



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with William E.  
Woolfenden and Irving Burton, 1992  
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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with William Woolfenden and Irving Burton on December 2, 1992. The interview was conducted by Garnett McCoy for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Interview

GARNETT MCCOY: This is Garnett McCoy. It's December 2, 1992 and I'm talking to William E. Woolfenden and to Irving Burton about the Archives of American Art and its early days. I want to start with a quote from E. P. Richardson's diary, Richardson having been the co-founder of the Archives. This is written in 1951 and he says: "Those who, like Wilensky, criticize art history as a useless pursuit often call it so because they say 'the work of art should tell its own story directly to the eye.' History, they say, 'offers a false substitute for this direct experience. Halfway through, one must have the direct experience for oneself, that is granted, but it is impossible to see a work of art unless one is in sympathy with the artist's intention. One must put oneself in tune with him, re-create his intention, see with his eye to comprehend his work. The man who judges the works of one age with the feelings of another may, as Coleridge said, be a very fine gentleman but is no critic.'" [transcriber's note: quotation marks inserted without instruction] Now, this was written in 1951 as I said and it seems to me that it does give Richardson's view or feeling about the importance of art history, which I am assuming led to his interest in preserving the documentation that art history requires to be written. Bill, do you have any thoughts on Richardson's own intention with respect to the founding of the Archives? Did he ever talk to you about it in the earlier days?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: He talked about it a lot. I think his frustration is the thing that I remember. He felt that in order to write intelligently about American art you should know what happened in St. Louis or San Francisco. However, he was interested in an artist, where they had been, and that he didn't have time as a busy museum director and no one else much did to go around and find this stuff. He thought that the thing that would give most energy to the study of American art was his collection of manuscript materials in one central place. He kept stressing the centralization.

GARNETT MCCOY: And then, when it did get started, with just a few people and enthusiastic interest, how much were you aware of the earliest development of the Archives before you came to the Archives yourself?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I was aware of it. We resented it terribly! (laughter) The Museum was broke, and Ted was trying to keep the Art Quarterly alive, and then along came the Archives and it seemed like more than could be swung. But Irving [Burton] knows more about that period than I do.

GARNETT MCCOY: That's true. But you did hear of talk about it from the staff?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: And the staff were invited to various events if Vincent Price was there, or Aline Saarinen. The other thing about it was that Richardson, in order to make it work, had to use the facilities of the Museum; everybody in the Museum got involved in one way or another.

GARNETT MCCOY: How did you first get involved, Irving?

IRVING BURTON: Well, I got involved because (laughing) we had to buy some pictures to decorate our house, and we had gotten track of a dealer without any idea of what was going on, and this one way or another led to Larry [Fleischman], who was then of course the big collector. From Larry we had gone to the Museum, where they had a show of American artists -- they were borrowed from the dealers and the Friends of Modern Art then -- and then this was opened to the public to buy, they bought directly from the dealer. My memory is that Ted Richardson himself came out when they came down and showed a great interest and told us about a few things and gave us various suggestions. So once we got involved with that, and both Larry and Ted being very interested in the Archives, they asked me to get involved in the Archives. I must say at that point I didn't quite know what it was all about.

GARNETT MCCOY: That was about 1957 or '58?

IRVING BURTON: That was about '57 or '58. As we got more involved, and of course I started realizing exactly what it was doing, and my memory of the founding is pretty much the same as what you said, -- that Ted had written this book and he was just bemoaning the fact that he had to travel from city to city and library to library, et cetera, to get anything at all, and wondered why we didn't have a national archives the same as European countries had. Apparently that gave birth to the idea. You know, I don't know whether Larry said it to Ted, or Ted said it to Larry -- my guess would be that Ted had mentioned something like that and kicked it around with

Larry. Larry was the sparkplug.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Indeed, though, Irving, weren't you involved before '57?

IRVING BURTON: No.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Because the founding date is '54. I thought you and Doris -- you and Doris had the first fund-raising.

IRVING BURTON: We had the first fund-raising. I can't quite remember the date, it was either '56 or '57, and we had Al Capp and with us and we raised -- I forget, it was one or two thousand dollars, which was quite a bit of money, and especially for the Archives it was a lot of money. Also, I made a major contribution at that time of \$500, which was provide Mrs. Ford (laughter). The reason I did that is Larry talked me into buying a picture, and so did Ted, and I was getting all the help free and thought the least I could do was support them. So we did, and the next fund-raising of course was at the Schweder [phon.sp.] house -- they were the people who owned Samson Luggage and New York. And Al Talbot was one of the chair people, but I think together, I'm not sure, but Al Talbot was. And there again -- and I think Vincent Price was at that house and that was the second, I think, fund-raising to get the Archives going. Now, as far as collecting was concerned before you came on, I think you spent most of your time in Philadelphia? Philadelphia Archives?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: They had Philadelphia go ahead and borrow Cowdrey here in New York. She had a desk in the Lipmans' house and it was all fine, she could work until they came home, then she had to put everything away and get out. (he laughs)

GARNETT MCCOY: You mean, their apartment?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. Because they were living mostly out in Connecticut. When they wanted the apartment she had to clear out.

GARNETT MCCOY: As I understand it, the Archives started in '54, but then it didn't get incorporated as a formal entity or a ceremonial entity until a couple of years later.

IRVING BURTON: It was a subgroup of the DIA, like the Friends of Modern Art, or Friends of Eastern Art, and that's how it was incorporated. And as a matter of fact, we were quite familiar with that because when we went to the Smithsonian, we had to de-incorporate in the State of Michigan, and the founders' society had a lease.

GARNETT MCCOY: Oh, that's right.

IRVING BURTON: But I was explaining to you before, and you of course expressed the same opinion, that the founders' society itself just really didn't care very much for the Archives -- (he laughs)

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: When they in the way.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. Well, I think, I mean the Archives got started and it was moving along in a very low-key way with an extremely small staff. And then I think the thing that really got it off the ground was the large Ford Foundation grant which Mr. Richardson persuaded Mrs. Ford to acquire from the Ford Foundation -- at least I believe that's the way it went.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. We asked her to see if the Foundation would do something and they were very hesitant about a new untried project, although that's what foundations probably should be doing. But the trouble at the time was that they had tied up all their money for the humanities, and we had to come in under existing programs. They gave the money, as I understood it, and as Ted and Larry understood it, for the study of creative arts in American civilization, which was to be a series of seminars to define what the major problems in our study of the American humanities. And the Ford Foundation at the end that claimed this wasn't at all what they had in mind.

GARNETT MCCOY: Well, it sounds like she didn't tie it up very clearly.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: But it was a wonderful thing. Actually we should be very indebted to them because it was the first time that the Archives really became national and had somebody to go around and talk to people and beat the bushes, and become an institution.

GARNETT MCCOY: How much money was it, do you remember?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: \$150,000.

GARNETT MCCOY: That's a lot of money.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: five years.

GARNETT MCCOY: And of course it freed up other parts of the budget to do other things with.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Well, it paid my salary. Richardson was more and more involved not only with the Museum but also with Winterthur and didn't really have the time to be. Then finally the Ford Foundation got to be such a major problem and project that I said I would either do the Archives or the Ford Foundation project, and that's when we brought in Bill Agee.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. I remember his coming. That was the New Deal art project. But you were brought in to handle both the Archives and the conferences, weren't you?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. Basically I was being paid by the Ford Foundation, so I was brought in primarily as far as they were concerned to run the seminars and the projects. But somebody had to run the Archives.

GARNETT MCCOY: And you came in early in 1960 I think it was.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I think so, although I didn't really take over until June, but I remember coming down to a board meeting in May probably.

GARNETT MCCOY: And other important things happened that same year, like the airlifts and so forth.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: It was again the kind of personal involvement of people at that time that was exciting. It was the first auction that the Archives did with the American Institute of Decorators and I think you were responsible, really, for bringing Milka Ionomoff--

IRVING BURTON: Who was head of the American Institute of Decorators, who later became one of our board members. They were looking for something to do which would establish them as a part of the civic thing, and it was a natural because she had actually helped us with our house. We had the first major auction ourselves. It was at the Institute of Arts, the AIA [?], and if I remember correctly, didn't we raise something like \$25,000?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I think so.

IRVING BURTON: Or even more, \$30,000, something in that area; which back then was a lot of money.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: But it was interesting that someone of Milka's background, not an American at all, should see the importance of American civilization where other people didn't.

GARNETT MCCOY: And she worked with Eppa [?] Hutton.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: She worked with Hutton and the whole board. It was the year that the Detroit Museum had the great Flemish exhibition, which brought Flemish paintings from all over the world. It was only going to be shown in Detroit, and Peter Pollack, who had been hired to do the public relations for the Museum and also -- they always got things going by combining: Larry hired Peter Parsley to do the Archives, and Ted hired him to do the Flemish. They got Eloise Spaeth to come on the New York committee --

GARNETT MCCOY: This was again in 1960? Or a little earlier?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: 1960. And she and Peter got together and decided to charter a plane and fly a group of people from New York to Detroit to see the Flemish show. And it was a huge success --

GARNETT MCCOY: Lots of publicity.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Lots of publicity, and involvement with people again. I think some of the people on that airlift are still members. Anyway, I was thrown because on the way back to New York, having had a nice "din" with lots of cocktails, they decided to charter a plane to go to Europe. And that was the beginning of the Archive airlift named after -- what do you call it? It seemed very inappropriate for an airlift which was at the time keeping Berlin; and I refused to be taken over by a group of people going off to have a good time in Europe. And it was also the first year of Lundi Gras, which came about -- was that Harold Love's idea?

IRVING BURTON: Well, it was Harold's and that wonderful gal, what was her name, whose husband was her neurologist, and a writer? Does that ring bells for you, I don't quite remember her name now. But it came about I can't quite remember if one individual brought but Harold was in charge at that time and he was responsible and this wonderful woman was responsible. And sure enough, obviously we couldn't do a Mardi Gras, so we called it a Lundi Gras.

GARNETT MCCOY: So that started off as Harold Love's idea? I didn't know that.

IRVING BURTON: He was involved in it. I don't know if Harold threw it out but I remember at the meeting where we discussed --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: He ran with the ball.

IRVING BURTON: He ran with the ball. There's no question, Harold was very good at it, and we started off with this. And of course, one advantage on our board over a cultural board was a famous restaurateur in charge, Leslie Gruber [phon.sp.] and his wife Cleo, who was a great supporter. And they had the Chophouse Restaurant, the number one restaurant in Detroit. And Monday was a great day because Monday is a very dead day for restaurants and Lester didn't do it for nothing but he did a bangup job and we had the whole Chophouse and it was really a tremendous so we had every big name in Detroit and Grosse Pointe and Ford and you can start naming the "Who's Who" of who was important in Detroit at that time.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I think it's amazing. I think it's the longest-running benefit dinner in the city.

IRVING BURTON: Without any doubt.

GARNETT MCCOY: The high point of the social season.

IRVING BURTON: Yes, that's right. And it's still getting sold out every year -- it sold out last year and it looks like it will be sold out again this year.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: And it was 1960 also that when the Detoit committee was formed -- that, again, was an amazing bit of -- the Archives had so little to offer the laymen that we expect them to be interested in the idea and support other esoteric -- usually if you belong to an organization, you go to a museum opening, or you go to a lecture, and we had to kind of put together things to create an interest. And it's interesting too that once people were involved in the auction -- maybe just marking, or wrapping -- they became interested in the Archives and active members.

GARNETT MCCOY: I've always felt that one of the problems the Archives has, especially in more recent years, is that the board of trustees themselves don't really understand what the Archives is all about, and have it confused with museums. We don't deal with paintings, so we don't have openings, so they feel kind of frustrated. At least that's my view.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I remember one year, one of our most loyal and active trustees called me and said would I please make a selection of paintings form our collection that could be used for Christmas cards. I tried to explain that the Archives didn't have any paintings. I think she thought somebody should fill me in about what was really going on!

GARNETT MCCOY: I remember those -- a couple of times you would put on a very effective demonstration to the Detroit committee, where we'd show them a collection of papers as it originally existed -- you know, just ratty old bundles of paper that looked like they'd been eaten by mice and spiders and things for years. And then you'd pick up a bundle and flip through it and (laughing) slips of paper would fly off in the air, and would show them a box after it's been all fixed up, and then a roll of microfilm that all this material was on. It was really very effective.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I think those were the papers in the big scrapbooks that had fortunately been microfilmed down like snowflakes.

GARNETT MCCOY: That was very effective as a demonstration.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: We should do it again.

GARNETT MCCOY: We should -- get back to that sort of thing.

IRVING BURTON: One of the other things: we in the Detroit committee were very active. You know, we did all this series of auctions and big garage sales. You know we had a big jazz festival in Hall and we had some of the outstanding jazz experts come in, and then we then we did jazz concerts. (he laughs) We didn't do so well in showbiz but we broke even and made a few dollars.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: What was the one with the Irish singers?

IRVING BURTON: Oh yes, the Irish singer, and Dizzy Gillespie was the trumpeter, and we had the Clancy Brothers and somebody. So we had a tremendous show, because we found in fund-raising it was very hard to explain to everybody what the Archives were, but if you threw something that they wanted to come to, they came, they contributed, a lot of them became members, and then we tried to tell them what the Archives was about.

GARNETT MCCOY: Well, there were some very imaginative ideas certainly.

IRVING BURTON: Well, a lot of these things we would do this, this, this and then after a while everybody was doing auctions. And then we did one where we got all the chefs together and had a big thing -- we had something like 30 chefs and each one made his specialty. That was done at the Ford estate when it first opened, and people would pay and they would go to the Ford estate, go through, and each chef had a booth and he would make a specialty. We did that for two years with great success, and then everybody was doing it and these chefs were so busy doing it for everybody they did it for nothing for nobody. (he laughs)

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: One of the things that didn't work was the car auction, which should have worked in Detroit.

GARNETT MCCOY: That is strange.

IRVING BURTON: But you know what did work, surprisingly? Machinery. You remember the machinery auction?

GARNETT MCCOY: Used machine tools.

IRVING BURTON: Used machinery. Harold Love ran that. We just were standbys because machinery was very heavy and they were commercial machinery, and we hired an auctioneer and sold off all the machinery. As I remember, we made a lot of money on that.

GARNETT MCCOY: Bill, do you remember how the New York committee got going? Was that before your time?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: There were so many New York committees. It's one of the problems. Bob has had a committee which tended to be very professional --

GARNETT MCCOY: Like an advisory committee.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes, later, like our advisory committees. And then Elizabeth Firestone Willis was chairman of the New York committee, and they had various committees down here -- nothing like fund-raising but just kind of interesting afternoons. Then Eloise Spaeth, when she was made trustee, was made chairman of the New York committee and she formed another committee. And then we got our own New York committee.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. Well, there were a lot of them. But how did the whole New York connection get going? Was it because -- in the early times, there was Howard Lipman and Joe Hirshhorn on the board and they created an interest in New York apart from the Detroit connection. Is that the way it was?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. They always realized they'd need an office here. That group and Bartlett and , kind of an operation at the time was to centralize things and to go after things in other archives and other collections. Bob spent a great deal of his time on auction catalogues, which was a wonderful project but not very exciting.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes, that's true, she handled the scholarly aspect of it or the collecting aspect, but how did the fund-raising, the support committee, get established here?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: There wasn't one, really, not in the sense Detroit was fund-raising. If you look at the original board where Richardson was very carefully trying to have -- he didn't want it to become just as Detroit institution, he felt very strongly it should be national. He had Fulbright, representing the government, and Al Capp and Vincent Price as kind of popularizers for people who were very much in the public eye; and Howard Lipman because Jean and Howard had just bought "Art in America" and he was an active collector, and had also the Frederick Fairchild Sherman papers. And -- who were the others ...

GARNETT MCCOY: There was Joe Hirshhorn.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Joe Hirshhorn, he was a great collector and he also had the McCray papers, maybe, by that time.

GARNETT MCCOY: (after pause) He might have.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: They were people who had broad interests in the American field and a much earlier interest.

GARNETT MCCOY: But then there was somebody in New York who dreamed up the airlift idea, or at least carried the ball with it.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I always thought it was Eloise who was recognized as the person who was doing that. I always felt it was Peter Pollack, who tended to take on too many jobs at once -- instead of trying to get interest

in the Flemish show by bringing a group of New Yorkers out to Detroit, do it the other way around.

GARNETT MCCOY: That was .

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. And then the success of that led them into the European -- the Boston Museum of Fine Arts had had tours for their members but they were done as a kind of courtesy, there was no money involved. Then the Archives came along and made \$50,000 on each trip.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. Probably the first ones to do that, wasn't it?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Getting back to your question who sparked the New York thing, it was really very much Howard Lipman who was always holding out paying for space, paying for projects down here. I always remember the day I said to him that we could reproduce all the film and have it in the New York office, and that really appealed to him. I think he found it hard to raise money here where there was so little going on, so that the idea of having the microfilms here and he could say "everything that's in Detroit is here, everything that's here is in Detroit" --

GARNETT MCCOY: So it was a research center as well as a collecting center.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes, right.

GARNETT MCCOY: All through the years, in fact, Howard was extremely generous with the Archives.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: You're right, yes.

GARNETT MCCOY: One thing I wondered about was: the Archives had its structure, and its goals, and Richardson was the director, but how much did he actually do in directing? I mean, it's true that the Archives was on a very small scale before he left for Winterthur, but did he pay a great deal of attention to it do you think? I guess he didn't need to.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: No, I don't think he needed to. It fascinated him, he was always interested in what came in, but it was a small Detroit organization. The committee carried on the fund-raising, so he didn't have to be too involved in that.

GARNETT MCCOY: And the papers were taken care of by the librarian, at first --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: At first.

GARNETT MCCOY: -- and then Miriam Leslie --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Well, Arlene Custer, who evidently really set up the systems --

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: -- you always felt somebody had done a lot of solid work.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes, she did.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Arlene left, and Carol Selby was hired as the museum librarian --

GARNETT MCCOY: That's right.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: -- and expected to take on the Archives. And she just said, again, she'd do either the museum library or the Archives but she couldn't do both. Then they brought in Miriam to do the Archives.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. Was that in about '59 -- that was before you came, wasn't it.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. In about '59.

GARNETT MCCOY: And then, after Richardson went to Winterthur, in early '62 I believe it was, did he provide you guidance and advice and so forth?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes.

GARNETT MCCOY: But you were in effect the director at the time.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. I was doing day-to-day -- I always felt we needed his name for this new untried institution and he was one of the leaders in this whole American art history program. So I was perfectly content

to be assistant director. He kept saying, "It isn't fair to you to not have the name when you're doing all the work." And I think he really found it a little much, because the "Art Quarterly" was always a struggle, trying to fund that, trying to get good articles, and he was, as I said, more and more involved with the Winterthur board and helping Harry du Pont.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. When was it that Larry became president of the board? Was he the president when you came?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes, by that time.

GARNETT MCCOY: Do you know, Irving?

IRVING BURTON: Well, the first meeting I attended it was Frank Donovan. Remember Frank?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I unfortunately do. (laughter)

IRVING BURTON: Well, Frank was the president. earlier. And that winter Lovett and Larry, and Ted at his home, and Frank was there and he was the president, and [inaudible]

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I didn't realize Frank was president. He was treasurer.

IRVING BURTON: Well, he chaired the meeting. The first organization I chaired that I didn't know anything at all about. Then we kind of gabbed a little bit, and then he left. I remember Ted made a remark, "Can you imagine someone who comes in not knowing what the organization is about?" I was green at the time, I had (laughing) no idea what had transpired --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: There's a better story than that. Partially because Eleanor Ford, Mrs. Edsel Ford, was so supportive and so enthusiastic about everything, we all went to her with problems. Richardson had gone to her when he was founding the Archives to see if she could get Henry to assign one of his executives to be president of the Archives, and he suggested Charles Moore as the president. I think he appeared at one meeting and never again. About ten years later, his secretary called one day and wanted to know if he was still president of the board of the Archives of American Art, (laughter) which was kind of shattering, thinking how lightly they take these things.

But Frank Donovan had come from no place in the art world, certainly, but had been the backer to bring the Metropolitan Opera to Detroit; he worked closely with Anne Ford, who again was sympathetic to the problems of the Museum.

GARNETT MCCOY: Charles Moore was very briefly president, you think?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. He thought he was president for years but he wasn't. Mrs. Ford was president.

IRVING BURTON: I don't remember her at any meetings.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: At the very beginning we used to meet in the Baroque Gallery and she presided, which she found very hard and unpleasant to do.

GARNETT MCCOY: And then when did Larry come in?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: (after pause) I don't know what date he would have taken over, about '60, again just as he got more active and they needed somebody.

GARNETT MCCOY: About the time you came.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. But it was Larry who got me to go. He was the power at that point.

IRVING BURTON: You never knew what was happening because he would just talk for You sat there and we sure don't know anything because he didn't do the same thing twice in a row.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I remember the board meeting I went to in May about 1960 and my appointment was announced to the board as a fact and there I was, and I could tell that Aline Saarinen was really miffed by that. I went back to Detroit and I said to "I can't take that job because Aline is so opposed." And he said, "How do you know that?" I said, "Well, just looking at her I could tell." He said, "Don't pay any attention. Why don't you call her up?" So I did, I called up, I said, "I'm in an awful spot because you obviously don't think I should take this job." And she said, "It isn't that at all but I get so fed up with paying my way to New York and then having all these major -- McClelland, Peter Pollock and my appointments were all announced to the board in that meeting. If you want it, take it, but don't let Ted and Larry snow you." (laughter)



GARNETT MCCOY: Was she at Cranbrook?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: She had married Eero. and wrote our first kind of propoganda sheet. Wasn't it Aline who got after this "go after things that aren't under lock and key?"

GARNETT MCCOY: I don't remember that.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: She felt that there were a lot of good papers around that were in danger, and that we should be microfilming things in institutions where things were relatively safe.

GARNETT MCCOY: That was before my time, I didn't hear about that.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: She had resigned before.

GARNETT MCCOY: That's right, yes.

IRVING BURTON: I think the first time the board really had a function is when came in named Harold on the board; I mean, just like that. And what happened was Harold was on the Detroit Symphony and for one reason or another -- I don't know whether he had marital troubles with Betty, whatever reason it was --

GARNETT MCCOY: "Marital troubles" is what Barry used to call them. (laughter)

IRVING BURTON: That's right. "Boy have I got troubles." (more laughter) Whatever it was, he was doomed not to arrive because at that time the Symphony was a social ladder and if you were all right you got to the top, if you weren't you flattened out. So he never got into the exalted committee, whatever it was, so he was ripe to look for leadership elsewhere. Barry just brought him in one day and we found out "I want you to meet the new chairman of the board." And there we were.

GARNETT MCCOY: And that was chairman of the board.

IRVING BURTON: The committee.

GARNETT MCCOY: Oh, right --

IRVING BURTON: We're talking about the Detroit committee. And there you were.

GARNETT MCCOY: Very arbitrary.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Of course, that's what he wanted to do when he resigned. He was going to put Harold in as president. I just said I couldn't work with Harold and it would be easier to find a new director than it would be to find a new president of the board. He was furious and he said, "Well, if you don't like it get somebody you do." And that's when I got Russell.

GARNETT MCCOY: I remember that. And then Russell was on until 1971, I think, when Howard came in.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: We were having financial troubles at the time. Actually there were problems that stemmed from our association with the Smithsonian. It drove Howard nuts that we couldn't get basic financial statements. He thought it was my fault and I was just too dumb to understand financial statements. Much to my delight one day he turned to Ames Wheeler and said, "Bill can't explain this to me, will you tell me what -- " Ames said, "I never could read one of those things, I have no idea what they talk about." (laughter)

GARNETT MCCOY: Ames was the Treasurer of the Smithsonian!

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I know.

IRVING BURTON: You and I went and talked to him about that interest charge on our money. (laughter again)

GARNETT MCCOY: I remember Howard complained because the board meetings were so dull. So at the following meeting I brought a document in to pass around as an example of interesting documents that the Archives gets in. It was a wonderful letter from Maurice Sterne written when he was in Bali in 1912. A long letter, and he goes on about how beautiful the women's breasts are there, and he has little pictures of the various kinds of women's breasts, little illustrations, with long descriptions; all very straight-faced. So I passed them around and Howard thought that was the best meeting that he'd been to since he joined the Archives. (laughter)

Well, I had thought we might talk about some of the individuals who had been connected with the Archives from time to time, who might be completely lost to history after Bill and I and you are gone. I think we ought certainly to mention Effie Morse, since she was a critical figure during the 1960s.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes, she was that.

GARNETT MCCOY: She was the membership secretary.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Effie I had found in the thing I did called "Looking at Modern Art," which was a discussion group -- was that what they were called, discussion groups that were around in the 60s?

GARNETT MCCOY: I think so.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: It was, again, a Ford Foundation project and Katherine Kuh of the Chicago Art Institute chaired it. We were to write the announcement of the course for the local papers and then select ten men and ten women none of whom had any real connection with the art world, they were to be totally amateur and non-art. And Effie was one of the people who applied for membership in this --

GARNETT MCCOY: Who did the selecting?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I did. I got lots of letters from people who were interested. Gloria Whalen, incidentally; that's the way she got interested in the art field. It was one of the most intriguing things I've ever done. I was used at lecturing to people and giving gallery talks, but here you had to shut up and let them try and find their way. It sounds like a free idiocy to have people that don't know anything -- anyway, Effie was very much a leader and very involved in all of this.

She made the mistake with a friend of hers of trying to open a "lonely hearts club" in Detroit. They were convinced there were a lot of people that really were perfectly all right but who were just too shy to make dates. So she started a dating bureau --

GARNETT MCCOY: She did?? I didn't know that.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: -- and invested a lot of money, what little money she had, in announcements, printing and renting a place where they could meet. And then the papers refused to accept the ads because they thought there was something kind of pornographic about the whole thing.

GARNETT MCCOY: Those were the days -- Effie was a woman ahead of her time.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Effie had a young friend, she got him to -- they were always advertising "Dime a Dance" studios in the paper. One was called The Tr Studios not far from the Museum, and she got this friend of hers to go down and apply for that, and it turned out to be practically a prostitution. (laughter) But she never could break this ruling, so she was without a job and I was concerned about her and also thought she'd be very good. So we got her to come over and be membership secretary. She did everything kind of, as you remember.

GARNETT MCCOY: I do; yes.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: And one of her great -- she had never been to Europe, and I could tell, the first year that we had chartered so there were going to be extra seats, I just had a feeling Larry would say to Effie, practically the night before, "We're taking you to Europe." So I said to her, "If I were you, I'd get my shots and get a passport." So she hurried down and did both, and sure enough, a few days before we were to go, he said, "Effie, I'm going to take you with us." (laughter)

And she became everybody's darling. In the first place, she handled all the reservations, but she was so excited about being in Europe she just had to hold onto herself with glee, and everybody thought it was just marvelous, and helped this hardworking woman. And then I think she got very distressed at the time we were talking about becoming part of the Smithsonian, because she was already 60, I think.

She asked for time off to go to Florida, and came back, it seemed everything was all exciting and wonderful. We didn't have our own office, everybody shared everything; if Effie and I wanted to talk about anything privately, we went for a walk. So she said, "Can we go for a walk." It turned out a childhood friend of hers had asked her to marry him and she was going to do it. And while I had advised her, telling her she'd end up as a nurse, bookkeeper and housekeeper, she married the guy anyway.

GARNETT MCCOY: And that's the way she wound up.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: That's where she wound up; in Daytona Beach.

GARNETT MCCOY: Remember that story before they got married -- he was a boat-dealer, and he took her out on his boat and he hired a captain to run the boat so he could pay attention to Effie. The captain came aboard and the man said, "Miss Morse and I are planning to get married but we're going out on this cruise together and we want you to run the boat for us." So the captain looked at him for a long time and finally said, "Well, there's no

fool like an old fool." (hearty laughter)

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Well, you know, again, on their honeymoon -- Effie was at least 60 -- they went on a boat up the Columbia River because Bert Hargrave as a young man ran a boat that took the supplies a day's stop ahead of the crews that were working on the Alaskan Highway up there. So he wanted to go back. They stayed in these wood houses that had been put up 40 or 50 years before; mice and all sorts of things. So that was Effie.

GARNETT MCCOY: Is she still living?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I tried to call her once in a while and they say "this number is not accepting incoming calls." I have a feeling that she's alive and has her phone on and uses it if she needs it, but isn't strong enough to --

GARNETT MCCOY: Well, she certainly was a compelling personality, I must say.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Oh, she was indeed so.

GARNETT MCCOY: Why don't you say something about Bartlett Cowdrey, since she was one of the early players.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes, she certainly was. Bartlett -- I always had pictures of her.... She lived in New Jersey and she used to take papers home with her because, again, there was no real office here at the time. The papers were spread all over the attic and I had visions of her just romping through all those papers just in ecstasy. She was a recognized scholar who had done bibliographies and catalogues, helped with practically every research thing that was going on.

She was a natural for the Archives but it was a very lonely job, she was all by herself down here, she had to bring in her own typewriter. I used to come down and spend the first week of every month in New York, and the first thing on Monday morning I got myself ready to hear all the terrible things that had happened to Bartlett. She was right in a lot of ways: Ted and Larry were expecting her to do things on a shoestring, giving her no support, but also she objected to everything when they did. She and Peter Pollock were at each other's throat, I had a terrible time with them.

GARNETT MCCOY: She came to the Archives through Richardson, I suppose?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. Bartlett very much liked Frances Richter in Philadelphia, and Anna Wells Rutledge, a generation of women scholars who took on almost genealogical historical research rather than art history. One of Bartlett's great buddies was Elizabeth McCausland, and it was through Bartlett that we got the McCausland papers. But she'd go off on tangents and special projects, so Richardson decided the way to discipline her and get her to conform was to put her on the auction catalogue project, which, I must say for a person of Bartlett's skills was pretty tedious, a boring thing for her to do. She left. Bartlett had turned into a lush, which again didn't help any either.

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GARNETT MCCOY: (begins mid-sentence) brought in through Howard or Eloise. Oh, it was the Flemish exhibition -  
-

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Peter [Pollock] had worked in a settlement house in Chicago and got interested in photography and also he did their public relations. He was hired by Dan Rich to do public relations for Chicago and gradually built himself so that he was named curator of photography. There were practically no curators of photography in those days, so it was quite a -- he wrote a very important book on photography.

Anyway, Ed White, a protegee of Dan Rich's, was doing an exhibition -- it was all very complex -- he was doing an exhibition of Larry's work and then he borrowed the Fleischman collection and Peter Pollock was assigned to do public relations for Cincinnati, and at the same time the Flemish show came up, so again, putting everything together, Larry hired Peter to do the Flemish show and the -- he was with the Archives for about four years and he was named director of the American Federation Art, which was a disaster because he was not in any way qualified for it. He ran into all kinds of personnel problems.

GARNETT MCCOY: As I remember he was only there a couple of years, I think.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Which was sad.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: One of the things that happens where somebody is given a job that they're not suited for ruins their career.

GARNETT MCCOY: And really he was a talented man, in many respects.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Amazingly vulgar. (laughter) Eloise said, "Even used hands like that in front of me."

GARNETT MCCOY: We recently -- some scholar got from his widow a bunch of papers that had not come to us, really good stuff -- scrapbooks about all his work in Chicago back in the 30s.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: She was always very friendly. Did he give them to us?

GARNETT MCCOY: She did give them to us but not too graciously. They have moved to Florida.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: They live just down the street from Jimmy and .

GARNETT MCCOY: Is it John Morse? Didn't he move down there too?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I don't know, I lost track of John when he was at Winterthur.

GARNETT MCCOY: Didn't he run the Ringling Museum or something like that --

IRVING BURTON: No, that was Shaw [?], the fellow who was head of the housekeeping department --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Building superintendent.

IRVING BURTON: He went down to Ringling Brothers.

GARNETT MCCOY: Let's say something about Ivor [Avellino], Bill. Ivor was a very important figure.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes, Ivor di Avellino. Well, when Bartlett left we had the problem of the unfinished exhibition catalogue of the New York Public Library and I went to see the head of the library school at Columbia, thinking that we really needed to get people with specific training and who had all sorts of background. They recommended -- they said they'd see if -- and practically the next day this young man came in and said he was interested in the job in the Archives.

I assumed, fortunately, that he'd been sent by Columbia, so I hired him. He went to work down at the Library. Our office in those days, you recall, was right across the street, 14 East 40th. I was called to see the head of the reference department. It turned out that this man had been war-damaged and he'd lose his temper and he threatened all the women to beat them up. So the librarian said, "We can't have him in this building, it's not safe."

Here I was -- ! So finally I guess I just let him work for another week and told him we'd run out of money and the project is off. Then I said to the librarian, "Now what am I going to do? Here we are again." And they said, "Well, we have this wonderful man who's going to retire; his name is Avellino. He's been with us" -- I don't know what his title was -- "in the American History department."

So I met Avellino and hired him and he became our man in New York before we had a New York area director, he was there alone. I always think of him going out with that great big oversized portfolio to collect things. He was particularly successful with old ladies, spent hours with them.

GARNETT MCCOY: He was extremely earnest. He'd write to Bill and say things like, "On your next trip to Gotham --" (laughter)

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: He thought that he should have been made head of the library which Jim Heflin and -- who was the other one from the New York Public?

GARNETT MCCOY: I don't remember. Anyway, Ivor brought in a vast number of collections for the Archives.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: He had spent hours with people like Lillian Tischler [?] listening to her stories.

GARNETT MCCOY: And one -- I can't remember which one it was -- got so attached to him that she sent him a silver bowl I think it was -- Mrs. or Mrs. Baziotes or somebody like that.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: You could refer to your obituary for Jemi [Jemison Hammond].

GARNETT MCCOY: Oh Jemi, yes. I think Jemi came in 1966.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Oh no, long before that.

GARNETT MCCOY: I think it was.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I remember because Otto Spaeth was dying in New York Hospital. They'd put radium in his body so that Eloise could only be in the room with him for a certain length of time. We had had a bunch of kind of girls who'd graduated from finishing school and wanted a job until they got married, weren't very good typists and weren't very efficient in the office.

GARNETT MCCOY: I remember at one point you had Sally Austin, who was sick also .

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: There were a whole series of them. And I decided we really again needed a professional, so I ran an ad in the paper and Jemi was one of the people who responded. I took her over to the Sloan-Kettering to meet Eloise; she was hired. Again, I had hired Bruce Hooton to be area director --

GARNETT MCCOY: He was the first.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Well, yes, and he kept breaking appointments with me and I said to him, "If you're breaking appointments with me, what do you do with other people?" I could never find him, or he'd have somebody call me up and tell me he was stranded on Martha's Vineyard and couldn't get back to work. (laughter) So we decided to part ways when Jemi had been there only a week. I always felt funny. I took Bruce out to lunch and fired him and then came back and told Jemi I'd see her in a month. "Carry on," and she did.

GARNETT MCCOY: She was there, though, because I remember she knew Bruce.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes, but not for very long. Bruce held no -- I always had free rights to fire him.

GARNETT MCCOY: And then, after Bruce came Butler Coleman.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I was always complaining that I couldn't do anything because I had the Detroit office and the New York office, that I couldn't do anything until I got somebody to run the New York office. Peggy said, "Well, there's this guy who's very unhappy at the Metropolitan, why don't you get him." So I got his name and met him; he was in the book store, probably just a stockboy but it sounded very good that he was down at the Metropolitan.

GARNETT MCCOY: How in the world did she know him?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: She had a great friend, the painter John/Jean Lamoureux; when she lived in Paris she was a great friend of John's/Jean's. They came over and were looking for jobs; that's where he came in. Somehow or other I think they were all better than the -- I shouldn't say that -- (he laughs) I think it's wonderful to go out and hire people you want to instead of having to accept people who come for examinations.

GARNETT MCCOY: That's true. Butler was very good at his job, I think.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Well, I always think he was self-centered so he that felt that anything he did had to be the best, so that if he worked for the Archives it had to be the best thing that was going. He was successful with old ladies, too.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. And he had a strong feeling for the importance of money-raising, too. (he laughs)

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: It's funny, I remember practically the first group of patrons that I was supposed to get was [he gropes for name] -- Aileen did her dissertation on him ... Dabo. I went to see Mrs. Dabo in this enormous great old apartment on the West Side, and and velvets and stuff all over the place. I really had a wet shoulder because she literally and wept. She wanted to have a one-man show of his.

GARNETT MCCOY: I remember her too.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: "Old ladies we have known!" (both laugh)

GARNETT MCCOY: In that thing I wrote about [proper name] I said that she established ascendancy over three successive New York directors without (he laughs) any trouble at all. She completely controlled Bruce, and pretty soon Butler would always have to consult her before he would take a step.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: ...was gone by the time was on?

GARNETT MCCOY: I think she was gone, yes. She was spiritual guide and mentor to Bill certainly, and to Butler too, yes.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: ...problems.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. But I always felt there was something a little detached about Jemi. I think I said that in my thing too. It was hard to get close to her. Well, I don't know... Do you think we should talk about anybody else? Do you want to say anything about Wayne Andrews? Remember Wayne??

IRVING BURTON or WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I remembver him very well.

GARNETT MCCOY: He came because somebody gave us money to establish a chair in American Art History, the first chair.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: It was the Knight chair. (inaudible phrase)

GARNETT MCCOY: Not the newspaper Knight?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: No. Anyway, it was to be a chair at Wayne University, the Archives of American Art Chair, and we were anxious to have somebody who had a breadth of interest, wasn't just an 18th century specialist or a 20th century specialist, who had a range of the whole thing. I had met Wayne through Hawkins Ferry and admired his work. He was looking for a job --

GARNETT MCCOY: He was a great friend of Russell Lynes, too.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. And Mike Bessie. They were all hybrids, weren't they?

GARNETT MCCOY: I don't know.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Also, Wayne had worked at --

GARNETT MCCOY: It was the publishing house, Scribner's.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Wayne Richardson advised me to spell out very clearly what everybody's duties were -- what I was to do, what he was to do, what you were to do. And I just thought that was silly, that we would it out as we went. But it soon became apparent that Wayne wasn't going to do anything actually that he didn't get paid for --

GARNETT MCCOY: (laughing) That's true.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: -- and we were deep into the middle of the beginning of the "Art in America" piece and he just announced that he wouldn't do it unless he got paid for it. You, fortunately, were there and took over, but it was disastrous.

GARNETT MCCOY: I think you were hoping that he would do a lot of the writing for the Journal, too.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. He didn't want to. But he wrote about -- who was the French artist who was here, a woman who did Cities" --

GARNETT MCCOY: (indistinct first name)

IRVING BURTON: Well, I can fill in a little bit more what happened --

GARNETT MCCOY: Oh, can you?

IRVING BURTON: Yes. Well, first of all (laughing) when Wayne arrived in Wayne County in each place I got a quick phone call. "Wayne is sick." I went down and Wayne had mumps. And worse, he had mumps with a --

GARNETT MCCOY: Oh my God.

IRVING BURTON: -- and was in dire agony. So of course that was my field, so I tried to help him out.

GARNETT MCCOY: Was he grateful forever after?

IRVING BURTON: Yes. He was a very warm, kind fellow, and so was his wife.

GARNETT MCCOY: She was.

IRVING BURTON: And they had a lovely daughter. He really was a very nice guy. But one problem that we had when I was in Detroit was that he have another office outside of Wayne, he wanted an office in the Archives. (all voices overlapping) didn't have any space for him.

GARNETT MCCOY: (laughing) He never forgave me.

IRVING BURTON: I know. He was furious because they wouldn't give him space --

GARNETT MCCOY: But you did give him space. Remember you had that office opposite my little office --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: But then we were moving upstairs and we weren't taking him with us.

GARNETT MCCOY: Oh that was later.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: He had a metal ashtray and he'd be working at his desk and all of a sudden this hammer would start up -- Wayne knocking the ashes out of his pipe.

GARNETT MCCOY: He'd come in every morning just kind of mumbling to himself. Then he'd come over to my little office and he'd tell me this long story. He was sort of fascinating, the story for the day. Then he'd go over to Bill's office and tell him the same story with a little bit more finish, you see. (laughing) And I suppose by the time he got home to his wife in the evening, it was perfect.

IRVING BURTON: He had a kind of high-pitched laugh, to me a bit of a bray --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: say, "When did you last read in the original?"

GARNETT MCCOY: (laughing) "Have you read your Emerson again lately?" He would always throw in "again" because he was flattering you.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: But Wayne had given him an office. He liked the idea of two offices and also being in the -- didn't Fred then give him some space?

GARNETT MCCOY: I don't know, that was after we left. He left before we left, I think, but I don't know where he went. Anyway, also he was teaching himself to speak Portuguese because he was going to Portugal at one point. He'd sit in his office mumbling Portuguese all day long. (laughing heartily)

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Well, he finally moved to Chicago, you know.

GARNETT MCCOY: Eventually, yes.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: about the size of .

GARNETT MCCOY: I wrote to Pev [phon.sp.] and she wrote back a very nice letter. I was very glad about that.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes, I wrote him --

GARNETT MCCOY: Somebody sent us \$100 in honor of Wayne's memory. So one of the two -- but Wayne in fact.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: How nice.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. I was surprised. Well, it seems to me, looking back on the 60s, I've always felt that the period that I was with the Archives from 1960 to 1970, before we got to the East Coast, was really a wonderful time. I mean, you really handled things very nicely, Bill, I must say --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: That's sweet of you.

GARNETT MCCOY: -- although I'm sure you were under terrible strain all the time having to deal with Larry and money and so forth.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: And Paul Grigo (phon.sp.)

GARNETT MCCOY: But he didn't really have much to do with the Archives.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes he did. He was on the board at first, again putting all your resources together.

GARNETT MCCOY: And we brought in some wonderful collections of papers; it was a good time. Could you review the decisions about forming an institutional connection? A direct connection so that we wouldn't have to spend all of our time raising money, would have more grounds for expanding nationally.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: What I was afraid of is that we'd actually go out of business because our finances would get out of shape again. You had a family, and Effie.... Small as our staff was, it didn't look like we were going to have enough money to pay our way. Again, I didn't want to spend all my energies raising money, and I tried to

say to the board, "We have two possibilities. One is to become a branch of a bigger, wealthy institution, and the other is to go after serious foundations. The board must really give up everything else for six months and concentrate on foundations." They didn't like either of these suggestions very much.

GARNETT MCCOY: Were you beginning to think along this line as early as the mid-60s?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Oh yes, because we were broke. broke us.

GARNETT MCCOY: It was always so hand-to-mouth, wasn't it.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. And the Museum wasn't in any condition to do anything for us. Everybody thought the Museum paid bills, they all thought the Fords gave us tons of money, and I remember talking to Carter Brown, who thought we should become part of the National Gallery [of Art], which I was always glad later we didn't. We talked to other institutions --

GARNETT MCCOY: The Whitney.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: The Whitney had that very interesting project under Lloyd Goodrich called --

GARNETT MCCOY: American Art Research Council or something like that.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: No. And Carl Zigrosser had had his called the -- and again [proper name] had decided that maybe we should become part of the Philadelphia Museum, because Ellen wanted to take a big insurance building by Paul practically on their grounds. It's like Ed Lurie of and Wayne, when he found out we had \$250,000 from the Ford Foundation came up with all sorts of great ideas of how he could spend it. (he laughs)

And Ripley called. He was building a staff in Washington and Richardson was always very kind about recommending me. [S. Dillon] Ripley called one day and said he'd like to talk with me, would I come down. I got down there and he started talking about Cooper-Hewitt needing a director. I said I really wasn't interested in Cooper-Hewitt and delighted where I was with the Archives but we needed to become part of another institution that had some money -- I think I quoted \$250,000 as our yearly sum and he reached down and started pulling money out of his desk drawer. (laughter) That started about three years of negotiations.

GARNETT MCCOY: I think it probably did go on for about three years -- two, anyway.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: And Larry was a lot of help, particularly with outrage. Because they had played on Detroit's local pride that a national institution was headquartered there. But I think again Richardson moved in and told Larry to shut up, because once we worked out our problems he did. And now and all the problems you have, I don't think we'd be in business if we hadn't.

GARNETT MCCOY: I think you're probably right; yes. You must have been in all that as a member of the board?

IRVING BURTON: Right. I remember: we had, first, the problem of money and because of materials coming out. If I remember correctly the philosophy "let's not collect and store here, we processor. And we sure don't have that kind of money because of excessive filling-up. But you and the staff didn't have Social Security, or you may have had some but you didnt have a pension fund at that time.

GARNETT MCCOY: Well, there was a pension fund through the Founders Society, that was paid up.

IRVING BURTON: That was about it. But you really didn't have what I'd call financial security because it really depended on the next fundraising.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: And we really were simply tossing in the art, too.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes.

IRVING BURTON: And the third thing was that a lot of people would not give their material because they didn't think about how -- I mean the Archives were a little too shaky for them.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: It was hard for a New York widow to see why she should send her husband's papers out to Detroit. What happened that since we became part of the Smithsonian I think justified it and they opened new offices. Which is, again, one of the basic conflicts in the Archives -- whether should be done by representatives who move around or be done from stable offices. You can argue both ways.

GARNETT MCCOY: Certainly the level of use of the Archives went way up with the Smithsonian connection.

At the end, during the last year, the last six months or so of negotiations, there was a lot of conferring back and



forth between the Smithsonian lawyer, Peter P , and the Archives lawyer, Harry Baldwin, and you had been advised that it would be well to make things extremely definite about precisely what the role or status of the Archives would be. Is that not correct?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: That is correct. But then you went down and worked it out.

GARNETT MCCOY: Well, I don't remember working it out.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Because it was all very vague -- space, and equipment, and all those things.

GARNETT MCCOY: But I think there's still a certain ambiguity about the role or the authority of the board.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: There has been, really.

GARNETT MCCOY: (laughing) Well, you don't understand that.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Evidently there is a clause in that wedding contract, there's a matter of wordage -- I thought it was absolutely air-tight, it never occurred to me that they could undo it. But evidently there are some words that can be interpreted that the Smithsonian has the right to place it in the American History -- not specifically but in any place they want to.

GARNETT MCCOY: Oh really?? I didn't know that, because I thought that it was settled that we would be a bureau.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: It was, but then evidently -- Susan could explain it --

GARNETT MCCOY: I see.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: It's very tricky.

IRVING BURTON: I remember when we talked about it, it was very specific that we would not be caught up in that situation. Apparently in the final wording (overlap)

GARNETT MCCOY: But it wasn't necessarily permanent that we would be a separate bureau.

IRVING BURTON: That's right. I can tell you my recollection of it was that we would go there, and there was a lot of hard bargaining because Harry Baldwin apparently had represented people in this sort of situation with groups, so he was familiar with the bureaucracy and that sort of thing. And then came the hard bargaining -- the collection would belong to you, and what what you to the board, and we will pay your room and board so to speak, and you have to raise so much. And if I remember correctly, one of the gimmicks for us was you have that free promotion -- that if you want to do something you will have your own funds without going through the long, elaborate budget, which takes a year or two to go ahead.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: This is very important to us for fund-raising. They say, well if you have the Smithsonian, why are you begging us?

GARNETT MCCOY: That's right.

(voice overlap and a cutoff)

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I was involved -- when you open up all the other coffins of the time, I think you might say something about that too.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. Well, the first one was the Boston office. Well, actually what happened was that I moved to Washington and Bill moved to New York. The New York office had already existed as an Archives office, and the Detroit office remained as the Detroit office, and the Washington office opened as the Washington office. But then at that same time -- wasn't it early in 1970 or mid-70 that we opened the Boston office?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I remember I went up and Walter Whitehill was "Mr. Boston" and I told him our story and that we wanted to be there and how great it would be for Boston. So he said well, they'd give us space at the Colonial Society, which if you remember was up in the attic third floor back kind of thing, but it did establish us there, and also it led back that Whitehill was interested and said "these are good peopl." It helped us tremendously. And that was true with California, too. We accepted footholds wherever we could and a belfry with the pigeons --

GARNETT MCCOY: It was rent-free, wasn't it?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: They were all rent-free. Boston finally began to charge us. I guess now they're charging a regular fee?

GARNETT MCCOY: I think so.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: For a long time they carried us free, and then a very minimal kind of maintenance.

GARNETT MCCOY: But the San Francisco office didn't open until 1971, I think it was a year after the Boston office opened.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: And that was a very hard decision. A lot of people thought we should have gone to Los Angeles to begin with, but I thought that the background was in San Francisco --

GARNETT MCCOY: I think you're right.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: -- and again, Ian White was very anxious to have us. He was quite frank about the fact that they used the presence of the Archives as a good way to get the Rockefeller collections --

GARNETT MCCOY: Really?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: -- because Rocky was under the influence of Richardson who always bemoaned the fact of concentration of so many things on the East Coast -- libraries, historical societies, museums -- and the dearth of opportunities for study on the West Coast, and he was adviser to the Rockefellers. I think it did make a difference. I think it was one of the things that made a difference in San Francisco -- Harry Parker from Dallas: I think one of the reasons he reacted as violently as he did to the move was that he had then seen a certain advantage of having the Archives to handle the good library and the good [is "good" a proper name?]

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes, that's true.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Maybe everything had been collected, it's hard to say.

GARNETT MCCOY: I don't even know myself. And then, just to get this on the record, the Boston office opened in 1970, the San Francisco office opened in 1971 or '72, I forget which, and the Los Angeles office opened in 1981 or thereabouts? It was about a year before you retired, wasn't it. You retired in '82, I think.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: So it must be about '81.

GARNETT MCCOY: You remember all that Los Angeles -- ??

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Well, I had a very small presence in Los Angeles. I remember we just had a and a telephone, I don't think we had a major office until --

GARNETT MCCOY: No, we didn't. And you got the interest of -- there was that lady out there in Los Angeles, Donna --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I didn't do that.

GARNETT MCCOY: Somebody did.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: As a whole, the decision to move to Los Angeles came up long after you and I were out, didn't it?

GARNETT MCCOY: Oh oh, that's right. The decision to leave the San Francisco office, yes.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I don't know whether that came from California people, did it?

GARNETT MCCOY: No, in effect it came from the Smithsonian, which was requiring the Archives director to cut back on its budget, and one strong suggestion was that one way to cut back on the budget was to cut back on the number of offices. Is that what you understand, Irving?

IRVING BURTON: That is exactly right. And that's what Richard Wattenmaker faced when he came in if it's true but primarily they found that the functioning of the San Francisco office was very low and they figured out per person who came in to use it in other words, it was not cost-effective at all. Then apparently they had a much better offer and a much better for people to raise funds in L.A., and I think that's one reason they made the transition.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: It always annoyed me when somebody tried to cost-account the Archives. The Smithsonian took that attitude before "we're paying so many hundreds of thousands of dollars for six people to

use the Archives."

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. It's not really an accurate way to look at it.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: What do you suppose the collection's items in themselves --how much do you suppose the collection is worth? It's the sort of thing Larry would like to .

GARNETT MCCOY: God knows. Millions and millions and millions.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: The photographs must be worth quite a bit.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. Oh, altogether it's worth twenty million at least.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Well, you've got photographs that are you could call priceless -- that is, they go for unknown sums of money. I just came back from San Francisco the amount of material coming out of San Francisco has dropped precipitously. So, you were not getting collections in, nor were people using them. So it was just a very easy target to knock off the space and funds.

GARNETT MCCOY: That's the way it was presented, yes. But there was a reaction. Well, we have touched on that. I was going to say, the Archives under the Smithsonian, as I said I think from the point of view of the use of the Archives, it was a tremendous advantage, and certainly from the point of view of making it easier to collect papers it was a tremendous advantage too, because the Smithsonian had so much prestige.

IRVING BURTON: I think it was very obvious. You know more about it than I do but in the amount of material, the usage, et cetera, simply because you had that name. And you also had a horrible place to store until --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: We had some fat [?] too.

GARNETT MCCOY: And then there were all those support services, like accounting and things like that.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: What is the in the New York office these days? Is it still the busiest office?

GARNETT MCCOY: For use? Well, the Washington office really is more but not a whole lot, it's relatively the same.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: What about collections at present?

GARNETT MCCOY: Well, she doesn't collect as much as the New York office does. But then I don't really know, myself, any more. And I haven't seen the new man's reports, so I don't know quite what he's getting in or how much.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: That's bothers you. His reports are excellent, do you get them?

GARNETT MCCOY: Bob Brown's?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: He gets a lot and I'm sure reflects the administration it's a very productive area and he's been fighting tooth and nail these cuts that would affect . But if the pressure becomes unbearable, something will happen to him but I gather -- I guess it's no secret -- that the pressure has eased off but the Archives is going to have to trim down on their size, because we are not coming up to budget.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes, yes.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: But I think at the moment, as best as I can make out, that Boston "I'm going to pay." If Boston goes, it's going to be under great duress of protest.

GARNETT MCCOY: I've heard.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes, because he's doing a great, great job there, there's no question about it.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes, he consistently has, over the years.

IRVING BURTON: I was interested too to see some other areas that things have come in to him. It's apt to be something from California, or Albany or some place else.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes. And he really covers Connecticut.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Well, you know, we ought to say something about (laughing) and the FBI and their attitude toward the Archives.

GARNETT MCCOY: Yes, let's say something about that.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I don't know anything about it.

IRVING BURTON: Well, obviously Ken Richardson was -- well, [proper name] also was, although he was not that active, because we had the sort of courtesy that the director and the DIA [?] went on a national board, and they invited me I don't ever show up at the meetings --

GARNETT MCCOY: Well, he was always sympathetic enough.

IRVING BURTON: He was sympathetic, yes. Surprisingly, Fred Cummings was very sympathetic.

GARNETT MCCOY: Is that right?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: was like, well, there was a feather in his cap

IRVING BURTON: Fred Cummings was very sympathetic, and he just felt it was a great plus for the DIA and he felt that it attracted very good people. He felt that they were offend, a very unsympathetic person. He didn't care much for the Archives, he seemed very aggravated that they were taking up too much space, although that was the space allotted. And he just felt that we'd had too much of a free ride -- we had paid for all that space, you know, we had lots of money and photography, everything eroded and plaster falling and everything rotted away from the acids, and lighting fixtures coming out of nowhere, overloaded, et cetera. And we had renovated the whole thing. It took quite a bit of both of us and Hamilton and Richard Wattenmaker and I on discussions with him, and I must say they were two people. We finally moved out of our space, our original space, and put together this wonderful space, which you know is right out on Quincy Court --

GARNETT MCCOY: Quite elegant up there, in fact.

IRVING BURTON: -- very elegant -- a bit lonely, but very elegant and people walking through indoors, and the rooms are laid out much, much better. So we're "in" but we're planning to enlarge before -- of course they had a budget slash and left no room for the Archives at all. They have none. Had to go and argue with them for what we could get in the new space, and part of the bargaining was we would do their if we could get the space. But now they're not building, so .

GARNETT MCCOY: But the Detroit committee is still very active and very successful in support of the Archives, isn't it.

IRVING BURTON: Very supportive, and very dynamic, and the troops -- surprising, over the years. They have new people all of the time --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: But so little activity.

IRVING BURTON: Well, they're very innovative, something that doesn't always --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I mean, there's no staff to bring in great papers .

IRVING BURTON: We're unhappy because we don't have anybody to help in the office. And we have lower-, lesser-ranking people there and they're afraid to move without consulting Washington. So there ought to be some way you have kind of a model . But in spite of it they've done very well, and they -- I can tell you right now that on this last mailbox auction which was so successful, a . And that way we bypassed the logjam . The mailbox auction is over and let's say a net of about \$75,000 --

GARNETT MCCOY: Oh, great.

IRVING BURTON: -- read the New York Times

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Didn't the Museum do birdcages?

IRVING BURTON: Somebody had done birdcages, and this was of course mailboxes. It was just one of the highlights new office buildings galleria, that's where you walk in three stories with trees planted and huge skylights going through an enclosed garden; and here you had all the mailboxes and .

GARNETT MCCOY: There was a thing in the paper about somebody found an outhouse of the and decorated the toilet seat for the -- they cut it off and sold it for some enormous sum at an auction in New York. (he laughs) It was the , or somebody?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I forget what it finally fetched, because the guy who owned it thought it was worth

some fantastic amount. The last night was just an ordinary sale at Sotheby's. American?

IRVING BURTON: Well, it was at Sotheby's and I think where we just had a preview. I decided not to go because we had in the morning and the constructivists at the Guggenheim and I put out . There had to be over a thousand pieces, an enormous . Then we went to that, then we had lunch, and went around, and then we talked, and then we had a meeting and broke up at about 5:30. Then we decided to go to Sotheby's, and from there down to Chinatown --

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Who was leading them down to Chinatown?

IRVING BURTON: Well, they said all those who don't have any place to eat why don't we all meet down in Chinatown, it's a nice restaurant and we'll all eat. And I said you know, I think I'd just rather go back and relax, I don't think I'd want to do that. So tonight at Christie's .

GARNETT MCCOY: For the Archives board?

IRVING BURTON: Yes. [noting that it's now 4 pm] I don't know if it's worth going to because .

GARNETT MCCOY: Bill, I wanted to ask just one more thing. It's kind of a theoretical question but it has to do, one that's something I like to play with sometimes, and it has to do with the Archives impact on American art history.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: I knew this!

GARNETT MCCOY: I think the Archives has an impact on American art history, although it might be hard to quantify. Don't you feel that's true?

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Very much. I think that your office and this office -- Washington and New York -- have made a difference in themselves. I always talk about when I was a graduate student and Pickens [?] had me make a card-- a bibliography. It was a box about this big that I carried around with me, because about American art, magazines and everything else. Think of the card catalogue today on the Archives.

I think that Richardson and Larry were right in any place and then and here getting of sheer size . And again, their whole idea of centralizing microfilming. It's funny, we talk about using new technology in 1960 microfilm and tape-recorded interviews. Think how far the computer has changed --

GARNETT MCCOY: yes, yes.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: What do you feel?

GARNETT MCCOY: Well, I think it has too. In one way that I think it's had an impact is -- it's a little bit hard to define but both in the case of the quote that I read from Richardson to start out with, I think that the Archives has had an effect on what used to be called "the formalist school of art history," that is, you simply examine a painting or a sculpture or a drawing in terms of its formal qualities without regard to the historical context that it came out of. And because the Archives is a collection of historical documents rather than of works of art, it encourages art historians to use written records rather than simply to immerse themselves in a work of art. They must do that too but I think that art history is more sophisticated if they do make use of historical research. And the Archives is what makes that possible, and encourages it.

WILLIAM WOOLFENDEN: Yes. I think certainly one of the strange pieces of

END OF INTERVIEW

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