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Oral history interview with Eugene Chodorow, 1965 August 4

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Eugene Chodorow on August 4, 1965. The interview took place in Los Angeles 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.

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 just testing to see if it's picking up our voices.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, I understand.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Do you want to say something?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well—you're saying?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What? Just anything.

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

EUGENE CHODOROW: Married sometime?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: 29 years.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's a long time. This is Betty Lochrie Hoag on August 4, 1965, interviewing the artist Eugene Chodorow in his home in Los Angeles. That name is spelled Eugene E-U-G-E-N-E and Chodorow is C-H-O-D-O-R-O-W. And Mr. Chodorow, do you have or use a middle name?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No middle name.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: All right. Mr. Chodorow was on the Project in New York and has some interesting experiences. And is a well-known sculptor and painter in Los Angeles. And before I ask him about his experiences on the Project, I'd like to ask about his life. Would you tell us when you were born and where you were born?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, I was born March 15, 1910. In the Ukraine.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Ukraine?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What province?

EUGENE CHODOROW: In Odessa, on the Black Sea.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'm glad I can spell that one. [Laughs.] Sometimes they're so long. And did you receive an art education?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Prior to here—to coming to this country, I just kind of self-taught. And carrying things around, you know, for artists. You know, washing brushes, you know. That sort of thing.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: In Odessa?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Some scenic painters there, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Scenic painters?

EUGENE CHODOROW: [Inaudible] painter, mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was this for the theater or ballet, or—

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, it was just a small town.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Small town place. I mean, I didn't live in Odessa at that time. We lived in a provincial, small town.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Not in Odessa.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: And—well, I mean just as I say, it was not much of an education. When I came here to this country, I went to the Educational Alliance.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Excuse me just a minute. When did you come to the United States?

EUGENE CHODOROW: In 1927.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: When you were 17.

EUGENE CHODOROW: That's correct.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: So, did you come by yourself? Or with your family?

EUGENE CHODOROW: By myself. My father managed to get here about five years before that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I see.

EUGENE CHODOROW: And—I went to the Educational Alliance in New York. And, what's his name—Abbo Ostrowsky was running it at that time. And you might say at the time, just right after the Soyers and the Gross and all these fellas—just when they kind of graduated, I started in.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see. I'm ignorant about New York. I've never been there. Is the Educational Alliance an arts school or an educational school?

EUGENE CHODOROW: It's sort of a neighborhood house. You might say that the quite few leading artists came through there. The Soyers, what's his name? Well, Gross the sculptor and—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is that George Grosz?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, Chaim Gross.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Chaim.

EUGENE CHODOROW: And, well, quite a few I just can't recall right now, actually, who made the grade, you know. But quite a few artists passed through there.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Now, did this Mr. Ostrowsky have something to do—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Ostrowsky. He was the first organizer of the school. And he actually nurtured it along and it became quite a school by now.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: I understand.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was he an artist or an educator?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, he was an artist. An etcher. Quite a good etcher.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that's interesting. [Recorder stops, restarts.] How long were you at this Educational Alliance?

EUGENE CHODOROW: I was at the Alliance for about three years.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: And, in—well then after a variety of different jobs, you know, manual jobs and mechanical, garage and machinist jobs and so on. It was right during the Depression, you know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

EUGENE CHODOROW: It was right through that period, when I just worked at any thing I could get a hold of.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:05:01]

EUGENE CHODOROW: And then the Project came along. The Federal Art Project. And I got in first as a poster project [inaudible].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did they have a separate division—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —at that time, for—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, they had, for the posters, you know, sort of developed towards into the American art—you know, Americana, you know. We made these copies piece of these different old embroideries and—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, the Index of American Design.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Index, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Really?

EUGENE CHODOROW: But I believe the beginning of it was this poster project.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's interesting.

EUGENE CHODOROW: You see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Were the posters done for the theater group of the Project? And for advertising exhibits of paintings? Things like that?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes. All sorts of things like that. However, I didn't last very long on it. And pretty soon, one day in the office of McMahon. You know Audrey McMahon? You've heard of her?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yes, I have.

EUGENE CHODOROW: I was called in and Anton Refregier—you know Refregier?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: He was organizing a group of mural painters. And I got in on this group and we painted the murals for the Green Point children's ward.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This must've been about the first mural project they had.

EUGENE CHODOROW: You might say, yes. Yes, we were right in the first one. And Refregier is a very fine organizer. A good artist. Very good designer. And he got us to work, you know. To get a bunch of artists to work together is quite difficult. I believe he really created some very fine murals there.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: About how many people were on that, do you remember?

EUGENE CHODOROW: About eight.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Do you remember any of the other names, or—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good.

EUGENE CHODOROW: There was Gene Morley, Brubaker, Penney—James Penney. Let's see—Reebuck, Louis Reebuck [ph]. Harry Ryan. He's in Pasadena here now.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, really?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I should go see him, I didn't know.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, Harry Ryan. Well, that's about all I can remember.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's a lot to remember from so long ago.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes. There was eight people, and we did this ward up. You know, it was kind of depressing working with the kids, sick kids, you know. But I believe we did a nice job for them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was it one mural or a series?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Just a series of murals of sort of farm scenes. I might say that I—I think my design established the plane of the thing, you know. I mean the farm.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

EUGENE CHODOROW: In the foreground. So, the stylizing actually became very much of Ref's.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

EUGENE CHODOROW: He's got his own style. And we all got together and we painted his style.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: See, because it did have the unity.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Then there was a solarium. And we painted the circus animals.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: A solarium?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I bet the children loved that.

EUGENE CHODOROW: They did.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: There was very funny incident. I don't know if I should—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Let me hear it.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, it's funny this, that someone there objected to the murals. To its modernity, not—just made it difficult for us to work. It was either the head of the hospital or the assistant or some.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: And well, in the solarium, we painted this camel. And on the camel was sitting [they laugh] someone. And the two of them, they resembled, you know, these two people.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The two kibitzers. [Laughs.]

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's wonderful.

EUGENE CHODOROW: But then there came a—actually an objection from the health department of the doctoring outfit that we should remove these people, you know? And Ref—no, we did. We put a whale on top of this here fellow [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs], it was on top of the camel [laughs]. Everybody knew that still, underneath—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Under the veil.

EUGENE CHODOROW: —there is that same guy.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that's very fun.

EUGENE CHODOROW: It was lots of fun then doing it. Ref is a very fine—very fine, kind of live person.

[00:10:06]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is he?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Organizer, yes. And when I say organizer, throughout a big job like this—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He's in San Francisco now, isn't he?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, I don't think—is he?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Maybe in New York. I'm not sure. He hasn't been in our area so I'm not sure about him.

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, he did a job in San Francisco. He did this Rincon post office. And then he went back to Woodstock.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I see.

EUGENE CHODOROW: And since then, he traveled in Europe. In fact, I just got a note from him. He published a book on his travels in Europe.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's interesting.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is it a period book? I mean, about Romanesque?

EUGENE CHODOROW: It's [cross talk]—no, no. It's a book on travels in Eastern Europe.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, a modern man's travel—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes. With sketches, you know. His book was just published. In fact.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Who was the publisher, do you remember?

EUGENE CHODOROW: I believe International Publishers.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Fletcher Martin who was here, lives at Woodstock too.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh, does he?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And Herman Cherry, I think, was on our Project. And I think that's where he is. It must be a large colony of artists.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes. Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: I don't know Woodstock from nothing. I was never anywhere around there, so.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I don't know any of the area, but when you keep hearing about these people being in one place, you begin to visualize Carmel, or [laughs]—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —something like that. What happened at the end of doing this mural? Were you put on another one?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, that's when I went hunting for a job for myself. You know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: On the Project?

EUGENE CHODOROW: On the Project. And I had sort of interest in aviation around that time. You know, not that I was flying much, but I used to hang out in these airports and made friends. And I dreamt up this idea to paint murals for the Floyd Bennett Airport.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Floyd Bennett?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Thank you.

EUGENE CHODOROW: And together with a friend of mine, Gus Henkel—August Henkel, who was a former illustrator for *Vanity Fair*. [Inaudible] leading magazines, [inaudible] and all that. We got together and we made up sketches for these murals in Floyd Bennett Airport.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Now, you didn't have the commission yet? You just were going to present these asking for—

EUGENE CHODOROW: We were—yeah. We were presenting. We were working on these things together, sketch up. And it was presented to the—to McMahan. And she presented in turn to the Municipal Art Commission that was run by Mr. Bijoto [ph]—Bijoto [ph]. And it was accepted.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, I believe that this was rather unusual, your ingenuity. Because often it didn't start with the artists. But someone would come to the Project and want a mural done. And then they would give it out to the artists. And that showed a lot of—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, no. At that time, you see, nobody wanted murals.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I see.

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, it was completely new. You had to go and create jobs, you know? To actually—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Get your own commissions.

EUGENE CHODOROW: What did they care, these guys, if they had murals there or not?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: You know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They never experienced having them, so—

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, so they didn't miss it, you know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Huh.

EUGENE CHODOROW: So, well, we drew up these designs. You know, it was sort of a—four panels. Each one nine by 30 feet long.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: And it was history of aviation, starting with the legends of flight, you

know. Going into the da Vinci there and the Wright brothers and all.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Not as—no, the legends of flight were the—actually the Daedalus and Icarus and all that. The actually legendary [inaudible].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Then it went, in the second, the actual beginnings, that was the Wright brothers and so on.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

EUGENE CHODOROW: And the third one was aviation at peace. And there was aviation at war.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's interesting.

EUGENE CHODOROW: At that time, I was quite influenced by Orozco. You know, I just saw his murals in New Hampshire, there. At Dartmouth College. Powerful murals. And I was influenced by the idea that, you know, you have to [inaudible] on war [ph]. And it was coming. You know, it was just before the second war—the Italian, the Germans, the Japanese, you know?

[00:15:12]

And I had in this mural, which I designed, was the war mural, was this central group of civilians [ph] bombed, actually, you might say they were the Spaniards. You know, at that time it was the Spanish Civil War.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, yes.

EUGENE CHODOROW: You see. And there was this group, you know, the woman and a child. And a very lost man sitting there and standing, and tragic kind of scene. And on the left it was the forces of, you know—of democracy.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Which was also symbolized by big head of President Roosevelt. On the left-hand side. On the right-hand side, there was this figure of, you might say, this ancient hun [ph]. This mechanized hun [ph], you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Attacking with a flamethrower, you know, coming into this group of these people. And then these little soldiers. You know, these automatons, you know. Filing through this golden wreath and so on.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It must have been very powerful.

EUGENE CHODOROW: It was a fine mural, yes. And well, that was one of the controversies that rose in that mural is that they said that I was attacking friendly powers. You know, Japan and Germany, with the swastikas. At that time, they were friendly powers.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: But anyhow, the excuse why what happened and how it happened, nobody will ever know exactly, you know. Just how it—what happened.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, there was—naturally the fourth mural was the aviation today, you know? And there was this central group of aviators. And—Lindbergh, and Amelia Earhart, and Wiley Post, and all these. And there was the development of—in the plants. You know, building of planes and stuff.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Those were the murals.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No controversy in that one. [Laughs.]

EUGENE CHODOROW: They found something there, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, really? What—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, there was a star, you know. One of the assistants painted a star and they claimed that it was really not a navy star, but it was a red star.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Red star, sure.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Some dumb reason, I don't know why it came up like that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you have to paint the star out? Cover it up, or what?

EUGENE CHODOROW: I didn't have to do anything. They took care of it all, you know? I didn't have a chance to correct anything there, you see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What do you mean?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, I mean, the murals were destroyed, you see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: All four of them were destroyed?

EUGENE CHODOROW: So, the story goes, that they were destroyed, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, for heaven's sake.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, what a crime.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes. Refregier, in fact—Anton, he was the witness who saw the thing going on. And he wrote the—he had an article at that time in a newspaper describing the burning of the murals. There were these people there—this keyed-up detail that cut them up into pieces and stuffed into the [inaudible].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh no.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes. That was three years' work

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. Oh that's—must've been disheartening. These obviously were oils on canvas?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oils on canvas.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The panels were to be put up?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, they were to be mounted in lead, you know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. Had they been put on the wall at all when this happened?

EUGENE CHODOROW: They were hanging on the wall for about a week. And they were a brilliant looking set of murals.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you get photographs of them?

EUGENE CHODOROW: There are photographs around. I had some. They're somewhere around, I suppose.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Have you had a chance to look, to see if you still have them so we could borrow them for microfilming?

EUGENE CHODOROW: I might have them somewhere around.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I hope you do have them.

EUGENE CHODOROW: I'll look through—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'd like to see them. I'd like to have them for the record. Well, you said that Refregier wrote a letter—

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, he described the burnings.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Here's what happened. What happened is that—the story goes that the local American Legion post found objections to the murals. That we were attacking these friendly powers, that there was this red star there, you know. That there was a—Leonardo da Vinci was a bearded fellow was really Karl Marx in disguise, you know? [Loud engine noise.] [Inaudible.] And there was this figure of Franz Reichelt, who was the first investor of the parachute, with a big handlebar moustache. Now, logically, who else could it be but Stalin, you see?

[00:20:21]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: I mean, deals [ph] like that, which was manufactured, I don't know why people picked—and yeah, we were the goats, that's all.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Isn't that a shame.

EUGENE CHODOROW: We were the goats. The Project was breaking up, and some forces needed these—to discredit it, I suppose. And this just happened to come along, you see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was this about '39? 1938, and '39?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, '39, '40.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: '39, '40. Had there been anyone besides you and August Henkel?

EUGENE CHODOROW: That worked on the murals?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, we had quite a crew.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: A whole crew?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes. The, well most of it was really done by us two, you know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: How did two of you work on doing it, designed it? Did he do two of the four panels? Or did you work on all of them together?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, Gus made the design. The—Gus designed this legendary panel, you know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: And he designed the second one, the one of the first [inaudible] flight. You know, the Wright brothers and so on. And I designed the other two panels.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Which was the war panel and the peace panel.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: And then we also collaborated. We worked together quite a bit. And he was a terrific draftsman. Gus, he's dead now. He died a few years back. And we worked together pretty well. He was a knowledgeable man. And a lot of painting experience.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Where had he gotten that experience? Did he ever tell you?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Gus?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, Gus went to the Pennsylvania Academy. And he was a student of Tommy Eakins.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, and he used to tell me quite a bit about that period there. So, he was a friend of Marin.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: John Marin?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Do you know George Baker [ph] out here in the Palisades?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, what about him?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He was a friend of—or a student of Eakins too.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh, really?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I thought you might've known him. Excuse me just a—

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BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This is Betty Lochrie Hoag on August 4, 1965, interviewing Eugene Chodorow, reel number two.

When our tape went off, you were starting to tell me some about Gus Henkel, and I appreciate it because when people have died, sometimes there are no relatives or friends left to ask anything about it. But he had a very fine training, then.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, Gus was a very accomplished artist, a fine landscape painter and one of the real outstanding illustrators of that time.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did he do any other Project work, besides this mural with you?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, this—these were the only things that we did. I might also add here that somewhere after we had already had our designs, finished. And sort of accepted that also—that we are going to do the job. I believe McMahon got Gorky to do some designs for the same job, see?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Why?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, she was sort of partial, you know, and at that time—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: With her friend [laughs]?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, well at that time I thought it was pretty crazy because I didn't appreciate Gorky's work, which since then I got to like very much, you know? But at that time, I had no use at all of any of his [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs] mad stuff, you know? And that—in a sense, that's, you know, pretty bad.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah, of course it would.

EUGENE CHODOROW: So, well, we fought it, you know? And we held the job, and Gorky went to Newark, and he did those same designs in Newark Airport.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, isn't that interesting. And the space worked out for the designs he had already done?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, he already had arranged it. I mean, it was abstract in long panels, and somehow he worked it out, and as I remember, they were very fine murals. I don't know what happened to them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's interesting. I wonder if they're still there.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Also on canvas.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, the Smithsonian is trying to locate a lot of these things that have disappeared when they've been taken down in remodeling, as part of the National Archives. I think it's a wonderful thing. So many of the Project easel paintings were given to schools and public institutions and put away in the attic and just disappeared.

EUGENE CHODOROW: And the sepia [ph], yes, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And they're just trying to get all these dug out again. And a lot of people have become famous since, and they're happy that they have. Well, that was probably the last work that you did on the Project.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, that was it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Since the war came along.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, then I just got off the Project that time, then I went up to California.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Why did—was this in the army that you came to California?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, I came here first.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, did you?

EUGENE CHODOROW: I came here in '41—in '42 I came—now let me see. I came out here in '41, and I moved here with the family. And I worked at all kind of different jobs, you know, and, just to make a buck. One of my last jobs before I enlisted in the marine corps was a job—I painted scenery for a burlesque here, [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs] and that was a job that lasted for about five shows that I put up for them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was that downtown, or in Hollywood?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, no, that was in San Diego, the Hollywood Burlesque in San Diego.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Probably entertained all the sailor boys at that time down there.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, it was full house always then.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Really? I wonder if they're still there, do you suppose? Were they permanent?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, no. No, they—you know, they changing these around—you paint numbers. They come and say—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

EUGENE CHODOROW: —want a champaign [ph] number. They're wanting this kind of a number. I don't know the first thing about these numbers. [They laugh.] But, you know, I had the first—the one where we kind of showed me the business was an old-time scenic painter, by name Shanty Andrews [ph]. And Shanty [ph] was a old-time scenic painter, going back to the Mississippi river boats, you see.

[00:05:00]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Why, how fascinating, my goodness.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Now you could—you could mention a number to him, and he'd paint with his eyes closed, you know? He was a fine craftsman, I know. He must be dead by now, I suppose.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Shanty Andrews [ph]?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I never thought about there being specialists in burlesque

backgrounds, it's—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh, yes. It's—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —well, of course there must have been.

EUGENE CHODOROW: It was—and then I, as I say, enlisted in the marine corps. And I spent three and a half years in service.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You did?

EUGENE CHODOROW: While I was in service, I painted two murals for the naval hospital in Oceanside, San Diego—I mean, Oceanside of—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: California.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, California. It's the Santa Margarita Ranch and Camp Pendleton there was a naval hospital.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

EUGENE CHODOROW: I painted two murals there, for the auditorium. They were life-size. They were nine by—nine by 15, I believe, so. On both sides of the stage.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Direct fresco?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, it was also on canvas, which I prepared out of [navy duck (ph)], you know, and sized it and all that. And it was—one was a—one was a beach landing, the marines getting up on the beach. And the other one was a recreation mural, you know—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: California recreation?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, it was also military personnel [inaudible]. Of a pretty gal, you know, dancing outside the—you know, orchestra [ph] and all that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I want to get this straight. This was the Santa Margarita Ranch—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —and it was at Camp Pendleton?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It was convalescent hospital, or was something like the other—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, yeah, it was naval hospital, you know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see. I'm going to ask my son because he was a marine and was down there for some time—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Was he?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —and ask him if they're still there.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Really? What was he, your son?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, he was in the marines five years. Just got out—

EUGENE CHODOROW: During the war?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No, recently.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Recently. I see. They're gone. They're not there anymore.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I see. You've checked already?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, they built a new theater, and I suppose this went in the dump somewhere.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I hope not.

EUGENE CHODOROW: I suppose so, sure, it went. But it was—there were less-effective murals, you know? I mean, I made a lot of marines and naval personnel posing for it, and I might add, there was a interesting incident that you might be interest to know, that the sketch again, you know, I somehow controversy always follows my work, [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs]—I don't know why. But the sketch was accepted, you know, and this captain accepted the sketch. In this beach landing mural, on the left-hand side, there was this here corpsman giving a blood transfusion to a marine on the beach. And I had a Negro corpsman giving this blood transfusion.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Now, it started quite a dissention about it, you know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Because he was Negro?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Because he was Negro. In fact, the chaplain came over and said, Look, Chodorow, don't you think the logical thing here should be that the chaplain should be giving [laughs] the blood transfusion?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, isn't that strange?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah. And I said, Well, no. I said, That was accepted. The sketch was accepted with a Negro obviously in the sketch. Well, to make it short, you know, the fellow who posed for it—the model for that, he was shipped overseas, you know, right that same week.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The Negro who had posed for it?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

EUGENE CHODOROW: And from then on, I couldn't find a model, you know? [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs.] They shied away from me. Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. You mean the other Negro marines on the base didn't want to get into the controversy?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, [inaudible] [the U.S. from the naval (ph)]—from the [inaudible]. And, you see, this was in the naval hospital, so.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I see. Well, you should have told that chaplain or anyone else that the first military personnel to die in America in a war was a Negro man.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Ah, well, I—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Laughs] Revolutionary—that war, that would have stopped them.

[00:09:52]

EUGENE CHODOROW: There was no arguing about it. I mean, I was doing the job, and I thought it was—that's the way it was, you know? In the recreation mural, there was also a Negro band, you know, which was playing. And it was very interesting, the night after the murals were finished, they were inaugurated, it had, you know, an opening and so on. And one day, actually, I kind of looked to see this thing, it's a very interesting thing for an artist that, somehow, the thing repeated itself. Right outside of naval hospital, there appeared a Negro band. I don't know, it came off a boat or something, and I believe this conductor, he knew that I was there—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh?

EUGENE CHODOROW: —and he said to these guys, they started playing outside, and little by little, these WAVES and [inaudible] come together, then started dancing. And a thing that never happened before, you know, come to life.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. It had been in your mural first, and then it happened.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, yeah. And, I mean, these people are kind of playing up to it, you

know, they saw that, and they acted up to it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. They realized—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That must have been a thrill for you.

EUGENE CHODOROW: It was, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. That was nice. Well, you must have been shipped overseas, weren't you?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes. You see, it was just a stopover for me because I was just about to go out to a replacement at that time, when I landed in this naval hospital with an appendix. I don't know. Might [inaudible] psychosomatic [they laugh]. I should—I didn't want to go, but this appendix really saved me.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Convenient time.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Convenient time because, by the time I got overseas, that time, I was out of the shooting.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

EUGENE CHODOROW: You see?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You went to the Philippines, didn't you?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Because Ted Gilien said he met you at some place. I thought he said the Philippines.

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, we met in Nagasaki.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Nagasaki.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Then you were sent to Japan for [inaudible].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Sent to Guam. Saipan, Guam. And then to—landed—we were the first to land in Nagasaki. When we came in there, the city was broken up and bombed, you know, just full of radiation, whatnot.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This was right after the bombing, yeah.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, we were there about a month after the bomb was released. In fact, I always suspected that some of us there were sort of guinea pigs in a way, you know, because we lived right close to this deep pit, this bomb crater, you know, where it fell. And, you know, I didn't know anything about it, you know, there is such a thing as danger radiation. We were not told.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They hadn't told you?

EUGENE CHODOROW: And I used to go out there and sketch and sit on all those stones there, and I can see now, I suppose, radiation were just oozing all over the place.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did it ever hurt you? You never had any reaction that you know of, did you?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, I don't know. I suppose I might have gotten some of it, I suspect. But, you know, that time we were—we watched the Japanese come by, and when they'd get to the atomic area, they just started to trot, you know, and just complete columns of people just running along, and I couldn't understand it. [Inaudible.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What they were running from [laughs].

EUGENE CHODOROW: They knew what they were running from—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

EUGENE CHODOROW: —and we didn't know about it, you know? In fact, Ted and I went out a couple of times, and we sketched, you know, [inaudible] bombed-out torpedo factory, and—who knows.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Now, this is Ted Gilien you mean?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He was asked to do paintings and drawings of that period. Were you, or were you just sketching on your own? The marines hadn't asked you to do war illustrating?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, no. I was—I was in the reproduction section there, and we were, you know, mapping sections, and it was just a job to fill my [inaudible], you know, I didn't [inaudible] that sort of work got to [inaudible].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You mean it was maps and charts [inaudible]?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I was thinking of Boris Deutsch's illustrations that time. Did you get pictures of that, what the atomic bomb can do to you [*What Atomic War Will Do to You*]? He was another Russian artist. You probably know him here, don't you?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, I know Deutsch, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Because he came from near Odessa, I believe.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Did he?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I believe so.

EUGENE CHODOROW: I met him one time. I did not much talking to him.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Very nice person. He had come through Siberia and come to Nagasaki on his way to the United States as a very young man.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh?

[00:15:00]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And so, it was the first, you know, Western town that he'd seen, and he was very impressed with it. So, after this happened, he did that painting, which one was [inaudible].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh yeah, I remember, yes. Uh-huh [affirmative], uh-huh [affirmative]. Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] tragic—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, yes. I—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I mean it struck him especially tragically.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Sort of a figure of a—figure of one or—I just can't remember,

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] a woman with a—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well. Let's see. I'd better get you back again. The war—you were there when the war ended and came back to California, right?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, came back here, and settled down here, and been here ever since. So—oh yeah, I went to Paris for a while.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Were you studying there?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, I too went on the G.I. Bill, took me a year in Paris with Zadkine. Ossip Zadkine, a sculptor.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. Now, he was up in San Francisco, isn't he?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, Zadkine was never on the West Coast, no. Zadkine is a—is a French-Russian sculptor. One of the first cubists, a contemporary of Picasso and Lipchitz and all that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

EUGENE CHODOROW: And he still is sort of, I mean, mainly cubist, he hasn't changed too much.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Were you studying as a student with him, or as a friend together?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, I was a student—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

EUGENE CHODOROW: —on the G.I. Bill. Actually, this was the first time I went into sculpture.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I was going to ask you when it started because this has all been painting before that.

EUGENE CHODOROW: I'd done sculpture before, but—I'd done some constructions and, you know, when I was still on the Project. And—but to get any formal education, you know, was when I went to Zadkine.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Had you done anything for the Project, or just at that time?

EUGENE CHODOROW: For the Project, no. I did—I did a few things. I think one of them went on the Project, yeah. I don't know what happened to it. Some of it construction, you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You mean welded parts?

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, no, it was—it was wood. I didn't know at that time about welded for anything, but this was a carved, band-sawed wood, and it was done on a sort of a idea of a musical instrument, you know? And I believe that stayed on the Project. So, I did a few more constructions during that time, and then moving to California, they were lost in New York.

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

EUGENE CHODOROW: They were nice things too, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Maybe they'll turn up someday.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh, I don't know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You came back and have lived in the Silver Lake area ever since.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, as I said, in '50 I went off to Paris for a year, and it was— then I came back and have been here all this time.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: A young man who is going to UCLA, doing graduate work, I believe his name is Mr. Erday [ph], from Israel, has been writing his thesis for his master's, I believe in theater arts, about you. He has been making a documentary film about your life and your work, and this is going to be shown in the home of a friend of his, a Dr. Cutler [ph] in Hollywood next Sunday night, and he has invited me to come see it. I'm curious to know more about it. Would you like to make any comments about the picture?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, I have a copy of the picture. I don't have a projector here to run it. I only saw that one time, and I bought this off Erday [ph]. I paid him for it, when I did a piece of sculpture.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, for the film itself?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes. Total came to about \$225.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: My goodness.

EUGENE CHODOROW: To help a young fellow out, you know. And I don't—I can't make up my mind yet. I sure would like to run it and to see, but it seems like it's—it isn't the—first, [inaudible] he chose very little of my sculpture? Primary idea was to show the sculpture, you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Of course, it would be.

EUGENE CHODOROW: And actually, the whole thing he shows it is maybe one figure, which there is a musician there, and the rest of it is the fellow went into sort of psychological dealings there, you know? I mean didn't make a documentary of me, but sort of creation of this Erday [ph]. I mean, that's what it seems to me. I have to study the film more. I'm quite disappointed about it.

[00:20:30]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, it's sort of a psychological study of you as a man and an artist.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, sort of a psychological view of—you know, where he brings in my father there, and all kinds—which I was—this is my recording, you know, but I was telling you about my childhood and, in other words, he picked out just certain things out of context there, which you could have. I am disappointed in the film. I really am.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That is too bad.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Are you going to be there to see it Sunday night, with that group?

EUGENE CHODOROW: I might. I don't know. I might.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I wondered if you would mind if I took my tape recorder and made a tape of it and send into the Archives.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, why would that be important? I think if it's no good, it's no good, you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No, I thought, possibly, I could do that and then have—and play it for you and have you tell me the parts that aren't right and correct them, so we'd have the right thing sent into the Archives in case they had a copy of it.

EUGENE CHODOROW: You know something, I am pretty well disgusted with this whole recording altogether, you know? [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs.] I mean I just want to be left alone, you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You don't. Yes.

EUGENE CHODOROW: I don't want to be bothering and all kind of things being made up on my account, and so, I don't feel it's—it isn't right, you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative.] So, you would not want to have [inaudible]—

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, I don't want any—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

EUGENE CHODOROW: —notoriety like that, you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You're right. Did he write the script for it himself and narrate it himself?

EUGENE CHODOROW: There is no narration in this part at all there. It's all, you might say, he took cuts of recordings of me, you know, and put them together, but I sort of walked away from it with a very low feeling, you know, for this whole thing.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I mean, these were recordings of your voice?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And then did he come out here and prowl around and take photographs of you at work?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, I mean, well, I was perfectly willing because I understood this was to be, you know, a usual documentary of an artist.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Sure, he should be interested in that.

EUGENE CHODOROW: But it seems to me like this is—well, you'll have to see it for yourself, and I would like your opinion. So, tell me after you've seen it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I would—I will call you after I do.

EUGENE CHODOROW: I want to know what you think of it. Maybe I'm all wrong, but it's not what I expected.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is he working under Dr. Grey [ph], or do you know? Dr. Grey [ph] is head of the theater arts, I believe, at UCLA.

EUGENE CHODOROW: I don't know. I don't know any of his connections. I really don't.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He's a friend and former neighbor of mine. I thought I might talk to him about it and see what he thinks.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh, I see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I mean, about the man's work. It would be interesting to know what the approach was, wouldn't it?

EUGENE CHODOROW: I see, I see. Well, it's no use for me to say anything now. [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs.] I have to kind of—myself, you know, to find out more about it, you know—I do not own the film—and see what's what, you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I'll talk to you again after Sunday night. Mr. Chodorow, do you teach at all?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh, once in a while I do.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Just privately?

EUGENE CHODOROW: I have a couple students here and there, you know, but—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Because many of the artists are in some of the art schools. We have so many around—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, I know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —and I thought perhaps you were teaching.

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, no. I stick here on my own.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And where do you usually exhibit your things? Do you have a gallery, or [inaudible]?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, I have a gallery here, [inaudible] Gallery Levine [ph] you know, there. And he sells one occasionally for me.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is that on La Cienega?

EUGENE CHODOROW: On Beverly Boulevard.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Beverly Boulevard, I knew I was [inaudible].

EUGENE CHODOROW: Near [inaudible].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, before I end the tape, there's one question I always like to ask the artist. What do you think that the value of the Project was to American art, either good or bad, as you look back on it now, and the influence that it had on them?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, it was great. I mean, it was—it was as you said before, it's the beginnings of this American flourish in the arts, you know, the beginning of it. There was a lot of bad. There was a lot of good. I mean, we can't say that everybody were geniuses, [they laugh] you know, that [inaudible] masterpieces. There was a lot of junk done on the Project too, you know, which is—but, however, you have, you know, some fine, great names came through, Ben Shahn and de Kooning, and well, all this New York school, you know, started from there.

[00:25:28]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Certainly had [inaudible] there.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes. Well, you know, Pollock as well.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you think that these people influenced the younger painters who were on the Project at the time? Most of them were pretty young then too. They were just finding their way [inaudible]. [Cross talk.]

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, they were—each one was looking, and all this was evolving, don't you see. I mean, for instance, if take Phil Guston, you know, he started in—Phil Guston started in the Project was a realist, you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: As a realist, was he?

EUGENE CHODOROW: He was a very fine draftsman, you know, I mean, terrific draftsmanship, you know, realistic renderings and whatnot. And, you know, what Phil Guston is doing today, you know, and it was a complete switcheroo, you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's pretty abstract now. He started here, did you know that?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, I understand that he comes from here, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, that's interesting. Of course, we know it fed a lot of people at the time. They needed it too, but it seems to me that the important influences are just beginning to be felt, just beginning to realize how really wonderful it must have been. So many of the artists have told me what happy times they were, the rapport among the artists. Do you remember that in the New York area?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, there was. I mean, we had—we had things that we haven't got here, maybe. Possibly, there is some starting here too, but we used to meet a lot outside. We used to get together in the restaurants, cafeterias, and talk and discuss work [inaudible]. In a way, I was—being that I was in charge of a project, you know, I might have—I might have been standing off to the side a bit, you know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Of course, you couldn't—

EUGENE CHODOROW: But it was a nice time, alright. I mean, the Artists' Union, very powerful force, you know, and the organization of the artists.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Were you active in that at all?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh, I was a member of the union. And whatever struggles the union had I came along with them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I guess all the artists—I must have interviewed several—have told me.

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And in Chicago, too. They had a union form there.

EUGENE CHODOROW: [Inaudible.] Yeah, Kent, Rockwell Kent was in charge of the union—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: In New York?

EUGENE CHODOROW: [Inaudible]—in New York. In fact, he stood up for me when the murals were burned, you know?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, did he really?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You mean, how could he stand up and do it—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Well, I mean—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —or did he talk or write about it afterwards [inaudible]?

EUGENE CHODOROW: He wrote about it, so—well, that's it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I certainly have appreciated the interview. Is there anything you would like to add to it before we stop?

EUGENE CHODOROW: That somehow, it's a—you know, the similarities that—there was this time when those murals were finished, you know, at that time, and the Second World War was coming in, and somehow—how many years is it since now? 40, 60, 25 years.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, it has been.

EUGENE CHODOROW: 25 years, somehow. Things are still not so good. Wars going on again.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's hard to understand, yeah.

EUGENE CHODOROW: You know, you have cycles just keep on going.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I hope it doesn't take a war to get another art project started, but I certainly would like to see some such thing for the artists in our country—

EUGENE CHODOROW: [Inaudible], yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —I hope it comes through peace.

EUGENE CHODOROW: I wonder how it would work out again. Don't actually—today the artists are—I mean, today artists became a commodity that is valued, you know, that has organized money behind it, you know? It's quite a big jump from the Project days.

[00:30:15]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

EUGENE CHODOROW: You know, the artist is not a poor artist, anymore, you know? That's gone.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I think the Project helped that a lot, too. It made people appreciate their artists more than they ever had, don't you?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Oh, yes, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Incidentally, before we stop, too, I spoke to your wife on the telephone, and she told me that she was on the Project—

EUGENE CHODOROW: She was, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —for a while. Was it on the Art Project that she filled in?

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yes, I went off, you know, I went off. I went up to Chicago that time, and she, you know, needed a job to keep the family going, so she went in, and she was on the Project for about three, four months, maybe.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, she said she wasn't an artist. Was she painting, or—

EUGENE CHODOROW: No, she was in the office force [ph].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I see. She wasn't in the Art Project then, just in the—

EUGENE CHODOROW: Yeah, in the art project, but as an office worker, yeah.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —but in the office. I see. Well, if she's here, do you think she'd like to

say anything to the tape about it? Would there be anything she remembers that would be interesting, do you suppose?

EUGENE CHODOROW: I don't know. She's not here now. She's working now, but—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I'll ask her. [Inaudible.]

EUGENE CHODOROW: You might. I don't know if she has something.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'm happy to talk to or see her. Well, thank you so much, Mr. Chodorow.

EUGENE CHODOROW: You're welcome, sure.

[END OF TRACK AAA_chodor65_8453_m.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]