—yes, I think possibly it—but he had been accustomed to doing these large stage scenes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, I see.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Putting in his commercial work, that was one of his specialties.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Stage sets as well as posters, that he did? Oh, yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Large posters. You know, they'd be the whole side of a house in those theatrical productions.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, yes. Well, are there other things that you remember his doing between that period and when the first Federal Art Project started? Do you remember other types of things that he did? He did a great many easel paintings during that period.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes, and he did, as a sideline to make money to live on, he did two series of postcards.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And those postcards are collector's items now.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I imagine.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: They were different from any postcards that they'd ever had before, so they were a very good seller.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And I read somewhere—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Then he did a good many portraits.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He did the—incidentally, he did the last portrait of Bandelier. It was done before Bandelier died in Spain, when he went back.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Do you remember when Bandelier died?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I don't remember exactly.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Approximately?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I'd have to look that up.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. It probably was in the '20s, would you say?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I think it was sometime in the '20s.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes. Well now, how did it come about that he became involved in the Public Works of Art Project? Do you remember?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, he—the committee came to see him and wanted to know if he could do it and—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: What was the assignment that he was given?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: The assignment was to make murals for the federal building—the first federal building—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: In Santa Fe?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes, and he was working on that at the time of his death.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, so he just had that one assignment.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He was—yes, and he didn't get that—he didn't get that finished and that was given to—to finish it—that was given to W. P. Henderson, so that Henderson did those murals.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, how far had Mr. Cassidy gotten with them at the time of his death?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He had just gotten started. He—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Just—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Just laying [ph] in one of the first ones.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And as I say, they didn't know about natural gas, and he died of the results of the gas poisoning.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: That was in the—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Carbon monoxide.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: The studio where he had to work. Was that right?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Warehouse.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes. Would you tell us more about the circumstances of that—of his working in that warehouse?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, there wasn't—there isn't much more to tell because he worked such a short time.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, you said his—he didn't have room in his studio on Canyon Road—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: To block out these large canvases, is that right?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, to paint the large canvasses—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: —that were necessary because they were very large murals. I think they—something like 18 by—perhaps 24 or 26 feet.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes, I know they're large ones. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So, he rented this warehouse—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: An old store building

SYLVIA LOOMIS: —as a place to work. Mm-hmm [affirmative], and then the—it was heated by natural gas—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: —that was not vented. That's what I understood.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I understood [clears throat] that it was not vented—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: No, it wasn't.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: —properly—the building—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: The [coughs] plumber who put the gas in put a damper in the stovepipe.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh my.

[00:20:19]

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And it threw all the carbon monoxide out into the room.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And of course, it went up to the—it rose and went up to the ceiling and Gerald got it and—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: He was working on scaffolding?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes. He had to because he had to start at the top you see.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And almost—well, I guess almost always an artist starts from the top of his canvas.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, was he overcome while he was actually doing this?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, and never regained his health after that.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: They brought him home and he never recovered.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, that was a tragic thing certainly.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He was sick for several weeks.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: We were living at 922 Canyon Road then.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, did he tell you at any time how he felt about this project that was subsidized by the government?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, he thought it very fine recognition for the artists, and was very much pleased and felt honored by getting the assignment.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: But he never did anything to get it.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, yes, but he was such a well-known artist—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: —that he would be naturally one that they would choose to do some of this work.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes, he was the first one that was chosen for any of the—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: —public works.



SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Here.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, did he ever say anything about the effect that he thought this might have on the public appreciation of art?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes, he thought it was—I can't remember his exact terms, but he thought it was a wonderful thing.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: That government was recognizing the artists.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And I think that that was the about the first time that the government had recognized the artists.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes. Yes, that was the first of the Federal Art Projects.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative], and—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And that was quite a long time before the—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: WPA?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: WPA, yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes, I think that didn't start until 1935.

INA CASSIDY? Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: And this—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And you see he died in '34.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: In '34. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Lincoln's birthday.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, really. Well, it was just a year—yesterday was then the anniversary of his death. That—this must be a difficult time for you, all these memories of the past, but we appreciate your willingness to talk to us about it, and the reason that I brought this up was because I felt that he really had given his life to this.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Because he—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: [Inaudible.] [Cross talk.]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: —if it hadn't been for this poisoning, why, he might have lived for a good many years more.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: But he was doing the work he loved.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, that's a good way to go [laughs], but it did seem like a tragic incident—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: —and it was during the time of these Federal Art Projects. Well, are there any other comments that you would like to make about Mr. Cassidy and his work or his—either on this project or—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, he was—he was a born artist. [Laughs.]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes. No question about that.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And he won recognition all over the world.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Practically. He's represented in the Canton Christian College in Canton [Guangzhou], China.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And in Bombay, India—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: What sort of—in what way?[00:24:52]

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Mr. Dubasch [ph], he was a shipping—big shipping man in Bombay. He came out to Santa Fe—to New Mexico and Santa Fe, and he fell in love with New Mexico, and he commissioned Mr. Cassidy to make him four large panels for his dining room in—I can't just at the moment say—Uplands [ph], I think, was his estate down there. And he gave him the sizes and he said, Now you select the subject. They were—I think, as I remember, they were four feet wide.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And then the full height—10 or 12 feet high. "You select the subject but make them of the different seasons and scenes in New Mexico."

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: That was the only thing he—restriction he made or instructions he gave him.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: So, Mr. Cassidy did those the year before he died.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And he has murals in a great many places. One is in Golden, Colorado. The first discovery of gold in Colorado. And that's in the Golden High School. And he also designed the Memorial Park there.

And it's kind of interesting, Willard Nash posed for the man in that picture.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, is that right?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: In that mural. And one of the—the first Mrs. Schuster [ph].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, that's interesting. Willard—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes, it was.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Willard Nash was one of the mural artist at Taos later.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: What?

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I say Willard Nash was one of the art—the mural artist in Taos later.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Was he?

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I think—I think he was. You know there were—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I didn't think so.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Wasn't he the one who worked with Bistrom and Higgins?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I don't think he ever—he always worked in Santa Fe.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: He did?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: So far as I know.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, I may have mixed him up with both artists up there. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I know his name, but I've forgotten—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Just [inaudible, cross talk].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: No, he lived on the Camino.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And I think he always lived in—I don't know what became of him.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well now I understand that you were also an artist, Mrs. Cassidy, in your own right and I wonder if you'll tell us something about your work.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, I was always—my school books—see I was brought up in the territory of Colorado, on a ranch.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And we had no schools near.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Would you mind telling us when you were born?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: March 4, 1869.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: '69.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I'll have a birthday in a few days.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes, you will, and, let's see, that will be your—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: 95th.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: 95th birthday. How wonderful. I knew that you were over 90 but I didn't know that you were so close to being 95.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And I'm still in my right mind.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Certainly are. Better than lots of people I know.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And there was a woman came to town, after we went to Pueblo to live—and there was a woman came to town teaching art, and her teaching consisted of copying my copying paintings that she had copied under her teaching. [They laugh.]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: That was a little indirect, wasn't it?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: But I was—at that time, I was going to be the greatest woman artist that America had ever known. I was going to be the Rosa Bonheur of America because I loved horses so much. And I later learned that really my forte was sculpture, but I didn't know anything about sculpture then, and later I studied sculpture under Claire Diman [ph]. And I have example sculpture—of sculptor—my mouth is so dry—that—in the folk art museum, and in a museum in Wisconsin and several places [that way (ph)].

[00:30:35]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: You also said that you had done some easel painting. Could you tell us about that?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes. I painted—after I had taken those four or five lessons from this woman, I had painted a good many oils from nature. I remember I'd take—go out in the orchard and get a branch of black cherries and paint those, and I guess I must have painted 15 or 20, and gave them to my relatives, and I haven't any of those on exhibit anywhere [laughs]. And then in—to digress a bit—no, I won't do that now. The—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, these paintings that you said are on exhibit at museums, what—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Those are especially a group that I did of small sketches that I made while we were in Europe in '26.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA CASSIDYS: Of course, by that time I had learned a good deal about watercolor watching Gerald. I had painted in oils always before that and the—I had an exhibit in Oshkosh—invited—in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. I can't talk straight [laughs].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: You're doing fine.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And my paintings in the museum—my exhibit in the museum several years ago, I have photographs of those yet—they're watercolors, they were mostly watercolors that I made while we were in Europe and coming home from Europe.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And my impressions of seascapes and landscapes and people.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And I framed them altogether in one large frame like this, and I had my wood sculpture—I took to wood sculpture because I—in the—it was in the museum at a board meeting one evening, we were sitting around the fireplace there in the old palace and they brought some wood in and—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Okay.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And they were in such—well, they gave it the name of driftwood general, you know, but it isn't driftwood.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Pinon.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: It's just old pinion wood.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And there were shapes there that were so suggestive that I asked if I could have them. And they gave to me, and I took them home and cleaned them up and that was a matter of hard work.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Take the bark off and get down in the soft wood and decayed wood. And get down to the hard wood and then polish them. And I didn't varnish them, I just oiled them, and the green of the cedar was lovely, and one looked just like a stork.

[00:35:02]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: The bill of a stork.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And the different one—the others looked like natural forms of something like that you know?

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And they're down in the—I think they are in the folk art. I know that—and there's some in the New Mexico museum.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, you're—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: [Inaudible.] And—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, you're so well known for your writing, Mrs. Cassidy. I wonder if you'll tell us how you started writing?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes, well I started writing when I was 12 years old. I wrote my first letter to *the Pacific Rural Press* in answer to a girl who had written about her cooking, and I wrote about mine, and I had trouble making pie crust. I'd make it too short. I couldn't spread it on the pie plate without breaking it. [Laughs.]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And then the next was a story in *Sports Afield*. I got five dollars for that [laughs].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, good for you.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And that was just an imaginative—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: —story. And then when I came down here—I was—well, I was for years correspondent—country [ph] to correspondent in Colorado and—before I knew Mr. Cassidy before my marriage to him, and I've always dabbled in writing. When I wasn't writing things for print, I was writing them just in keeping journals. And then when I was in Vienna, I—Austria, later after Mr. Cassidy and I were married, I went to the—oh, sorry. I'm sorry I can't think—Professor Cižek.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He was teaching children's art—teaching children art, but he didn't teach them. He just gave them a piece of paper and some crayon and told them to draw, because it developed their creative imagination. And then when we came back, I had classes—children's classes here a couple of years.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: In the same work. So, you see I've been [cross talk] dabbling in—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes. You said something about the time that you and Mr. Cassidy were still in Colorado, and that he was interested in painting Indians, and you were interested in writing about them.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, of course I was born and brought up on a ranch there in Colorado and the only Indian that I knew about—the only good Indian I knew about was dead Indian.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And because they had—they were all on the war path.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh really?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: My father had—was besieged, and mother, nine months before I was born by the Indians that kept them besieged two weeks, and they didn't know whether they were going to escape or not.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: What tribe was that?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: The Cheyennes and Arapahos.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And then of course as I grew up and got to thinking about it, I thought that well, wouldn't we have done the same or worse if some strange person had come in—people had come in and tried to take our home away from us?

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And I saw them in an entirely different light. And I have found the Indians are wonderfully interesting people to know. And Gerald and I have lived with them weeks at a

time and been adopted into families, and they have been very dear friends. So, I've got an entirely different view of them. They have a literature of their own that's very much worthwhile. Some of their—I've translated or transcribed a great many of the Indian poems—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: That are very fine things.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, I know they're beautiful—many of them.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Nearly every book there on the shelf has a poem of mine in it.

[00:40:21]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And I'm getting those ready—trying to get them out in book publication, which I never did do.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, I hope you do—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Before and I want to do that.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes, well now I understand—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I wondered a lot.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, this is all extremely interesting. Very valuable. And I know that you were the head of the WPA Writer's' Project in New Mexico.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes, yes. After Mr. Cassidy's death, I had to do something to make a living, and well what started me—let me go back a bit—what started me writing about the artists, I found that what the artists needed was just everyday publicity. Just to introduce—I started writing on a New Mexico magazine, just to introduce the artist to the public and to get them to know something about the artist, and for the first two or three years I did that gratis. And then they commenced to pay me a small sum, and I kept that up for about—I guess about 30 years that I worked on that.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And only just gave it up in the last few years since I've been crippled with rheumatism so I couldn't write.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes, I remember reading about your—reading your articles when I came to Santa Fe first. Well, did this then work into the WPA project?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, I think it helped my friends. I didn't know anything about it until I was notified that I had been appointed.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I had done some research for Ms. Sargent [ph] on the Indian crafts and craft workers just after she gave me the job, just after Mr. Cassidy's death.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And I was out at—[pause] again, was at—was it Santa Clara?

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I don't know.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: No, it was farther up, over near Jemez [ph] in there?

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, was it a pueblo?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Let's see there's Zia up there, [inaudible] and Santa Ana and Jemez [ph].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I guess it was at Zia, come to think of it.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: She was living there and working for the government. And she had me do that.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Was that guidebook of New Mexico done under your supervision?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Pardon?

SYLVIA LOOMIS: That Federal Writers' Project Guidebook to New Mexico. The one that's so—that was used as the sort of, the classic for information.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: You know, yes, that was for the unemployed artists.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: It was made for them.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: You mean writers, don't you?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I traveled—I had to interview them and start them to work on something.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Don't you mean the writers—unemployed writers?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: No.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, for artists?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: They—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: This was that guidebook, you know? Yeah.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Oh yes, that's the writers.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: That was the Writers' Project, yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: They were to—I'd give them assignments to do, and they looked up—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yeah, did the research on it. [Cross talk.] Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I have that—a copy of that guide here.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, I have one myself. I just wouldn't be without it. It has so much valuable information about New Mexico.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: It certainly has.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, now would you tell us about some of your other interests, like your helping to found the old Santa Fe Association, for instance, and your work in preservation of the heritage of New Mexico?

[00:45:02]

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, I've always been interested in history. And when I came to Santa Fe, I was—I'd always known about Santa Fe because my father used to freight here—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: From the Missouri River—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: —to Santa Fe.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: What did he freight?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: All sorts of things, everything—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Stock, you mean?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: No. It was mostly merchandise.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And I grew up—see, he came here in 1859—he came to Colorado in 1859, and he was a scout with Kit Carson and was in all the Indian wars. And taking the Navajos after they surrendered to Fort Sumner and put them all on a reservation there. The thing that is called—the operation is called The Long Walk.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And that was the breaking up of the Navajo opposition and—Navajo and Apache. And as I say, I've always been interested in history, and of course I brought up on history and—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Lived through quite a lot of it.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: —my father was a history book in himself.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: He was.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And we didn't have many books—very few books, but the Bible and dictionary, I think, is about the only books we had and that is bound books. And we had to rely on what newspapers there were. I learned to read on *the Pacific Rural Press* and *the Toledo Blade* [they laugh] and *the Rocky Mountain News* [laughs].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh yes, that's still going too, isn't' it?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I see copies of that occasionally.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And my father was a farm boy. He was born in New York state. He was a farm boy, and his interests were in farming and cattle stock raising. And he believed in thoroughbreds in all lines of breeding stock, and that is what he developed in Bent County, Colorado.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He had one of the earliest ranches there.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Near Fort Lyon. The old territorial maps of the early days has notation, it's about eight miles from Fort Lyon. A notation, Sizer's Ranch.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh yes, mm-hmm [affirmative]. [Ina Sizer Cassidy laughs.] Well, it certainly could account for your interest in the history of Santa Fe.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: And the fact that you did so very much to help preserve the customs and the architecture and all the other things that you did in the old Santa Fe Association. Think the work that was done then was—probably saved it.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: The old Santa Fe Association was organized, I think in '26.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And the men at the head of it died off and dropped it, and then in—I think just long about '50 somewhere like that—that they got worked up over some of them—somebody tearing down some of the old buildings.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And they said there ought to be an organization formed for protection.



SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And it was at a public meeting, and I said well—got up and I said, What was the use of having a new organization when the old Santa Fe Association was formed for that very purpose?

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Why not bring it to life?

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: So, they promptly elected me—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: —as head of it.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And that's the way I got interested.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh yes, well I—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Or got into it.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, I remember when I first came to Santa Fe, which was in 1949, that was the time they tore down that lovely old building to make the La Fonda Hotel Parking lot.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: And there was a great deal of agitation at that time.

[00:50:02]

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: And that was when I first heard about the old Santa Fe Association, and I remember you were the president of it—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: And I've been identified with it ever since and—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Now I learned then that anybody that proposed something, the work was shoved onto them.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, you did a wonderful job at that, and in all of the other things that you have done in your long and varied life.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Now, I'm disturbed about these names. The radio yesterday—the radio announcer here spoke about Tonopa [ph]. And I thought, Mercy, what place is that? And Tonopa [ph], Arizona, and I waited until he used it three or four times and then I recognized it: Tonopah.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh [laughs]. I know those things—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Tonopa [ph].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: [Laughs]. Well, those things happen all the time. These newcomers to—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: —this part of the country that don't know the local pronunciations or even the correct pronunciations.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: It's too bad.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, what are you working on now?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I'm working on—when I can, with my stiff hands, I'm revising getting together my poems. I've written for quite many art or anthologies and magazines and newspapers, been published, and now I want to get them into book form.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I hope you do, and there's one other question that I had. We heard from Mrs. Frank Meyers of Pacific Grove, California that you had given Mr. Cassidy's papers to the Bancroft Library, University of California. Do you know if those included the papers dealing with his work on PWAP, or maybe there weren't any papers of that period?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: No. I don't—accepting incidentally.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: When it was in the WPA, there were papers that I had kept, historic articles I had kept, and all of my writings—and I must tell you about the Bancroft Library. Mr. Cassidy was known as the last painter of the Indian. The last painter who painted the Indians while they were still wild Indians, they were not yet citizens.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And so, the director of the Bancroft Library, who used to be in Albuquerque and knew Mr. Cassidy's reputation, said that he should be accorded that distinction, and he was later—became director of the Bancroft Library, and he promptly set up, or commenced working on the Gerald Cassidy Archive in the Bancroft Library. And they bought a good many early books from me—historic books and things like that, and some paintings. And the books that I had on Mary Austin and things of that sort. And then when Mr.—what's his name?

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I don't believe I know.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: George.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: You mean the director of the Bancroft Library?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I don't think she gave us that name. She just said the library.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, he set up this—I'll think of his name presently—he set up the Gerald Cassidy Archive honoring Gerald as the last painter of the Indians, to paint them still in their savage state before they became citizens.

[00:55:25]

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And that includes, as I say, a good many paintings in these books—Mary Austin books and also all the material concerning—the history concerning Mr. Cassidy and my own writings.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And [inaudible].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: There aren't any of those papers left. They all went to the Bancroft—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: They all went to the [cross talk] Bancroft Library.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, I know you said that you thought it was possible that there might be some papers left about this period of the Public Works of Art Program, but you don't think so.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: No, I don't think so because the Public Works of Art Program was—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: A brief period in his life certainly.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes, it was. And I don't think there would be—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Anything significant in that.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: No.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, it's nice to have all of his papers in one spot [cross talk] where they will be preserved

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I think it's perfectly wonderful.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Isn't that fine?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And to have it to happen and have it set up as a permanent thing—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Yes, so they'll always be available—

INA SIZER CASSIDY: —in the Bancroft Library particularly because they have the Catlin paintings.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, yes.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: They were the first in the East, you see, and then to have all this history of the Indians from an art point of view, at least. I think it's really a wonderful thing.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Oh, I do too.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: It's—Isn't that funny? I can't say his name.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, I think we could probably find it out, you know, if it's—if they feel it's necessary to have—to have that as part of the record.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes. Well, I'll very likely think of it [cross talk] when you go out.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: You probably will just the minute that I leave. That's always the way I do. Well, I can't tell you how grateful I am to you, Mrs. Cassidy, for giving us all of this valuable information and giving us your time and your strength.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: If there's anything more that you'll need, why, I guess we can pick it up. I'm getting these papers. They're not—I haven't got the papers all together, and I'm getting them, sending them on.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. As you get them organized, hm?

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes, well, isn't that funny.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, don't you worry about that.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I always think of him as George Bancroft [laughs].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: [Laughs.] I see.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: And it isn't it at all of course.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, we can pick up that name later. Well, thank you very much and hope we haven't tired you too much.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: He was here just about three weeks ago, four weeks now, I guess. Just for over—he had to come to Albuquerque for some kind of a meeting, and, oh dear, it makes me so provoked.

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I know it is annoying.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Well, if you need anything more, why—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: Well, I'll call on you if I do and I again, thank you very much.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: I'll think of—I'll think of his name. And you can—

SYLVIA LOOMIS: I'll jot it down when I do the transcript on this.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

SYLVIA LOOMIS: All right then. Well, thank you very much.

INA SIZER CASSIDY: Yes.

[END OF TRACK AAA\_cassid64\_8440\_m.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

[Note by Sylvia Loomis: The name of the director of the Bancroft Library is George P. Hammond.  
-Ed.]