



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Radio interview with Elizabeth Davey  
Lochrie, 1954 June

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Elizabeth Davey Lochrie in June 1954. The interview took place in Los Angeles, California, and was conducted by Ruth Ashton for CBS Radio in Los Angeles, California.

The original transcript was edited. In 2023 the Archives retranscribed the original audio and attempted to create a 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

[00:00:02.16]

RUTH ASHTON: [in progress]—rich, hearty flavor of Hills Brothers Coffee to accompany a few pleasant moments of relaxation. And you always know that each cup of Hills Brothers is a good cup of coffee, because here is a coffee that's dependably delicious. Balanced blending and controlled roasting promise you that when you drink Hills Brothers Coffee you really do have the finest treat of all.

[00:00:24.69]

Well, in our effort to spotlight outstanding women here in the West, we've asked our stations on this network for their suggestions. And today we're happy to present the woman of whom Station KBOW in Butte, Montana, is so very proud. And apparently KBOW is joined in this feeling by everybody else in Montana.

[00:00:43.96]

She's Mrs. Elizabeth Lochrie of Butte, known in the entire country, as a matter of fact, for her paintings, her sculptures, her murals, and portraits, and lectures, and magazine articles. Mrs. Lochrie currently has an exhibit touring the country with the Montclair Art Collection. She's permanently represented at the Newton Galleries in New York, where she also had a one-man exhibit last November.

[00:01:06.10]

But most important, I think, is the real purpose and significance in the work Mrs. Lochrie does. I had the great pleasure of seeing her in Los Angeles, and I think you'll know why she is so outstanding when you hear her answers to some questions I asked her by tape recording.

[00:01:21.91]

First of all, Mrs. Lochrie, would you tell us just why have you chosen as your subject matter, "Montana and the Indians There?"

[00:01:30.22]

ELIZABETH LOCHRIE: Well, I imagine it's probably because I was born right there. And at the time that I was born, they were rounding up the Indians to put them on reservations. And the main line to several of those reservations went through my town. And I saw much of the Indians and loved them, as a little child, and ran away with them several times.

[00:01:49.09]

RUTH ASHTON: [Laughs.]

[00:01:49.61]

ELIZABETH LOCHRIE: And it seemed like, all my life, I wanted to paint. And as I got older, after I'd finished art school and raised my family, the thing to do seemed to be to paint the Indians and the mountain scenery where they live, and where I live, rather than any other

subject.

[00:02:06.79]

RUTH ASHTON: You feel that the Indians are an important part of our history and our culture —

[00:02:10.11]

ELIZABETH LOCHRIE: I think they're very important to our culture.

[00:02:12.43]

RUTH ASHTON: And they're perhaps being neglected, you think.

[00:02:13.96]

ELIZABETH LOCHRIE: They are. We have many nationalities in our country, and many of them have developed—take the Swedes and the Norwegians and the Irish—have developed and become wonderful American citizens. Take the Indians, no, because we have suppressed them—kept them down. Also, they're Stone Age men that we expected to jump a gap of millions of years into our culture from the Stone Age period, and we haven't given them half a chance.

[00:02:40.12]

Now they're dying out, being suppressed, and pushed back on land on which they cannot survive. And we are, just the past few years, awakening to the fact that if they haven't been assimilated, they're dying of white man's disease and we're losing them. And the point in wanting to save them is that they have a fine, high culture, they are physically a wonderful race of men that is worth preserving, and that, given time, they will assimilate and add to the bloodstream of Americans—something that's worthwhile.

[00:03:13]

RUTH ASHTON: You feel that we're actually missing something very important—

[00:03:16.48]

ELIZABETH LOCHRIE: We are, if we lose them, as we have lost the East Coast Indians almost entirely.

[00:03:21.73]

RUTH ASHTON: And you're recording these facts about the Indians, what they look like, and how they live, for a record of our history and also to show us how important they are to us.

[00:03:30.97]

ELIZABETH LOCHRIE: Yes. And what I'm seeing today— I'm not going back to 1840, which I didn't experience. I'm telling in my paintings and in my writings what I see today—the way they dress and wear, the way they react to our cultural influence, and the way we're reacting to them.

[00:03:51.22]

RUTH ASHTON: Thank you, Mrs. Elizabeth Lochrie. And thank you, station KBOW in Butte, for bringing to our attention an outstanding woman of the West. And that's all for the "Women's News Desk" today, brought to you by Hills Brothers Coffee. This is Ruth Ashton reporting.

[00:04:08.92]

BETTY LOCHRIE HOAG: You have just listened to a tape taken from a record made in June 1954, in which Ms. Ruth Ashton of CBS interviewed Elizabeth Lochrie, the artist from Montana, who was in Los Angeles on the event of the opening of the Francis Lynch Gallery in the new Statler Hotel, where her pictures were being shown.

[00:04:36.26]

Mrs. Lochrie was connected with the federal projects in Montana. She had three different commissions from the Treasury Department to do post office murals—one in Burley, Idaho, one at St. Anthony, Idaho, and one at Dillon, Montana.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]