



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Carlyle H. Smith,
1994 August 8

Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

Contact Information

Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/askus

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Carlyle H. Smith on August 8, 1994. The interview took place in Boston, Massachusetts, and was conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. 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

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, we're interviewing today, Carlyle H. Smith, and this is Robert Brown, the interviewer for the archives of American art, and we're interviewing at the archives' regional center in Boston, Massachusetts, on August 8, 1994. Now, you've said that you were born in 1912 in Torrington, Connecticut. You were born to a family that had been in that area for a very long time, is that right?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes. That'd been there since the early 1700s. And fact is, I think my dad was the first one of the family to ever leave the Torrington area.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, Torrington was, what, a small manufacturing town?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It was a very busy manufacturing town at one time. American Brass Company had a big plant there, and Union Hardware, the Torrington Company, the Needle Shop. You name it, it was in Torrington. It was a very busy place.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So there were a lot of highly skilled workmen there?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, absolutely. My grandfather was one of the—well, he was *the* superintendent of the tube mill at the American Brass Company most of his life.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did that involve? Thorough knowledge of how things were made and all that?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I would imagine; I was too small to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: To ask him questions? [Laughs.]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: —to ask him questions, yes [laughs]. But, that was my grandfather on my mother's side. My grandfather on my father's side was in the paint business. His father before him was in the paint business, and his father before him—before he came along was in the paint business.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, what would that have meant back in those days being in the—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, making paint and selling it. He was one of the original Yankee peddlers. He had a wagon and he traveled all of Richfield County. [00:02:02] Everybody knew James Smith. In fact, his—my grandfather, Charles W. Smith, opened a paint store in Torrington, and he named the store "James Smith's Son" because everybody knew James Smith, but they didn't know him. And that's the way I remember the store. It was on Water Street. The building is no longer there. But my dad was in the paint business and he worked at the store there with his father for, well, all the time I was grow—a pretty young kid.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, they were still mixing, making their own paints?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yep, yeah. Yep.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was before the days of mass-produced paint?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right, and then my dad finally went to work for the DuPont company, and went Woonsocket, Rhode Island., I was about 12 years old when we moved to Woonsocket.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But even before that, you've said in Torrington you befriended a jeweler?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, he befriended me, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was Louis Tunick, huh?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Name was Tunick, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: T-U-N-I-C-K?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I don't know. I can't explain why I was fascinated with jewelry, but he had *the* jewelry store in Torrington, and I used to go down there and watch him do it. He took pity on me and let me come in and watch him repair jewelry and repair watches and so forth. When some of the kids were out playing baseball, I was down there with Mr. Tunick. Not that I didn't have fun, because I did; I played as hard as everybody else.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sure. Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I just became fascinated with it, and I knew what I wanted to do from the time I was probably 10 or 12 years old. And that's all I've ever done. [00:04:05]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Jeez. Wow.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Except, when the war came along, I had to do something else.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do something else. Well, do you—how do you suppose that was so ingrained in you so early?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I don't know.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did your family support you in this? Were they interested?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yeah. They supported me. I often say that my dad thought what I wanted to do was absolutely ridiculous, but he never said no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why would he have thought it was ridiculous?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, he didn't understand it. Just like lots of people. They just kind of snicker when you say you're in jewelry. They don't realize what's involved. I wanted to know what was involved. [Coughs.] Excuse me. And uh, when I graduated from high school, I looked around for a jewelry school. By that time we were living in Rhode Island.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, you were live—and Rhode Island, then, was a major center for jewelry manufacture.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right, and that's why one of the thrill things in my life was when he announced that we were moving to Rhode Island, because I knew that jewel—that Providence was one of the manufacturing centers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, your father must have been aware that, if you wanted to work in jewelry, it was not a pie in the sky proposition. He knew it was a good trade—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He knew it. He knew it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —a good thing to get into. Yes. Well, you said that—of course this would be typical of that time, there was no real art instruction until you got into junior high or senior high.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then, I believe it was high school, you mentioned you had a couple of influential teachers, a William Coleman [ph] who taught woodworking.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yep, and a man by the name of Fish.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he thought—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, he taught woodworking. That's all—that's all they had for—.

ROBERT F. BROWN: About all they had.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: —in the manual arts.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But, did you find that woodworking, although you weren't going to go into it, it was interesting and—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It was very interesting. I was working with my hands, and this is what I like to do. Not only that, but I admired these two men, they were the kindest, most understanding teachers that you could—anybody could ever have, especially Mr. Coleman. [00:06:08] I think he's probably the one that made me want

to teach.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, I didn't know how—in those days, I didn't know how to go about getting into the teaching profession, but as I went down to Providence and met Mr. Rose—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Augustus Rose. We're going to talk about him.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Augustus Rose, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But why do you suppose you wanted to teach? What do you suppose it was?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, I just admired these people who were teaching and I wanted to be like them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did, say, Mr. Coleman teach? What was his approach to teaching?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Same approach that I used. He was—everybody was—it wasn't a mass class approach, it was an individual approach.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Even though he probably had pretty large classes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, he did, but he took time with everybody.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He'd go from bench to bench?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Bench to bench, yes. And, this is what—I think this is the reason that I—well, I'm sure it is, it's the reason that I used this method through all my teaching, and I think you can find anyone of my students who I've had and that's be one of the things that they would mention.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, you would let—a student is allowed sort of to blossom on his or her own?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's the way I teach.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the teacher just comes in occasionally and says, you might do it this way, or, have you thought of that, yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's it. That's it. Well, I took this design home and they—everybody says I should do it this way, or so and so said I should do it this way. And, I'd say to them, "Well, how do you think you should do it?" "Well, I think I'm doing it the way I'm doing it." "Well, then do it that way. You're not trying to please them. You're trying to please you."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative.] Was there much attention—was most of the attention paid to when you were being educated, to how—to fabrication, I mean, or was there some attention to style and appearance? [00:08:04]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, of course, at Rhode Island School of Design, we were well-drilled in both of those approaches. We had to take so many hours of design and research, and so many hours of practical experience. See, in those days, the Rhode Island School of Design, most—well, not most of—all of the instructors in—I don't know the other departments—but, in jewelry, these were all professional people in their own field and who came in maybe one, or two, or three days a week and taught. They knew what—what it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, gave us what we needed, and anything that was superfluous, they didn't bother with it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, they mainly had in mind that you pupils would be going on into industry yourself?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Into industry, yes. Well, I was—when I was a sophomore at the Rhode Island School of Design, Mr. Cirino came down, and he said to me—Antonio Cirino—he was chairman of the jewelry and silversmithing department at that time. He was one of Mr. Rose's—Augustus Rose's first students. And, Mr. Rose brought him along, and he came to me and he said, "I want to see you in the office." I didn't know what it was all about. I wasn't very happy when I was going up there because nobody wanted to go up to the chairman's office very much. But anyway, he said, "Mr. Rose called me and there's a position open at the Providence Boys' Club." Now, remember, this was in the Depression time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. Yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, we were having a time. I commuted from Woonsocket every day, rather than stayed in Providence.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Your family was having real hardships.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, they were. [00:10:00] And, so I thought, well, it's a chance to help. So, I said, "Yes, I'd sure like to try that." So, he said, "Well, you go down and talk to Mr. Garnish"—I even remember his name. He was the superintendent of the South Main Street Boys' Club, and, I went down and he told me I had free reign, I could do anything I wanted to do, but this is what I had to cover, and approach it anyway you want to.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did he say you had to cover?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, it was art metalwork. He had—we had an art metal teacher, we had a woodworking teacher, and we an electrical—person who taught various forms of ringing bells and things of this style—how to wire things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, the boys were being taught practical things, even at that age and at that stage?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right, and the Providence Boys' Club paid three dollars and a half an hour, which was unheard of. And, I was able—I started teaching one class a week. Well, finally, it grew to three classes a week, and then four classes a week, and—this is all done in the evening.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And then, a Saturday afternoon class. Well, I was making pretty good salary there [laughs] and still going to school. It wasn't easy because I had all my schoolwork to do, plus going—and then I had to get the last car back to Woonsocket at night, the last street car. It was an interurban streetcar. I'd get home about 11:00 and then I had to get up, take the 20 minutes of eight car back to Providence again.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Providence. Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, it wasn't easy but it sure—I had extra money to spend for materials and supplies and so forth, so. I did this for—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was called art metalwork?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, we made letter openers and bookends, and raised simple forms, and all in copper.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In copper. Now, back at the Rhode Island School of Design, what did you make there? [00:12:00] Or, were you put into making things right away at the school of design or?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes. Immediately.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Immediately.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes. Now, we did—well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mainly worked in copper?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: —the coach was more professional because these were professional men we were working with who were out in the field. My silversmithing instructor was a man by the name of Dresser, and he was a silversmith from Gorham. So he was very, very meticulous and very fussy about planishing, getting all the marks out. Things of that type. And, we spent a good—a good percentage of our time designing. He approved the design and show us how to get started and so forth, and carry it—probably did two or three projects like that of a semester.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What would you have in mind when you would design? I mean, would he set a problem first, "I want you to think of a—"

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Sometimes he did, and then sometimes he'd leave it wide open and we could go—at the beginning, he set the problems, and then as we progressed, we—we just went.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, had you had some schooling in drafting before that, or mechanical drawing?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No—well, in Woonsocket we had a school called the Harris Industrial School. That sounds like a reform school, but it wasn't [laughs]. And, I took courses in blueprint reading, shop math, and things of that nature. So, I was—I had a background, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, yes. Now, you mentioned also, at the School of Design there were courses in theory. Who would teach those? Historians, or—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, these—these were all permanent faculty members at the school of design.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you recall their names, any of them?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, my. No, I can't.

ROBERT F. BROWN: These—these didn't quite make the impression on you that—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No. These were things we had to do because we had to do it, that's it. [Laughs.] You know what I mean? [00:14:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. This was to give you a smattering of history and other cultures and so—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right. I knew—I remember one man—the only man I remember, and I just remember him because of his name, his name was Cornelius McCarthy. And he did teach enameling, but he ran a private stained glass window studio up on Benefit Street, and made beautiful stained glass windows. But, he had—he was so well versed in the history of stained glass and enamels and so forth. I guess that's the reason I remember, because he was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was a vivid personality?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would you—at the school, you had such long days plus you taught at night. Did you have some bit of student life there though, at the school? There wasn't much, huh?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Very little.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Most of you were commuters, I would think?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right, commuters—yes, I'm sure most of us were commuters.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: There were some people who lived in rooms down there around the school. They had no dormitories in those days.

ROBERT F. BROWN: There was a museum by then though, wasn't there?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yes. Very fine.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that important to you? I mean, did you visit it?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Very much so. I used to like to go over at noontime, at lunch hour, over to the museum. They had changing exhibits, and I particularly loved to go through the Pendleton House, which is a—has a very fine collection of old, antique furniture.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, I haven't been to the school of design in years and years and years because I never get back this way, but uh, on this trip I'm planning to go up there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Good, good. But that, then—you did regularly go and look at things at the museum?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh yeah. Oh, yes. Yeah, we did. Not only myself, but others.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I was going to ask, now you graduated from RISD then in 1931.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of course it was a bad time.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:16:00] Uh, you'd also taken—and I guess this was strategic—you'd taken education

courses at the Rhode Island College of Education?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Had to, in order to qualify for a teaching certificate. And that was difficult on its own, because I had to go clear across town in order to get those classes, and there wasn't much time. So, we couldn't waste any time then. We either went or we didn't go.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What kind of courses would they have given?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, educational psychology, and methods of teaching vocational subjects, and things of that type.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it fairly useful?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Very useful. Very useful.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I never regretted the time that I put in over at the Rhode Island College of Education. My wife is a graduate of the Rhode Island College of Education.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: In fact, I met her—because we were both teaching at the Kenyon Street School. That was my first job teaching—not metalwork, but woodwork.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Woodwork.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: At the Kenyon Street Elementary School. The largest elementary school—in those days—in New England.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Something like 22 hundred kids went there, and 80 teachers. It was a platoon school where these kids went to class, rather than the teacher coming to them. They went to the—it was just like high school, only they were little, bitty kids. And it worked, it really worked.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, it was right up in the heart of Federal Hill district.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A fairly rough district then?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yeah. And, my first teaching of metalwork was at the Esek Hopkins Junior High School.

ROBERT F. BROWN: E-S-E-K Hopkins?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, it's on Charles Street in Providence. Mr. Rose called me in one day and he said uh, "Would you like to go to junior high school?" And I says, "Oh, yes."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, where was mister—what was he doing at this time?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He was the director of manual arts in the Providence Public Schools.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He'd left school of design years before, hadn't he?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, years before.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, I says, "Oh, yes." And, he said, "We'll, you go out and talk to Mr. Terrell, the principal out at Esek Hopkins. [00:18:05] He knows about you. I'll warn you: there's no studio out there. You're going to have to do it yourself. There's a room. It used to be a locker room, boys' locker room. It's a nice room. You'll like the room. But, you're going to have to build your own benches, you're going to have to get what you can get by just scrounging."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Wow.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: "We don't have the money." So, I went out and I did that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: About when was this? Was this after you'd worked with Mr. Rose in his shop?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, no—well, I worked at the shop while I was doing this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay. Huh. So, you set this up—you had to—from scratch?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Sure. First time I ever set up a class like this, and he let me have free reign. Anything I wanted to do or get, I could put in there. Well I—I equipped the shop as I thought it should be equipped by getting things from other places.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. And, these were kids in—12, 13, 14?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And they were a tough bunch, too. That Charles Street's is another Italian section there, you know, and—and not that there's anything wrong with Italians, but they tend to be pretty clannish. And I never had any trouble there. I just got along real well with these kids.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. Well, did a certain number of those Italian kids come from—from families where there were artisans and skilled people?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because they have such a tradition.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, they do have that tradition. I think that's one of the reasons that I never had a bit of disciplinary trouble at all in either one of these schools, and they were—this is why I'm bringing out the point that these were in predominantly Italian sections. They'd get in there and there was an inborn thing that came out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And they produced some beautiful things. [00:20:00] I was at Esek Hopkins for about—I'm not sure whether it was four or five years, and then Mr. Rose transferred me to the Gilbert Stuart Junior High School, which was considered a—a little boost up the ladder.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh, because it sat in a nicer part of town?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, it was off Elmwood Avenue, which in those days was a high middle class neighborhood. And, I didn't like it. It was a new million dollar—two million dollar school, and it had all kinds of equipment, but I sure didn't like it. I liked working with those other kids better than I did these—and, I—I have to admit, I got myself in a lot of trouble up there using the same methods on those kids as I used on the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why is that?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, you had to talk their language, you know. The language of the kids at Esek Hopkins wasn't the same as the language at Gilbert Stuart. And, finally the principal came down and he said, "I get a lot of calls on you," he says, "You're going to have to change your approach." I said, "I know it. I realize that. I know it. It's my fault." So, I went down to Mr. Rose and I said—you didn't know Mr. Rose, but he talked very, very slowly, and always at an even keel, never raised his voice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, I went down and said, "Mr. Rose, may I be transferred back to Esek Hopkins?" And, he looked at me and said, "Oh, my no. No one ever asks to go back to Esek Hopkins," and I said "Well, I'd like to go back." And he said, "What's the problem?" and I told him, and he said, "Well, I'm not transferring you, you'll just have to do the best you can." And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It was all right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was it, the language you were using?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You'd got—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It was rough, you know.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: You couldn't use the same language with the kids at Esek Hopkins that they required at Gilbert Stuart because they were a different—entirely different class of kids. They didn't understand it. They'd think you were, maybe afraid of them, or—they'd pull things on you, but they never did that up at Gil—and that's—maybe that wasn't a good thing to start up there. [00:22:10] Maybe it would have been a better thing to start in the other school.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were the middle class students at Gilbert Stuart School, were they as interested and as motivated?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Not really.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, it was an entirely different attitude. It was an attitude thing, is what it was. But, I got along all right, and after a couple of years, I—I could accommodate them, and they—we got along fine. I remember one time, this little—he was a little—I think he was a Portuguese kid, and he said—Mr. Whitehead, the principal, came down and he says, "You get along all right with Leon Edmonson, don't you?" And I said, "Oh, yes. We don't have any problems." He says, "Well, they won't allow him in the lunchroom anymore." [Laughs.] And I said, "Send him down here. I eat my lunch here. He can eat it with me." So, he did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why, Leon was causing trouble in the lunchroom?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yes, he was terrible. And—but he never caused me any trouble. When he'd get into the metal shop, he calmed right down. He was doing something he could see some sense to.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you were used to handling boys like that.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, that's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, one day I remember, it was so funny, I'd eaten my lunch and he was sitting down at one of the benches, and I unwrapped a piece of mince pie my wife had made. And, Leon, he—I says, "Come here a minute," so he came up. I says, "You want some of that?" He looked at it—I'll never forget it—"What's that?" I says, "That's a mince pie. A piece of mince pie." He didn't know what mince pie was, you know, and it had gotten a little bit squashed. [00:24:00] He says, "My gosh, it looks like your wife only put one mince in that one." [They laugh.] I never forgot that. But, I always gave Leon—we had a tool crib there where we passed out tools, and he had a little bench inside the tool crib so he could work. This—this is what he loved to do, and I—I like to think that I helped Leon, and I think probably I did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you were going—some of these years in the '30s, you were going to summer schools yourself. We were just looking at photographs.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Schools that Mr. Rose supervised.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would you go there just to learn that much more about silversmithing and—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That, plus the fact that Mr. Rose had me take care of his supplies and materials, and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And then, in payment for that, I got to study with the rest of the people who do what they did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, when did you first meet Mr. Rose—Augustus Rose?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: At the Rhode Island School of Design. He was a—he was—I think it was his last year there when I became—was a freshman. And I—he took a liking to me right away, so it went on from there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You went there first when, about 1927, '28?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: About '27, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. What was he like as a teacher?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Mr. Rose?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Very thorough, very calm. Just a nice person that you wanted to work with.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That was his philosophy and that's—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, I always think that—well, I still think that I had an advantage over a lot of these other teachers because I studied with, and worked under and for, the man who started the whole thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He did, in effect, start art metal instruction.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Two men. He's credited with having the first class in metalsmithing in a public school curriculum in the United States. And he taught at the old technical high school in Providence. [00:26:09] And I think one of the reasons that he kind of tested me a little bit, sent me out to Esek Hopkins is when he started Providence, he had to teach his first class on the stage in the auditorium at the old technical high school, and he had to get his own materials and his own tools and so forth, and he wanted to see whether I was up to it or not. I'm sure that was part of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] He knew that you should be tested.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the importance of that.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: For a young—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I'm sure. I've thought of that many, many times, why did he do that? Why did he send me out there? Well, he wanted to see if I could do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. Was he a man—would you talk about things generally, or was—what were—did he have interests, fairly broad-ranging interests?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Everything that we ever talked about had to do with metalwork.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, I never met him on a—never went with him on—well, I did too. I'll take that back. We went to an industrial arts teacher's conference at the Fitchburg State Teacher's College.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Uh, he took me. I went with him in his car, and we went—they had some little exhibits there and we went through, and the instructor there had made a few little pieces of jewelry—a couple of rings and a bracelet or something, he had them out on display. Mr. Rose said to me, he said, "This is the type of school you should be teaching in, but you'll never see it happen." I said, "What do you mean I'll never see it happen?" He said, "They'll never teach this in higher education—the higher educational level. They just won't." So, when the call came to go to the University of Kansas, I wouldn't have cared what the salary was, I'd have gone. [00:28:02]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Because, Mr. Rose said that no one could ever get it started, but here I had a chance to. And, that's why I left Rhode Island and went way out to Lawrence, Kansas. I had no idea what was out there. I talked to Marjory Whitney, she told me what she had in mind, and it went on from there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: We'll get to that. Well, why would Mr. Rose have thought it would never come to be, and also—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He just—he'd been rebuffed so many times, I think, that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then on the other hand, the work he saw being done at Fitchburg was not—I gather neither he nor you thought much of it?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, it was pretty—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it sort of just done on the side? Sort of perfunctory?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, some—hobby craft.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hobby craft.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. And that wasn't the approach we wanted to use.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Well now, let's talk for a bit about your time in Mr. Rose's metal craft shop, which was a business he set up—and a supply, as well as fabrication business—about, I think, the late teens, early '20s, as I recall?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah well, it was late teens. He—no, the early '20s it started.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Early '20s.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes. I went in there. He gave me a job at the bench, and I did soldered joints and catches on preformed pins, brooches and so forth. And I had a chance to get in and do—practice these techniques, and I became pretty good at it, if I do say so myself [laughs]. And then his brother managed the Metal Craft Supply Company, which was the only company in the country where you could buy tools. You had to send to Europe for most of the tools, but he designed some raising stakes and hammers, and so forth, called the Rose anvils and the Rose hammers. And his brother managed that part of the operation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was his brother's name, do you recall?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Gordon. [00:30:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Gordon Rose.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Gordon Rose. Yeah. Uncle Gordon, we all called him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But he was not the craftsman that Rose was?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, no. He was—he was purely in the business end of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, you were given fairly perfunctory—or, menial jobs, but they were of value because—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, he was training me. I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he—would he look very carefully at the finish and quality of your work?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Always, always yes, and he—they'd do things to me like, well, I was six months on buffing—just doing nothing but buffing. I don't think there's anybody in the United States that knows how to buff any better than I do. I mean, you can—you can ruin a piece of jewelry if you don't know what you're doing on the buffing wheel. But I know what I'm doing because I didn't do anything else for six months.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And I tell you, that's the closest I ever came to quitting that place. And, he said, "Well, there's nothing like experience." And that's all that I got out of him. "They never can take that away from you." Well, he was right, of course. But, you had to bite the bullet a lot of times because uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were the pieces you worked on, were these ones he designed?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And he would make—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He'd come in with designs and I did in the—pewter became real popular, oh, I guess probably in the late '30s. And it wasn't pewter as we know the old pewter, it was a new material called Britannia metal. It had lead in it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. It was shinier, or could be.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, much shinier. And, he designed some nut bowls and scoops, and I made them. He just handed them to me and said, "Let's see what you can do with these." So, I made them all and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What, you'd raise them?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, raised them and did—soldering on pewter is not easy. Pewter has a tendency to melt before the solder does. And, but I got—I got pretty good at it. [00:32:00] And, he used to put out a little brochure about every—about four times a year with some designs and some information on what—various techniques, you know? And, I remember he had a—well, I have it at home now, a copy of it, where there's a whole series of the nut bowls and scoops that I made while I was there at the craft shop. And, Elizabeth—the lady you met—Elizabeth, his daughter.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, she ran the shop.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: She was a—she was it. He was—he was in the Providence Public Schools.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He'd come in maybe two or three times a week, and check things and see what I was doing, give her orders, and that'd be it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was there direct sales, did customers come in?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. Yeah. We had a store there and a workshop.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where was this store and workshop?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, when we—when I first went to work for him, it was on Aborn Street, which is downtown between Washington and Westminster Street.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was about 1931 or ['3]2?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, it was a tough section of town, and he had—he'd go to New York and go to Brass Town and buy a lot of this foreign brass work, and beautiful pieces—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Brass Town? Was that a district in Manhattan where—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, he called it Brass Town, where they sold all these—oh, Syrians and Turks and so forth would sell this handmade brass. He'd buy a lot of this and bring it back, and we'd rework some of it, and polish it up, and he had—the store was a beautiful old store.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, people would drive down Aborn Street with their chauffeur-driven cars, and go in—just like they do, like going down to—the kids want to go down to antique shops here. [00:34:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: But it was [inaudible]? This is sort of the carriage trade came—came to his door?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, nobody walked down that street. Heavens, no. And, he did very well there. And, the first summer schools he ran, he ran in the backroom of that store. And, then he moved. He moved up to Meeting Street, which, you know Providence—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, that's in the nicer—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, you—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —part of—yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: The First Baptist Church sits here, the school of design sets over here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Meeting Street is over here on the other side. The Providence Art Club and so forth is there. So, he moved up there. But strange to say, he didn't do nearly as well up there as he did out on Aborn Street.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. No explanation, huh?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. Well, you were in an exhibition in 1936 at the Providence Art Club.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Was that one of your first—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: One of the first.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —occasions when you showed things?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. He said I was good enough, to go ahead and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What sort of thing did you show then?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I don't remember what it was. I really don't.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it silver work?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, it was silver work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, partly he kept you at his shop because I gather there was some stipulation that you had to have work experience before you could be hired—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —as a public school teacher.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: When I graduated from Rhode Island School of Design, I knew what I wanted to do; I wanted to teach. He knew what I wanted to do, he knew I wanted to teach. But, he called me in and he said, "You know, you've got a problem." I said, "Well, I suppose so, but what is the problem?" He says, "You cannot be certificated unless you've had five years' experience in the field which you're planning to teach, as far as industrial arts are concerned." I said, "Why is that?" He said, "Well, we're operating under the Smith-Hughes Act which stipulates— puts that stipulation in there. They won't give any money to the city if we've got anybody who is teaching without satisfying that requirement." [00:36:09]

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was a federal act?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. So, he said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do," he says, "I'm going to take you in the shop for five years." He says, "We don't have to get a—just, boom, boom, boom, five years like that. We can work summers, we can work evenings, we can work—as long as we get the time in. And I'll put you with a master," which he did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And who was this master he put—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: A fellow by the name of Richard Paul.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, he was in his shop? In Rose's—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. He was his—he was his jeweler. He was a—oh, god, that man could do anything. And, he put me with Richard Paul and I stayed with Richard Paul for five years, and I picked up so much, you know? And, he—he was just like an instructor. He watched everything I did. Then, finally, he'd hand me something and say, "Now you do this." Then I'd have to hand it back to him. It was tough. It was really tough.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this was far beyond what you would have learned at the Rhode Island School of Design?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I couldn't possibly do it there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No? Why? They just didn't have—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, there was no time, and it was one of these things, you know, I was working with customers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. No, but at the Rhode Island School of Design, though, you weren't.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, but here I was and it was a different approach entirely. Over at the school of design I learned a lot of the techniques and operations, but over here I learned more than that; I learned how to get along with people, and customers, and so forth. I remember very distinctly, the first—one of the first jobs that Dick Paul gave me was to size a ring. It had an amethyst in it. "Size it. Without taking the stone out." Well, I'd watched him. I'd never done it. He'd wrap the stone up with—at that time we could use asbestos. [00:38:03] You know, we'd make a paste out of this, pack it around the stone—wet asbestos. So, I did that. And then, when I—but I didn't put enough on there, and when I heated the ring and I took that asbestos off, the amethyst had turned white [laughs]. That was the worst feeling I can—oh, it was awful. I sat there and looked at it, and Dick was over the other side of the bench there, and we faced each other, he was on side, I was on the other. I looked at him. I didn't know what to do. I thought, well, this is it. I'm through here now. So, he says—he looked up and saw me looking and he says, "What's the matter?" And I—I said, "Well, I don't know. I did what I thought I was doing right," and I hand it over. He says, "Oh, my god," and he hit the bench and he jumped up. He says, "Oh, god, what a stupid idiot. Haven't I done any better than this?" And I'm getting down lower and lower—[they laugh]. I thought—he says, "Take your tools and get out of here. Go home." I thought, well, I guess that's what I'm going to have to do. So, I started packing up, and I just—he let me get right to the door, and he said, "Come back here." So, I—I went back and set down, and he gave me a lecture, and then he says, "I think that's enough for me to say. All I'm telling you is, when that customer comes in to pick up the ring, *you're* going to wait on her, and *you're* going to tell her you did it." Oh, that was horrible. That was worse than getting out of there, you know? And, I didn't sleep at night. She was due three days later. And, he didn't—he didn't say a word in my defense at all. And, when she finally came in, I got up, took the ring and headed for the door. [00:40:00] He looked at me and he kind of smiled, and he says, "Sit down." And, he took the ring you of my hand and he went out and explained to her what had happened, he offered to get her another stone, and so forth and so on. It was all right, but I learned a tough lesson in that case, I'll tell you.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, my. But then did you learn how to do it right?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And sizing was a risky procedure?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It still is. It's always a risky procedure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean, altering the size of—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Of a ring with a stone in it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: But now I don't have any trouble at all. I have a can of sand—very fine grain sand—and I wet that sand, and then bury the ring just so the part that you're going to solder is sticking out—the rest of it's down in this wet sand—and you can even do a turquoise and nothing will be happen to it. I learned.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, these men, Rose—Dick Paul and all, taught by—you learned by trial and error.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And there were sometimes some severe trials?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But there's no more vivid way, I guess, of remembering, is there?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, it's the most efficient way of learning, but it's the most expensive way of learning. I mean, if you do it and make a mistake, you're not going to do it again.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. [Laughs.]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: There's a lot of money involved teaching that way, but I knew what I'd done wrong; I hadn't wrapped—put enough covering on that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Sneezes.]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It's just one of those things that's part of my experience.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, in jewelry making—I mean, you began making pieces as well when you were still at Rose's shop?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, they were commissions. They were all commissions that he had taken in, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he would hand some to you and some to Dick Paul?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. No, he'd hand them all to Dick Paul, and Paul would—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:42:00] He would farm out some—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: —hand some to me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did you find was the most challenging aspect of jewelry design in those days? Do you recall—or, what was the easiest thing? What did you—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, the easiest thing, after I got over the initial faux pas, was to size rings. [They laugh.] When I got so I could do it without spoiling anything, then that was—you would whip those out in no time. That was one of the easiest things. But when you're dealing with anything with a stone in it, you either better protect the stone in some way, or take the stone out of its setting. And, if there's anything—the philosophy is, if in doubt, don't.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And that'll save you a lot of headaches. I still use that. If I get a job in now for somebody and I look at it and, well, I'm not sure if this'll work, then I don't do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Or, I tell the customer and say, "This is apt to happen. Don't blame me if it does happen. You just give me the okay to go ahead, and as long as you know the dangers involved." And I usually have it written out and have them sign it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's the only safe way to do it, because you can get yourself in an awful lot of trouble. I always said that probably the most maligned and misunderstood person in the jewelry business is the repairman—who takes in anything, and anything—if something comes in that's made in Mexico, unless it's marked "sterling" and sometimes even that doesn't help—it's marked "Mexican silver," it's best not to even try it because you don't know what's in there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. So, a lot of your work while you were in his shop was repair work? You were given that to do?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. [00:44:00] Well, a lot of it was repair work, but we did—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You did a lot of it on your own?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you also, beyond your time in the shop, working on jewelry and silversmithing?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I didn't have any "beyond my time in the shop."

ROBERT F. BROWN: There was time?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, it was terrible.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, what you might say of showing in 1936 at that show in Providence were things you would have made—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Probably in the shop.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —probably at the shop. Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, there's no doubt what I made in the shop, in that early stage.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you find jewelry design and making as much of a challenge as silversmithing? Did you have—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, you don't do silversmithing until you've had a good background in jewelry making, because there you learn the limitations of your metal. In other words, it's always jewelry and silversmithing, not silversmithing and jewelry.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. I see. So, one precedes the other—or should?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, if you become real proficient in silver work, silver jewelry, you can do gold work and it's a snap. Gold is much easier to work than silver. On the other hand, if you're a gold smith and do gold work, it doesn't necessarily play that you can do silver jewelry, because there are a lot of things involved in making silver jewelry that you can't—are not involved in making gold jewelry—well, like casting, for instance. When you're casting in silver, you have to bring your metal to a boil and let it roll. [Helicopter flies over in background.] If it doesn't roll, you shouldn't—you shouldn't pour it. And gold, you just bring it till it melts and then pour it immediately. If you let it roll, then you begin to crystallize it and it's no good. But, gold, it solders more easily, you don't have to—you don't have fire stain to contend with, which you always have on silver. See, silver is a mixture and pure silver and copper, and when you heat it red hot to solder it, to cut—the silver has to be red hot to attract the solder. [00:46:05] A lot of people thing you heat the solder until it melts and then flows in there. Well, the solder will come to a little ball very quickly, but it won't go anywhere, it'll just sit there until the silver becomes red hot. And, when the silver is red hot, it'll flow.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: But as the silver becomes red hot, it also produces fire stain. Silver is a mixture of pure silver and copper; copper oxidizes and comes to the surface.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And there's nothing worse than to see a piece of jewelry covered with fire stain—silver jewelry covered with fire stain. Should be removed. Lots of people don't bother to remove it. Some people just plate over it and cover it up, and when it begins to wear, the plate wears off then you get this blackish—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, but I always remove it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you were a buffing man, after all.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right. That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: You got it. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, you had an extremely full schedule. And you were married in 1939. Then you were teaching, I believe you said, something like six courses a day?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: During those years? And, you did—

[END OF TRACK smith94_1of2_cass_SideA_r.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —were shut off. I mean—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, they were shut off.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —you could no longer get them. By then, you were beyond your time in Mr. Rose's shop, but you were teaching.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, then I guess, was it some sort of affiliation—you told me in teaching, though, you made do with tin from tin cans.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, they were threatening to close metal shops. And I didn't want to see that done, so one day I thought, well, they open all these tin cans at the cafeteria, and all that metal—it's good metal, it's going to waste. Why can't it be used? So, I went down and got some, great big—you know—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Big cans, gallon, half gallon.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. And, opened them up, cut them up, and we kept going. I mean, we just did the same things as we were doing with copper. It wasn't quite as heavy, thick, but the techniques were the same.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, you were teaching kids how to raise, mainly?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would most of them take to it pretty easily?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yes. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, we—they didn't close any metal shops in Providence because they all—after we got it started and Mr. Rose saw what could be done, he—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's right, he was still director of that.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, he was. And, he just—everybody did tin can work until the supply opened up again.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well how did you get into your wartime service? Were you drafted, or what?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, that's a—that's a story. I went up—I wanted to join the navy, so I came up here to Boston to be—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What, out of patriotism, or you knew your number was coming up?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I knew the number was going to come up eventually. I had two kids, but still I thought, well, shoot. I might as well do my part. I don't want to be walking around here teaching kids how to use tin cans and people are dying.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And so, we talked it over and I went to Boston. [00:02:02] I went—I was going in as a warrant officer if I could get in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, what would that have meant?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, that would mean I could be a metal smith and that could entail a lot of things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: So, I got up there—up here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To Boston, yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes. And, I went through the physical and I got down to the very end—and I knew I had flat feet—and he said, what—he looked—I can see it just as—I can see it right in my eyes, just as vivid—he said, "Stand up on this table." Well, I got up on the table and here's 12 other guys all looking at me, you know, and they're all looking down at my feet. He says, "What in the blazes is that?" And, I says, "Flat feet, sir," and it was a little squeaky voice, didn't even sound like me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He said, "Well, I guess so," he said—he had a—I guess he was a yeoman, doing all the notes, checking off the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean you had no arch in your feet?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, I don't have any arch in my feet. Never did have. And, he said, "Well, let's see. Put down there third degree flat feet for Smith," and he's looked at me and he says, "Put your clothes on and go home. We don't want you."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why wouldn't they take you? Because you couldn't—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, because they'd have had to pay me all the rest of my life. I could claim being disabled, see?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, what was the—is the disability?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, sure. It's a disability to have flat feet.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You can't walk properly?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: See, I have arches in my shoes. I have always had arches.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: So, I was going out the door and this fellow sitting there at the bench says, "You want to sign this card?" and I says, "Oh, sure." [00:04:04] I thought it was getting me out of there, but it wasn't. I didn't read it. It said that I'd do anything to help the war effort that the navy deemed that I could do, and I'd only been home for about—oh, less than two weeks, when I had a call to go to the American Optical Company in South Bridge. They were—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Massachusetts, yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: So, I got up and I went up there, and I didn't know what it was all about, and I went in the plant and they said, "We're doing 100 percent navy work here, and we've got a bottleneck. We need to have employee training programs set up."

ROBERT F. BROWN: They didn't know the reason they had a bottleneck, or they were falling behind?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, they were falling way behind because of the fact they were hiring so many people and just throwing them into the job. There were spoiling a lot of things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What were they making there?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Lenses.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Lenses. Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Lenses. They were all—it was all navy work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Precision work.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. So, they said, "You have teaching experience and the navy wants you to set up a training program, not only for new employees, but for supervisors." I said, "Oh my." So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you'd never worked with glass, had you?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No. No, but I'd worked with people, and that was what they wanted.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: So, the first six months, I went through that American Optical Company and learned all of the operations where they had been hiring people—not to become proficient, but to learn what was being—what was needed there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was involved, right.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. And, I was there for, well, till the end of the war. Was about three years I was there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you did bring them up to—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —pretty efficient level in the end?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: We got an E for—those banners they gave? [00:06:02] The E for efficiency?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, we got an E. All they needed was somebody to do it, and none of those people wanted to do it that they had up there. The personnel people weren't interested in doing it; all they were interested in was getting people in there and shoving them out to the various departments.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It took a full time man, and I—they wouldn't hire me because of my third degree flat feet, but when I wasn't an actual naval employee, but a civilian employee employed by the navy—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It didn't matter.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It didn't matter and I tromped around on those feet on cement floors for—from seven o'clock in the morning until 11:00 at night. It was horrible.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And—but, I did it, and that's how I got involved.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you—you felt certainly it had been worth doing.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yeah. Sure it was. Sure it was. There's no doubt about it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But, you didn't leave there with an affection for glass, I take it?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I didn't leave there for an affection for the [they laugh] American Optical Company, I'll tell you that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, you said that they wanted you to stay.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: They wanted me to stay, and I said "No, I want to go back to teaching." And, I can—a fellow by the name of Sam Sheard was the plant manager there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sheard?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Sheard, yeah. S-H-E-A-R-D.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, he was kind of a tough fellow, but he said, "If you want to stay, we'll have a place for you here. We can use it." I said, "Nope, I'm through. You don't need me anymore. I'm through. I want to go back to teaching." And, he said, "You won't make any money there," and I said, "I don't care about that." I said, "I've got to the point here I'm swearing at my wife and kicking my kids, and that's not the way I want to live. You've got an ulcer," I could say it then, because—I says, "You got a bad ulcer, and why you got it? Because you're here. I don't want one of those things. I'm going back teaching."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you feel it was just the wartime pressure or the company itself was sort of tense? [00:08:02]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, it was just tense, all the time. And I think the thing that really decided me was, I was down in the grinding shop one day and there was an old man tending a whole bunch of spindles, they called them. They were six lenses on a spindle, and they were grinding these lenses. And they had it all timed so that, by the time he got through this end of the machine, it was time to come back and change them. And that went along all day long, see, he changed the spindles. And he dropped dead at the machine—I was there when he dropped dead. Just dropped dead. He'd been there 40 years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Dropped dead at the machine?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: At the machine. And, they threw an old tarp over him and put another man on the job until the medical examiner got there. He stepped over him. And, I could see myself laying there, and I said—it was ridiculous, you know?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, the superintendent of that department's bragging that he didn't lose a spindle, even though the guy dropped dead.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Gosh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And that did it right there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That kind of attitude.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yea, that did it right there for me. I thought, no, I don't want any part of this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I suppose there was a lot of that in the old industries, weren't there?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, sure. Sure there was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And, the pay was, for the average workman, pretty bad, wasn't it?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It's is another thing that—I've never been to Sturbridge Village, because that was started by old Wells, Mr. Wells, who—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The owner of American Optical.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: —the owner of American Optical Company. He paid starvation wages, but gave this so his—to get his name out, and I never went to that Sturbridge Village. I refused to go.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I got 85 cents an hour when I was working there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: During World War II.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Eighty-five cents.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How'd your family exist?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Just about.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Just about.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:10:00] You know, this is the first you brought that element up, of the kind of—some people call it exploitation of the workman, but you apparently didn't feel that way when you were in the workshop situation like with Mr. Rose or when—or in the school system?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, I didn't.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: But I knew what these people were getting out of this shop, Wells and his family.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I just knew what they were doing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Great profits.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, these people—poor people, they just didn't have anything. Some of them had worked there for years and years and years and years and years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yep. Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: There was an old fellow that worked in one of the departments, and while I was there they gave him his 50 year—he'd been there 50 years. Name was, oh, Dennis McCarthy. You know what he requested? They asked him what he wanted for his fiftieth anniversary. He didn't want a party. He said he'd like to go up and see where the lenses went when he finished with them. He had no conception of what happened to those lenses that he'd been working on for 50 years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, they let him do that, and I met him upstairs in the—in the inspection department, and I said, "What did they give you? Did they give you a present, Dennis?" He said, "Well, they gave me a gold watch case." I said, "A gold watch case?" He said, "Yeah, they've been giving me the works for 50 years." [Laughs.] That's all he knew how to do.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. He didn't get a watch, he got the case [laughs].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He did get the watch, but that was his joke.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Joke, yeah. They've been giving me the works.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes. They gave me the works the last 50 years, he says.

ROBERT F. BROWN: God. Were you then—could you go back to Providence to teach, or you in fact went elsewhere?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, I went down to Princeton, New Jersey.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How'd you happen to do that? [00:12:00]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, I joined a teacher's agency and an opening came up at Princeton High School, and I went down and introduced the class to art metalwork, which they'd never had before.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, that was a very different community from Providence, wasn't it?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It wasn't very nice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you mean?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Princeton is not a very nice town. It looks nice. I'd only been there about two weeks when I went down to a hardware store down on Nassau Street to buy some paint to fix up the place where we were living. And it was—the man who ran the store, his name was Mr. Farr. He was on the school board. And, I went in and he says, "Aren't you the new man at the high school?" And I says, "Yes, I am." He says, "Well, there's a couple of things—you may think this is strange, but there are some things you ought to know." I says, "All right, Mr. Farr. What is it?" "First of all," he says, "this is a very poor town to bring children up in." I says, "Is that right?" He says, "It's not an easy town to live in." I says, "Why are you saying this?" He said, "Because I think you ought to know it. It'll come to you as an awful shock, but I'm telling you so it shouldn't come to you as a shock if you plan to stay here. There are two classes of people in Princeton; there are the people who live off Bayard Lane, where Grover Cleveland's widow lived, and so forth and so on. That type of people. And there are people who live down on Witherspoon Street, which are the low economic class type of people."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He says, "Can you afford to live on Bayard Lane?" I said, "Well, certainly not." "Well you know where that puts you then, don't you?" I said, "I guess so," and it didn't take long to find out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. So, there was tremendous cleavage within society there?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, Princeton is a mean town. It's mean.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, it wasn't a very happy time for you or your family?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, it was awful. It was awful, but I was teaching. [00:14:00] I'd made up my mind to leave, I'd joined another teacher's agency, when I got a letter from Margaret Whitney stating, if I was interested to come out for an interview, she'd like to talk to me about starting a class and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you know who she was? You'd ever heard of her?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Never heard of the University of Kansas [laughs].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: She got my name from a teacher's agency. And, I went out and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: To be interviewed?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, to be interviewed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was in 1947.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, '46, actually.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Forty-six?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, how'd you find her to be? What was—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: She was wonderful.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, you said—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Best boss I ever had in my life.

ROBERT F. BROWN: She was—what was her position at the university?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: She was the chairman of the department of design.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that within a certain college or division?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Fine arts.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, they had a fine arts college?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, what was her aim in hiring you? Were you to be—to start something again?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I was to—I was to start a department—or, a major in jewelry and silversmithing in the university.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They'd never had—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had they had occasional courses at all?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, she taught.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What training had she had?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Not much, just a little bit. And she wanted to push it. The design department had majors in industrial design, art education, fashion illustration, commercial art, ceramics, textiles. She wanted to put in jewelry and silversmithing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: We were the first state university in the United States to offer a bachelor's and a master's in jewelry and silversmithing. And it's all because of Miss Whitney. If I hadn't have had her backing, I couldn't have done it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. So, she was a good boss then to have?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You've said she was very down to earth? [00:16:00]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes. She graduated from KU herself. Went out, traveled a lot, went out, spent her time getting her feet wet out in the field, and then came back and became chairman of the department—chairperson

of the department, sorry.

ROBERT F. BROWN: As you would now call it, yeah. But, that must have been a difference to you, too, to see women in such positions? You were out. It was a different culture.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, I was a little bit leery about it because I hadn't ever experienced it. I was a little leery about it, but it didn't take long to find out that she was a pretty straight shooter. She'd try anything. The fact is, I shared a room when I first went there with two other instructors, and she wanted to start a major. I told her, I said, "We can't do it this way, because when our time is up we have to get out. Somebody else is coming into the room."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, next class was coming. Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. "We can't do it. Just can't do it. So, I think maybe we ought to look for somewhere else." And, two days later she called me in and says, "You go down to the back of Bailey Hall and look at that Quonset hut and see if you can use that." So, I was eight years in that Quonset hut.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Not an ideal place, I suppose.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Not ideal, but certainly a place by ourselves so we could work all night, if we wanted to.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Now, the culture was very different there than it had been in Providence. After all, you were in the midst of several generations where that had been a center.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: They didn't know anything about jewelry out there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Nothing, yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It was just like talking a foreign language to them. So, I spent, oh, the first two or three years traveling all over Kansas visiting high schools, talking to senior classes and so forth. Anything they wanted me to do. I'd put on demonstrations, I'd bring films, I'd bring slides, I'd—we did anything. [00:18:00] At one time, I'd been in every high school in the state of Kansas.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Wow.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And some of them are not very big [laughs].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: You mention any town out in western Kansas, particularly, I know where it is because I've been there. Towns like Nicodemus, where everybody in town is black. That was—the government opened that town for freed slaves way back in the early days, and they're still there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I mean, the—it's a black, township, is what it is.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. Wow.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, Libenthal and Schoenchen And, these are all towns where they're all German out there. But, I've been there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. And this was—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And we—we got some of our best majors from out in there. Condon Kool [ph], who was one of the first winners in the design competition, Silver Today competition—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where is that ,American Craftsman's Council?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, uh-huh [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: He came from—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He came from Beloit, Kansas, which is a little, bitty town up in north central Kansas.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, Bob Ebendorff [ph], and people like this. Bob is from Topeka. And they—I used to go

over there every year to Topeka High School and spend a whole day talking to the classes, and I got some good students out of there. But, it was hard at first, but gradually it became known. Then Miss Whitney had developed a program in—they called it the high school art conference, and she—they'd bring in students one day—two days a week, and we'd all suspend classes—regular classes at the university, and the instructors and chosen students would put on demonstrations in the various fields, and these kids [phone rings] could ask questions and so forth, and so on. [00:20:05] That's probably Carl [ph].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, you brought your family out there and they—must have been a strange experience, particularly for your wife who was from Providence. I mean, was there—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, yeah, but she was—she was ready to go [helicopter in background].

ROBERT F. BROWN: After that—the year in Princeton, I suppose so.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: She was ready to go.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You came back, or was it just before you went to Kansas, the summer of '47, you studied in Providence with that special workshop, at the school of design I guess, with William Bennett, a master silversmith from England.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that of importance to you? Or was that a fairly major thing?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yes. That was—that was a wonderful thing. A wonderful thing. We got to study under a recognized master and learn techniques that we knew nothing about.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. Oh, you mean beyond what Mr. Rose would have known?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Yeah. He was a quartz silversmith over in England for years, and he taught at the Sheffield School of Art.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And we worked—well, you can't work with a person like that every day for a month without picking up a lot of things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It was worthwhile. Yeah, sure was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, there was a good deal more to be learned, huh?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yeah. I always say, "When you can't learn, it's time to throw dirt in your face." I'm learning even today. I went out—I'd always soldered a bezel together—thing that holds the stone?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Soldered together a certain way. Well, I was out in Lukachukai, Arizona, and talked to one of the Indian craftsman out there. And he says, "How do you solder your bezel together?" And I told him, and he says, "That's—I know an easier way." I says, "Well, tell me because I hate to solder bezels." "You take a nice joint, cut a generous size piece of solder, put it on a charcoal block. [00:22:00] Set a—instead of balancing your bezel on edge and trying to get it to flow into the opening, as long as you have a good joint, set it on top of your piece of solder—the joint on top—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yep, yep.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: —heat the thing and the solder is only going to go one place, it's going to go up in that joint. And it was just, boom, just like that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, you're always learning something.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's what I do now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] Well did Mr. Bennett's instruction from the—what you learned earlier?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Not really. No, no, not really.

ROBERT F. BROWN: There's something I read quoting him at that time, and he said he liked to follow his own ideas, and uh, that he felt that someone who has mastered his tools and his techniques can turn out work quite quickly, that there was this myth of everything being laborious, and time consuming.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. That's right. That's exactly right. [Helicopter in background.] If you know what you're doing, you can do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you realize at that time that you were sort of on the eve of a whole change in American crafts? I mean, there were—people from all over the country came to study in these conferences, didn't they?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: We realized it. I think everybody who was there at the conferences realized it, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, you were going to be bringing to Kansas not only your superb technical training in Rhode Island, and your experience as a teacher, but now you were bringing this awareness now of the wider, European world of—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. And when I—gradually got my major started, I had to hire two faculty members, I couldn't handle it all alone anymore. And I hired a man from Finland, and I hired another one from Copenhagen. So the students, some time in their four years, got my techniques which were almost wholly—well, they were—American techniques and English techniques. [00:24:03] Then they got the Danish techniques, and the Finlandia's technique. I used to tell them, "You know three ways of doing each one of these jobs. Use the one that works for you, if you're as smart as I think you are and know which one you'll take." [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yours, huh?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: [They laugh.] Well, I never did say that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Well, some of your colleagues there—what was the name of the Dane? Did you get to know some of the—you must have worked very closely with him.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, Gary Nimjock [ph]. He wasn't actually a Dane, but he came from there. He'd been over there a long time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned other names. There was a man named Sheldon Carey, and I gather he'd been in Providence?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Sheldon taught ceramics, and he was—he was—I taught with Sheldon in Providence.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, then there he went? He was in Kansas before you?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He was there—he was there when I got there. So, Whitney knew how to—Miss Whitney knew how to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Persuade people, huh?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, she knew how to pick good people.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] Now, was ceramics taught as an art form then, or were they mainly where the student—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Art form.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And so was jewelry design, I think, wasn't it?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, yes it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Most of the students out there weren't thinking of going into industry, were they?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: They were thinking of having their own studios.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was a different day than it had been when you were coming up—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in New England.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. What about other names, Evelyn DeGraw?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: She was a textile teacher. She was wonderful.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was she trained—where?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, she'd been everywhere. Lord, she'd been all over the world learning her various techniques. She'd been everywhere. You just name it and she'd almost been there. From Peru to Germany to Ireland, to everywhere. [00:26:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, she was an excellent—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What about Alex Boyle?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Alex Boyle taught printmaking, and he was an accomplished designer—wallpaper designer, primarily. And it's a different type of design all together. And Alex just retired this past year. He's been there ever since.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, he would be a man who came out of industry, to some degree?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, that's exactly where he came from.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The fine, aesthetic arts—like, print—that kind of paint—and painters and sculptors were in another part of the university.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right. Absolutely.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Another name you mentioned is Downer Dikes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Downer Dikes had charge of our industrial design program. And he just retired last year.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Industrial design, those were people being—going to be streamed toward product design and so forth?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right. That's exactly right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Working with companies, huh?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's where these instructors came from, out of industry.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. And then, another name you've given is Arvid Jacobson.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Arvid Jacobson was a purely an aesthetic type person. He did watercolors and things of this type. Very dainty. He did a lot of textile design. [Helicopter in the background.] Not the techniques, but the designing of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Designing for textile.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, was he trained in Europe or where was he?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, he was trained right there at the university. Never been anywhere.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see, he was a product—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He's one of the old, old timers that had never been anywhere but the University of Kansas, and he was a corker.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He did a lot of traveling, you know, and I presume he did a lot of studying.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, but you say he was a corker. You mean he was a character?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, he was a character. That's it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] Well, you said that Miss Whitney instilled great loyalty to the place and to the department. And—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: We had a faculty that had no turnover whatsoever. Year in and year out, the same people were there. [00:28:00] And we built up—there's a closeness that is no longer there. They're in and out of there like I don't know what now. It's a different feeling entirely. They get an offer somewhere else and they go because it's more money.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, they have no feeling for the university. We all had offers to go other places, but it was a different—different feeling there, and none of us went.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you had the backing of the administration, too.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you were—got to the point where you were able to teach abroad for extended periods.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And yet, then return to the university.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned, you taught in Costa Rica?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, uh-huh [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, I gather Miss Whitney initially was a bit perturbed at your doing that?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: She didn't like it very well. Fact is, she tried to keep me from going. She didn't want me to go. I said, "Well—" I went over to the chancellor's office, and I said, "I don't know what's going to happen here if—" He said, "Well, you're supposed to be going to Costa Rica." I says, "Marjory Whitney doesn't want me to go, and Dean Gordon doesn't want me to go, and I don't know what to do. I'm being pulled in all directions here." He says, "Well, let's have a meeting with them." So, he called us all in and he said, "I understand there's some trouble here about Carlyle going to Costa Rica for a year or two?" He said, "You know, Carlyle, he's a full professor, and we can't tell him that he can't go. We can't tell him that he has to go. It's up to him. Do you want to go to Costa Rica?" I said, "Well, I'd be kind of foolish if I didn't, wouldn't I?" He said, "I would think so." I said, "Well yes, I want to go." He says, "Well, I guess that's it." And that was the end of that right there. [00:30:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: So, that was a college liberal arts and sciences program and I was in the school of fine arts. So, I went over to the dean of the college of liberal arts and I said, "You know it just dawned on me that I have to resign from the school of fine arts—"

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: At Kansas, I know you were a beloved teacher, and I gather you've said that, just as you were young and learning, you didn't like the teacher hovering around and giving you too much instruction, so it

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I wouldn't do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At Kansas, too.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I never did it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. You helped the student develop on his own.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. I've always—at the very beginning I'd tell them that, if they want me to do that, I'd be glad to do it, but that's not the way a lot of people like it. A lot of people like to be left alone. They don't want people having over their shoulder.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, that's the way I did it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. You also did your own work while they were at work, right?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yeah. I always—always did. I'd always do the assignment that I had given them, not something above their ability, but something on their level. "This is the assignment; I'll do one, you'll do one. When I do a technique here that I don't think you understand, then I'll call you all up and we'll—we'll see how it's done."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: This is—it's hard to teach that way—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I'm sure.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: —but that's the most efficient way to teach. And that's all I was interested in. In other words, if I had 20 students in the class, I had 20 classes in there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. Yes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: They all covered the same thing, but when they went their direction, this one went his direction, she went her direction, and they all covered the same ground because they all used the same techniques. But, I didn't want his to look like hers, and so forth. [00:32:03]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah. And, they didn't, huh?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: They didn't. They were all—that's the whole story. Think as individuals, not as a group. That's not the way it's done now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No? You're beginning to see—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: The last time I was visiting—I don't go near the campus anymore because I—the present instructor, I make him nervous when I go in. And I can understand that, so I don't—I don't do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But, the students began to look like the teacher's work?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Pick them out?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And, you've mentioned various students you had that were known for a great range.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned Bob Ebindorff and Richard Heltzer, and a number of others.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: See, they've all gone on and—a lot of them have gone into the teaching profession, and they have their own studios besides. Ebindorff is—well, he was in Boulder, Colorado, the last I knew.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But he was at New Paltz—at SUNY, New Paltz for years.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: New Paltz. Heltzer is in Montana.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Uh, Montana State. I got metalwork started up there. I taught up there one summer, did a workshop, and I ran workshop summers for about 12 years down in New Mexico, New Mexico State University.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, I heard about that, yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I didn't run then on the campus down at Las Cruces, I ran them in the mountains up at Cloud Croft.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Cloud Croft, huh?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. I used the high school facilities. Well, I had to do all this myself. I had to go around and beg my way into the high school.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, the superintendent of schools and I had become very good friends. He calls up every once in a while.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh. That's nice.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: We made some good friends there. [00:34:01]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you find that a summer program was enough to get a student sort of underway?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, to get them started, sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Get them started.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Get them so they—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In your opinion, is—I mean, the level of crafts made, metalsmithing in particular, is it appreciably better than it was, say, in the '30s or '40s when you were getting going? In this country?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I think it's probably better. There are a lot of people who are doing wild things that we don't approve of—but generally, I think it's much better, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And, a good deal of it's owing to you.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, I suppose.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And to others, the Europeans who came over here.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, yeah. Uh, I like to think I did my share, but there are others who've done marvelous things. I had a young fellow come over from Germany just to—well, Glynnis Matthews came up all the way from Australia to study at the University of Kansas. She had a chance to go to England or come over here, and she came over here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And why did she? Did she ever tell you?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, I guess it's because of the reputation we had at the University of Kansas.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: She didn't have to tell me. All she had to do was say, "Well, I had a chance to go to England or go here, and I—I went here." That told it right there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, this Klaus Collinberger [ph], who is teaching at Middle Tennessee State University, become quite well-known in the country—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he'd come from Germany to Kanas.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He came from Hanau in Germany, yeah. He came to the University of Kansas to—with all of the wonderful German schools they have over there, he wanted to get another slant, so he came over here. He's never—he never went back.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He's been at—he's been at Middle Tennessee since he graduated. [00:36:02]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, did he indicate that German teaching wasn't of the quality of yours?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, he never indicated anything like that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: He just—I think he wanted to get into another culture entirely. And he's still there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But, your impression is that sound teaching can be found many places?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Many, many places, yes. There's some wonderful, wonderful teaching going on in the

country.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, the group that we got together, including you, in 1982 at the Smithsonian—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, you had a group there—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —represented a lot of the great teaching.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, you had a group there that was the cream. I tell you. Yeah. I remember, people got—when I—it came my talk—time to say something, they got a little fed up on Kansas. They wanted to know—somebody asked point blank, "Why is all this in Kansas?" I said, "I guess because people in Kansas can see beyond the end of their nose. They—we've had some dynamic people in Kansas." Like, Maud Shallenberger down in Wichita. That type of person. "Well, I'm getting kind of tired of hearing about Kansas," she said. I don't remember who it was; one of the women. But just then, Eldridge walked in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, Charles Eldridge?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who was then head of the Museum of American Art.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. I said—when he came in, he looked at me and he says, "Hi Carl," and I says, "Hello, Charlie." And I says, "Tell them where you're from, Charlie." He says, "University of Kansas." [Laughs.] It worked out beautifully. He's back there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's right. That's right, yeah.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: I wanted to talk for a bit now about some examples of your work. We're looking at some photographs and reproductions, and slides. The first one we're seeing is something from the late 1930s. It's a copper bowl now at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Now, that's late '30s. That's the very time when you're teaching in Providence. Also, either still are or had just been working in Mr. Rose's workshop. [00:38:04]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Had just been working.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Just been working.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, what does this represent? It's in copper. It's not silver.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It's copper. It's just a small bowl that's probably five inches in diameter and about three inches high. And it involves a technique of raising the feet out of the bowl itself. Nothing has been added. It was a design technique that was developed by the Gorham Company years ago, and has a—I'm trying to think what they call this. They call it the Martele.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh yes, the Martele technique.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The hammered technique. Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, That's right. And, the little feet are bumped out of the side of the bowl, and then—it's something that very few people today [laughs] know how to do. I wouldn't know how to do it if I hadn't studied under a Gorham silversmith. He's the one that taught me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: One of the people who taught you at the school of design?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right. That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: They rejected this for a while at the museum, and then they didn't send it back. They held onto it. Then finally, Fairbanks—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, Jonathan Fairbanks, the curator there.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. He took a second look at it and he says, you know—Jeanine Palemo [ph] told me this. "You know, that's a lovely little thing. Maybe we ought to add it." So, they've got it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And it is characteristic of your work at that time?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: At that time, yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Very robust work.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Some of the hammering is still evident.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, it was left there, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was intentional in that particular technique?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Intentional, yes. Uh-huh [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, the next thing we're looking at is this tea strainer from 1948.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Here something's happened. [00:40:00] I think it looks more like a very modern type design, with sort of abstract swirls and the like in the bowl of the tea strainer.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: This is a technique I learned from William Bennett.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of what, that kind of a design within—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, that's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Pierced—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: If you're going to pierce a design in there—I mean, this was necessary because it is a tea strainer, tea had to go through—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: —don't just put holes in there, do something with those holes—and that's what I tried to do. And, that has a mastodon tusk handle.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, you can't—was that picked because of its rarity, do you suppose?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, this was found in the Kansas River right outside of Lawrence, this mastodon tusk. I had it given to me and I didn't know what to do with it. It wasn't much of a piece, size-wise. So, I decided I'd use it as a handle.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I carved a little bit of it and buffed it up, and it just fit in. That—the interior of that strainer has a 24 karat gold plate on it. It's sterling silver, but it does have the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would this have been a commission piece?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was done just for exhibition then?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It was done for exhibition purposes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Would this shape of the tea strainer, which is sort of a rounded triangle—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I use that shape a lot. In fact, the Boston Museum has a nut bowl and scoop using that same shape. It's sort of an egg shape.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did you arrive at that shape, do you recall?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, I like the shape of an egg [laughs].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay. So, this is something you evolved?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It's a perfect—it's a perfect shape, you know? And they say the design of a chicken's egg is a perfect shape.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It says nothing—it's clean and nothing clutters it up. It's just a perfect shape. So, I—I've used that a lot, not only in raised pieces, but in jewelry.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [00:42:00] Now, this next one to look at on a slide, is a brooch or a pin from about 1949.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What can you say about that? Is that partly cast or not?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, it's not cast at all. This is—has a reticulated surface. Now, reticulation means to draw in. And what you do is, you take your material, put it down on a—well, I use a charcoal block. Lay it on the charcoal block and you start heating it. You heat it from—I usually start on the upper left-hand corner, and with a large, feathery flame—so you can get the whole piece, but I concentrate and then bring the thing around until the silver becomes red hot. And what you're trying to do is to melt the top surface of that metal but not melt through it, unless you want to melt through it. Sometimes it's kind of fun to melt through it, it causes various little odd shaped indentations and holes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, you reduce your—after the piece is red hot, you reduce your flame to a pinpoint, a pinpoint flame, and you start up in the corner and swirl it around and around and around, and pretty soon you'll see a little bubble of silver form on the surface, and you can actually steer that bubble. Where it becomes cool, the bubble will stay, and you can—with experimentations, you can build up some beautiful surfaces there. And that's the way that's done.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's what you were doing there. And to which you've inserted several gems or stones?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. Those are—they're garnets in there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And, this—another piece I wanted to show was, I suppose, a pin or a brooch from 1950 now in the Museum of Fine Arts collection here in Boston. [00:44:00] What can we say about that? It's almost got an axe-like shape.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, this is one I did after I made a trip to Ireland. I got inspired with Celtic design, and this is a takeoff on some brooches I saw at the National Gallery over in London. It doesn't—it goes a step further. I've got four dangles made of yellow gold. That's typical French in design, to have these movements. I mean, it's not Celtic. The top of it's Celtic, but the bottom of it is typically French. And, this was done using the button cast method, which very few people even know how to do. You pour out some investment in—I call them pancakes because they look like pancakes, and let them harden. And then you carve into the flat side of that pancake—you do it on a flat surface—carve in reverse. You have to think in reverse. And then you fill your indentations in with melted wax, and then you invest the whole thing. I say investment, that's high-grade plaster. It will withstand heat. And then you burn it out in the kiln, the wax melts out, and you have some cavities in there. Then you put this in a centrifugal casting machine and throw molten metal into it. That's the way that was done. It's kind of an involved process, but people like it. I like it, or I wouldn't do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you stick with these techniques, now and then, over many years. [00:46:01]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Oh, yeah. I try all different techniques.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, these are some—a pair of candlesticks, I believe from 1959. And these are—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. I don't have these anymore. These were stolen.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative], but this—what can you say about their design?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Their design is—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sort of a tapering shaft, and then almost a—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, they would normally be called a drip cup, but they're not drip cups, actually, what they are is reflectors, and they're highly polished, they're hand raised.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In an outline, they're almost, again, that egg shape that you said is a favorite.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, that's—you'll find that. I use it an awful lot. These were stolen out of a craft show. And I guess I ought to feel complimented. They didn't steal other things, but they did those.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This next one is a brooch of about I guess 1960, and it's a bit freer form, or more than uh, I've noticed before. It's not tight. Perhaps it's because various things flare out from a central core.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, this—remember I told you I worked along with the students?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, this was an assignment. Take a—

[END OF TRACK smith94_1of2_cass_SideB_r]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. Well, this is one of those—

ROBERT F. BROWN: A problem you set your students, you said?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It was an assignment, and when I gave them an assignment I gave myself the same assignment. So they came up and we discussed their designs, and I showed them my design, and they made—in fact, on this particular one I remember very distinctly that one of the students made a suggestion and I followed his suggestion. You can be as right as I am, so that's a good idea. And I'll do it your way. Well, that made the class feel good, it made him—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sure. Sure.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: —feel particularly good. And it didn't hurt me any, so I incorporated his ideas in there. And, finished it up and it represents a five-pointed star, and on the ends of the points they have—little moonstones are set into the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which exaggerates the spreading away from a central core.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right. There's a moonstone in the center there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Well now, this next piece here is a liturgical piece, I think. A chalice, you said, of about 1963 or so?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: About that, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, how did that come about? Was that from—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, it's a commission.

ROBERT F. BROWN: From a church?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. From the episcopal—no, this one was for a church in Kansas City, a brand new church.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And, that seems to follow pretty well, traditional chalice forms.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's what they wanted.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's what they wanted?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's what they wanted, didn't want to go wild.

ROBERT F. BROWN: From what you said earlier, it strikes me that you might not be at your happiest when

you're following such rigid—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I'm not.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —formats.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, I'm not.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Didn't think so.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: They liked—I said, "Well, all right, if that's what you want. But, may I have the prerogative of changing the node up in here," which usually—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The little nop or whatever—or, nope? [00:02:00]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, the—yes. And, "Well, in what way?" I said, "Well, I'd like to put some little crosses in here rather than just have a shiny knob in there." "Well, you do what you do—yeah, that'll be all right. As long as this is traditional and this is traditional." Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yah. And it's a panel base, yeah

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But, when you were given the very prestigious commission by the university to design the mace for its—the chancellor of Kansas, you were able to become a bit more expressive, weren't you?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, at the time this mace was commissioned—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was 1964.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. This was—we had 10 schools on the university. There are more than that now, but at that time, there were 10 schools, and the school colors are crimson and blue. So, these arms that you see coming up, are—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What, of silver?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes, they're a very heavy silver. You can see they're about, oh, a quarter of an inch thick. And, they form sort of a flower, like a petal is opening up. They represent the 10 schools.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And on the end of each one of these arms is set a ruby, a sapphire, representing the school colors, crimson and blue. In the center, there is shaft coming up from the center, and there's a gold ball—it gives the appearance of floating.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That represents the entire university.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, the shaft of the mace—one of the oldest buildings on the campus was Frasier Hall, and everybody had a very soft spot in their heart for Frasier Hall. It represented the university, for old Frasier. And, they had to pull it down because it was going to fall down if they didn't.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [00:04:00]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, the fact is, when they pulled the—took the roof off, all the walls fell in. And uh, I went in and took—rescued a piece of one of the stair case—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Balusters, or—yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, well, it was the railings that came up to hold the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, it was in bad shape. I took it over to Haskell Indian School and they cleaned it all up. And, everybody thought it was oak, but it wasn't. It was walnut. And, that's—formed the—I designed a shaft for

the mace using that. So everything on the mace represents the university.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Then, on the far end of the shaft, was the school seal in sterling silver.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. On the side of the shaft?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, down at the bottom of the shaft—

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the base?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: —at the base of the shaft, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, this is the school seal. This is what I used. This is also used as the chancellor's collar.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The collar, yes. Okay.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And it has, once again, the alternating—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Red—or, crimson and blue.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah. Well, this—in I think it was later in '77 or so, the Murphy medal for the chair in music at the university.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. I had one week to get that thing ready.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that is medal work. Now, medal—did you find medal work—medal. M-E-D-A-L work a challenge, or was it something you'd also—the techniques involved were not—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, it's nothing that I enjoy doing. It's too confining. But, yeah—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Casting and then finishing?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. It was modeling and casting and then finishing, is what it was. But, we did it. We got it done in time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Here is a rather interesting—just after your retirement in '77—I think this was '79—a sterling with a copper matrix.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah. [00:06:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Interesting form.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: This is a very—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is a pendant.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, this was a very odd thing. This is all—this is all copper in here, and this is—this is turquoise over here. There's so much copper in there, you don't very often see—and that's real copper. I mean, it—you can polish it and it shines just like—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And they were merged in nature, they were—grew together.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right. And it was given to me and I wanted to do something with it, so I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's sort of an irregular shape, and you've shaped a very smooth part on one side—the longer part—and then this sort of pierced and sort of scalloped quality on the other.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And not only that, but I lightly textured each one of these little petals on the opposite side, so you get a contrast between your smooth surface and your textured surface there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And, those were done for what, a commission or just done on your own?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No, that was done just because I wanted to do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And one other—of about the same year. I think another pendant uh, 1979.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. My wife has this. This is a green amethyst. It's been treated, but it has a beautiful color. This light doesn't do it justice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's much more geometric than most of the things we've seen.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, the amethyst—I carried that amethyst in my pocket for weeks trying to find—wonder what to do with it, and finally came up with this design. And, it shows a piece of sterling silver that's highly textured, surrounded by a frame of forged silver wire, and there's a little piece at the top that gives light reflection because it's domed—it's sort of an arch across the top of it. [00:08:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, it's of 14 karat gold.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Very nice.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: You have to be careful when you're using a faceted stone that you don't do anything to detract from the stone.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, no.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And it's very simple. Very effective, I think.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is there anything you'd like to say further about some of these later pieces, or maybe we should—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, I don't know. I don't know what's here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: We'll just have to hold them up, maybe the one or two you'd like to talk about. We don't need to put them in here, because—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: No. Well, this one's over in the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Better identify which one it is.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: This—this—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What year is that, approximately?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, that's 1992. Yes. I'm going to pull this out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, mm-hmm [affirmative].

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, that's over at the museum.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It's on exhibit right now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's a disk form—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But with another, smaller disk form.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, that other disk form is a stone. It's an amethyst.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And, this is designed as a pin?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: A pin. That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And it's got a very strong opposition of two forms.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh, is that unusual in your work, or not?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It is for mine, yes, it is.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, you're continually exploring. You don't know what's going to—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: All the time, yes [laughs]. All the time. And here's one I did last year—just last year. I'm particularly fond of this one, so. This was done as a commission. I don't have it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: It's an amethyst down at the bottom, and it has—it's being held in position by just a swirl of silver.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Great curvilinear shapes.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah, that's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This pin. Okay. And, this is one that—that was done as a commission?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: That's a commission, yes. I think that's all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay. Well, I think that we can see that, it's rather amazing that here in '92 and '93, and presumably '94, you're going in more directions, at least from the sample I've seen, than ever. [00:10:09]

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Well, I'm old now, and I got—

ROBERT F. BROWN: To be freer than ever, eh [laughs]?

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I can afford to be now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Good.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I've paid my dues. [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You certainly have.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yes. I just had a birthday. Eighty-two.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Eighty-two.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You don't seem that way.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: And, I have no intention of quitting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The only thing you've had to stop is the larger hammering work of—

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Can't do that anymore, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the silver—of smithing.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: I suppose I could, but I couldn't do much of it, because I've been warned not to. And I was sick enough that, when the doctor said don't do it, I don't do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No. Okay.

CARLYLE H. SMITH: Okay?

[END OF TRACK smith94_2of2_cass_SideA_r.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]