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Oral history interview with Richard
McLanathan, 1994 August 31

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Richard B.K. McLanathan on August 31, 1994. The interview took place in Phippsburg, ME, 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 BROWN: So I thought we could just start with your birth and childhood. This is an interview with Richard McLanathan in Phippsburg, Maine, and this is August 31, 1994, Robert Brown interviewing. You were born in 1916—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: 1916, yes.

ROBERT BROWN: In Methuen—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: —Massachusetts.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: Were your family long from that place, or was this a—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Uh, the family were from that part of Massachusetts. The family had mills in Lawrence, Lowell, and Haverhill. And my father at that time was living in Methuen. My grandmother lived there, his mother, and he had a tannery and belt factory and so on that supplied all of the textile mills in Lawrence. And so shortly after that we moved to Andover, which was a very pleasant place to live. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: Had Methuen been more of a small and partly industrial town?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, a small factory town. And it was a great, big township. It came before Lawrence, I believe, and so several other towns were carved out of it. But my grandmother's house was a big Victorian pile. It was right on the main square. It looked as though it ought to belong to the mayor of the town. And it was ornate Victorian, and it was a perfect place for a murder mystery or something like that, an almost Charles Addams-like atmosphere, which I remember with great interest, and as a kid the attic was colossal, very high, had a mansard roof. And I remember being frightened to death by a near-life-sized statue of Henry Clay that loomed out of the shadows there. [They laugh.] Why he was there, I don't know.

ROBERT BROWN: Was your grandmother from New England, as well?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes, she was Alberta Hemingway [ph], and she came from Framingham. And the Hemingways and the Bowditches and the Edgells [ph] were three of the early settlers in Framingham at the time that it was also a vast tract. And the family had a grant, which was—what was it called? Nobscot, after—

ROBERT BROWN: Nobscot?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Indian name. And my great-grandfather built most of those—designed and built most of those older buildings on the green in old Framingham Center. And we kept the family farm for years, where my grandmother and her four sisters grew up. I had four great aunts. I was outnumbered a hundred to one. And we used to all have family reunions at the farm in Framingham, which was kind of fun, because it was a working farm, and there were animals around, and all of that. It was very pleasant.

ROBERT BROWN: You were outnumbered. Were you an only child, or—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, I have a brother who was three years younger than I, and we obviously came from different planets. Our personalities are totally different. We're very, very different. He lives in San Antonio, and he's a retired colonel in the Air Force.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, the move to Andover—was Andover considered a very pleasant and—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: It was—

ROBERT BROWN: —a very desirable sort of—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: It was, and compared to the somewhat grimy mill town, which Methuen was, it was opener, prettier, all of that. And it had a few mills, but they were way down the foot of the hill. And, of course, the Academy was there, Andover Academy. And my father bought land adjoining the Academy, which was wonderfully handy because it was right on the playing fields, and he didn't have to cut the grass. And so it was just as if we had acres and acres and acres of our own lawn out there, you know, which was—it was a beautiful setting. It's a nice house, designed by, uh, what was his name, Lowell, the architect?

ROBERT BROWN: Guy Lowell?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Guy Lowell, yeah, who my father knew, and who had a lot to do with the Museum of Fine Arts.

ROBERT BROWN: But did your father have interest in the arts, or was it particularly your mother, or—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: It was—my mother was a concert pianist, and my father was a pretty good painter. He was totally an amateur painter, but he'd done it all his life, and he was good enough so he was invited to show in the Guild of Boston Artists, and he was a kind of conservative, broken color Impressionist, which Bostonians were in those days. And he did nice, splashy watercolors, and I always suspected that they were really better than he knew at the time, because they stand up pretty well, and he loved to paint. And, of course, he painted a lot around Maine, and he knew a lot of Boston artists. He used to invite them up to stay in the house, the photograph of which you saw, and—

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, the house here in Maine.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, at Small Point. And they'd all go out and paint beach scenes, or paint woodland—wood interiors or things like this. And they were all a very congenial, pleasant bunch of people, and I enjoyed this all very much. And I used to tag along and watch 'em paint, and sometimes do some myself, not very well. But, uh, that was fun. And it was in Andover, where my mother, being interested in music—and we had room—used to put up all of the musicians that came to perform at the Academy. And so very early on I got to meet Rachmaninoff and Paderewski and some very, very interesting people, including a mad Russian I never could—I always thought he was really a total shyster, but actually I suppose he was not at all. Um, he would sing Russian folksongs in a great, heavy basso, and he was a big, heavysset fellow. And he used to love and come and stay, and he'd always stay an extra day or two. [Laughs.] I was highly suspicious of this, but he and his wife were a colorful pair, anyway, and he spoke very rough English. But the head of the music department at Andover was a very nice man, and a very accomplished musician, named Carl Fattiger [ph], and he'd been—he was German, German-trained, and very much interested in the classics. And I think he was good at transmitting an enthusiasm for music there in what otherwise I think was not a very musically-inclined group. But he was a good family friend. And so the winters tended to be musical, and the summers tended to be painterly.

ROBERT BROWN: Because you were out here—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —in Maine—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —by then.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And there was a piano in the house in Maine, but it suffered with the changes of temperature and humidity to an extent that, well, you could hardly get it tuned and keep it tuned. And so my mother felt rather deprived about not having it, because she used to play the piano every day for a couple of hours, anyway.

ROBERT BROWN: Had she a career after you were born? I mean, was she—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, and she had what they called in those days a double heart block, and her pulse rate was just a little more than half normal, and so she never had very much energy, and she put everything she had into the music. And she loved it dearly, and it meant a lot to her. And the man who was then the head of the Chicago Symphony was her instructor. And she played with small groups of professional musicians, but never anything much more, because she just couldn't take the grueling grind of it.

ROBERT BROWN: Had she studied in Chicago?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, she studied in Chicago, and she studied with several different people, but they

were all people that she was put on to by the—what was his name, Bloch [ph]? I think it was, in those days. That was a long time ago. Uh, who was a very well-trained musician, and did a lot to put the Bos—the Chicago Symphony on the map. And he placed her with several of the people that he knew and respected so that she was pretty good. She loved it, in any event.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you come to love music?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: As a small boy, I mean—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —was that—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Very much.

ROBERT BROWN: —a source of—a real source of pleasure?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh yes, very much. And we always went to the children's symphony in Boston.

ROBERT BROWN: That was—when was that? Was that a certain afternoon, or—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: That was—let's see, it was an evening thing, but an early evening thing, and we used to go and stay overnight in that hotel that's on the corner of the Common, went downhill terribly, and then improved itself again. In those days it was considered a very nice hotel. We'd stay overnight there. My father would park his car in the Eliot Street garage, and we'd go to this kids' symphony. We had regular seats. And Ernest Schelling was the man who conducted the children's symphony, and he was a perfectly charming guy, with a great sense of humor. And he played a number of instruments. And so he introduced in the most delightful way all the structure of music, you know, and the—but did it with demonstrations, and he could call on various members of the symphony, you know, to—and they all fell into the mood, and it was lots of fun. It was very, very pleasant. I can't remember what day of the week it was.

ROBERT BROWN: At this—did you then begin playing yourself, or—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, I didn't, I didn't. My mother played so extremely well, and, uh, it just discouraged me when I started to ham around. And so I just didn't. But I always loved music, though.

JANE MCLANATHAN: But you had a singing dog.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes. We had a—yes, we—

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] A singing dog—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: We had a singing dog.

ROBERT BROWN: —[inaudible] small boy—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, we had two dogs, an English Bull Terrier named Wag and an English Pointer named, um—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Major.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Major, that's right. And Major would get under my mother's Steinway grand when she was playing and would start to sing, the most mournful sounds you ever heard in your life, and it amused her tremendously. It interfered with her practice, but she—it amused her tremendously. And so sometimes when these distinguished musicians would come in, you know, she'd let the dog in to sing for them, [laughs] which was great. He was a nice dog. Wag was darling, and there's a picture of him up in the other room.

ROBERT BROWN: Is—

JANE MCLANATHAN: What about the Hare?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes, I had a Belgian—pet Belgian Hare.

ROBERT BROWN: Belgian Hare.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, it was a beautiful, big—

ROBERT BROWN: Great, big thing.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —airbrush, you know, about this color.

ROBERT BROWN: Sort of a beige, or—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, beige.

ROBERT BROWN: —honey color?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, and it's sort of like a Siamese cat blending into darker, and almost black in places. And he was big. And he was housebroken, and when he wanted to go out he'd thump in front of the door, and we let him out. And, you know, when he thumped with the hind feet, you know, that was a real thump. You could hear it. And one time my mother—there was somebody, a woman that came to visit her, who had a very small, yappy dog, and the minute she came in the door she let the dog off the leash, and the—my mother cautioned her, "Please, just for a minute, and let me get Richard's pet rabbit out of the living room." "Oh, no, there won't be any trouble." So the little dog went tearing off, and got the rabbit under the—caught up with the rabbit underneath the grand piano, and then in just a moment came howling out of there, you know, with a bloody ear and one thing and another. [They laugh.] And this woman, who was very proper and paying a proper call, you know, oh, she was incensed, just—to her, it was barbaric to have a rabbit in the house anyway. And so anyway, she gathered up poor little Fido and tucked it under her arm and went off in a high dudgeon, where my mother was just extremely pleased because she thought she was a very dull person anyway.

ROBERT BROWN: Did your family stand out for their liveliness, do you think? Were they a bit unconventional?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, I think they were terribly conventional for the most part. I think—I suppose it was unconventional for a person who was considered a successful businessman and owned mills and ran things and was trustee of things and all that also to paint. That probably was considered a little bohemian. And if my mother had been able to pursue the career she wanted, I think that would've been considered pretty bohemian, too. But as it was, I don't think we stood out too much that way. I think everybody was pretty conservative. Conservative, hell, I think my father thought—well, he just couldn't keep his language clean when you mentioned FDR. And, of course, we were brought up Republicans, and he was the—at Grace Church in Lawrence, he was the senior warden, ran all their business affairs and everything else. And that church produced more Episcopal bishops than any other church in America. And I was christened by Bishop Lawrence. So, of course, that meant it didn't matter what I did; I had a ticket straight to heaven. And my brother was christened by Bishop Moulton. And one of my father's closest friends was Bishop Herron [ph]. And all of this is pretty much on the conservative side. But the family collected, especially my great aunts—they either ate their husbands or didn't marry, and they were a formidable group. And they collected clergymen. And it was considered sort of a dull weekend if they didn't have a bishop coadjutor or, you know, somebody like this visiting them. And so sometimes there were some delightful surprises. One time they were—they entertained a bishop from India, who had been recommended to them by a family friend, who was a High Church Episcopal, which they were. And so who should turn up but this jet black guy, you know, in jodhpurs and a Nehru jacket and a black cap, and just—he was just about as black as his jacket and his cap, because he was a Dravidian Indian. And this caused considerable shock at first. But since the family had been passionate abolitionists, and the family farm had been a station on the Underground Railroad, their principles finally came to the fore and slightly repressed their prejudices, and after all this was a man of the cloth, and although he talked funny he was very polite. And so it was all right. And then another time I found out, to my absolute delight, that the Episcopalians were—had very, very close connections with the Greek Orthodox church, and intercommunicated. And so I'll never forget the time when a Greek Orthodox bishop came to visit us, and he was about six feet four or five, and he weighed about 225, and he was built like a blocking back. And he—great, big, robust guy, with the long, black robe, and the upside-down hat and all the rest of it, and a big black beard, and a booming voice, and a wonderful sense of humor. And he loved my father's wine cellar. And, of course, with his bulk, he was used to drinking a bottle a meal himself, whereas, of course, we would have a glass or two, and my brother and I would have it half and half with water, so that we wouldn't get to be drunks. Didn't help, did it? But anyway, he loved the stuff. And anyway, I thought, God, he was wonderful. That just—that made me feel that there's nothing like the Greek Orthodox Church, because he told us with great joy about his six children and his wonderful wife, and all of this stuff. And I was used to these somewhat pallid Episcopalians, you know.

ROBERT BROWN: And here was this robust—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And he was a—oh, he was great. And he had a wonderful voice, because he conducted a service at Grace Church. And, of course, he sang a Russian Orthodox mass a capella, with his wonderful, wonderful voice. There'd never been anything like it, you know, heard in that church, although it had a marvelous choir, a really distinguished choir. And so, of course, the choir came alive with this, because, you know, it was—they'd never had such an opportunity. And that was a high point.

ROBERT BROWN: Were you a largely passing witness to this, or were you a very lively boy? I mean, were you participating when these people would visit and all, you—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yeah, I enjoyed it very much.

ROBERT BROWN: —joined the conversation, all that stuff?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I enjoyed it very much. I was pretty polite, and pretty repressed, having a mad aunt and then four great aunts, and a grandmother, and, you know, all this sort of thing. I was supposed to keep quiet and, you know, be polite.

ROBERT BROWN: The women had most of the rearing of you, is that right?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, I think so. I think my father, while he was very kind, a very nice man, but I think they all carried the clout in the family. And, uh, but I remember, though, sitting on Paderewski's lap and playing "Chopsticks" while he played variations around me, you know. And there were—so there were some wonderful moments like that.

ROBERT BROWN: And these were largely pretty warm, were they, these celebrities who stayed with you—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yeah. Well, Rachmaninoff would—he had that look of a, you know, most severe, almost Puritanical-looking person, but he turned out to be very pleasant and have a charming manner. And in his kind of broken English, he showed he had a nice personality and some humor. And in those deadly serious photographs of him, you'd never guess it. And you'd never guess that Paderewski could be so playful. I mean, he thought this was loads of fun, you know, having this little guy sit on his lap while he played variations of "Chopsticks."

ROBERT BROWN: Would this have been in the '20s, then, the early '20s?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Because he, too—he was an important—politically important figure at that very time, right?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Absolutely, and much, much respected. And a tremendously impressive person to meet, not only because of the shock of hair, grey hair, and so on, but a very great sense of presence and all of that. I'm trying to think. There was a cellist at the time that was quite well known named Jacques Barichel [ph], who often came, because—and sometimes he'd bring a group. I don't remember the number, but it was just a few, of strings. And sometimes he'd come himself and they'd plan a program in which he would solo with local musicians, of whom there were some pretty good ones on the faculty at Andover and otherwise, that Carl Fattiger would get together. But he loved the audiences of the kids, and the village people who came to all of those things. He liked the mixed audience. He felt very much at home with it, so he used to come often. And he'd play the cello while my mother accompanied him on the piano, and sometimes Major would sing along with them.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] It was a pretty warm upbringing, then, at the time.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh yeah, it was, and not only that, but the one thing my parents—any sign of anything imaginative they encouraged, which was very nice of them.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, were you, uh, educated then in the local school in Andover—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Uh, I went to—

ROBERT BROWN: —in the first years?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I went to a private school run by a very nice man who was a retired Andover professor. And the school was held in his 1700 farmhouse. And several of my friends and I went there, and we went pretty fast. Uh, he was a nice person, and he didn't waste any time. You know, he just wanted us to move ahead, move ahead. And before that, I went to, I suppose, what used to be called a dame school when I was a little kid, that was, uh—what was her name? She was the biggest, fattest woman you ever knew. She was short and tremendous, very nice-natured. And this was held on the second floor of a business block down in downtown Andover. And I don't know what kind of an education that was. I think when I got to work with Mr. Manning,

things tightened up a great deal.

ROBERT BROWN: Manning was the—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —retired Andover—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Then I went—uh, they had—

ROBERT BROWN: Was the curriculum pretty broad, or what—whatever—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yeah, we had a lot of Latin, a lot of mathematics, and, oh, a general, general business, French. And I had a lot of Latin. And he was a good teacher, and I enjoyed the Latin. And, uh, that seems curious, but it was—he was an excellent teacher, so he made it fun. He didn't start us in with a lot of dull stuff.

ROBERT BROWN: Were the classes fairly—pretty small?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh yes, they were small. I think there were perhaps a dozen kids in all. But he was a thoroughly nice man.

ROBERT BROWN: Girls as well as boys?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, entirely males. And so then Andover Academy had the idea that—it was a four-year school—that they'd start in and add another year at the beginning, because their theory was—Dr. Alfred Stearns was the head of it then, the school, headmaster, and he was a family friend—

ROBERT BROWN: Alfred?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Alfred Stearns. And it was the theory that these kids came from different kinds of preparations, and if they could add a fifth year to get them acquainted and bring them up to snuff that the next four years would be spent much more effectively. But they didn't do much planning for it. They just threw these young kids in this great, big, college-like atmosphere with no directions. And so it was pretty rough. And I was a part of that experiment. And I was terrified by it, especially by a Latin teacher named George Hinman [ph] who had a wooden leg, and he used to hold up his socks with thumbtacks on that leg. And he—when he—he also had a very, very short fuse, and he had a habit of chewing on pencils and spitting out—like this, right in the middle of a pencil, and then spitting out the splinters. And, oh, he had me absolutely terrified, absolutely terrified.

ROBERT BROWN: Even though you'd grown up in the town and were—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —in some measure—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —familiar with the school.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And he had no—and I knew a lot of the faculty members, but he was nobody that I ever wanted to know, believe me. [Laughs.] So as a result I had a very rough time at it. I did fairly well. I was asked to go ahead, you know. I was—

ROBERT BROWN: Were you in—were some of these classes held with older boys?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, we were all about the same age, and we were too young for a school as big and impersonal as Andover was. And so anyway, my mother thought this was kind of silly, because I was pretty unhappy, so she was one of the faculty members, said that she ought to go down, take me down to see Mr. Boyden at Deerfield. And so we drove down to Deerfield, and I met Frank Boyden. Absolutely delightful man. Couldn't have been nicer. And he didn't interview me. We just talked, and he asked me about what I was interested in, and seemed interested in what I was interested in. And I'd done an awful lot of reading all my life. I can't remember learning to read; I just could read from the beginning. And so anyway, he said, "You know, we'll accept you in Deerfield any day, but I have a great friend who started a fascinating experiment. His name is George St. John down at Choate." He said, "He's experimenting with classes at different—for different rates of learning." And he said, "So, if you're fast in English, you rush ahead, and you don't waste any time. They'll put you in a fast class, and develop a curriculum for you. But if you're slow, say, in mathematics, there's a special curriculum there, and they'll put you in a slower class." And he said, "There's no stigma attached to this at all,

because," he said, "it's just—it seems—it's so sensible and practical." And he said, he introduced it in such a way, he said, "I think it'll be ideal for you, because you're obviously way ahead in so many of the areas of the humanities." And so we drove down to Choate in Wallingford. And George St. John talked to me, and in the meantime Boyden had called him up on the telephone and said we were coming, and what it was all about. And George St. John couldn't have been nicer. And he was just so pleased, and he said, "I'm so glad you want to come here. We'd love to have you come, so consider yourself enrolled." Well, we drove down there in a chauffeur-driven car. Between that time, and when school was to start, the Depression hit. My father went bankrupt. We lost the bigger house in Andover, and I welcomed the sheriff on the front doorstep because my mother was too distraught and my father disappeared. My mother thought he might've committed suicide. So anyway, and the poor sheriff was also just unhappy about the whole business. But I was the one. There it was. So I sat down, wrote a letter to George St. John, and told him I was so sorry, that things had changed very much; I would not be able to come to Choate as I had hoped, and he had so kindly invited me. I wrote the letter myself. My mother didn't see it, as I remember. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: You were about 13 or 14 at this point, I suppose, yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, yeah. And at—within a couple of days I got a letter back from George St. John, starting out, "Dear Dick: Enclosed are your railroad tickets, some money for your expenses in coming. We expect you to be here on such and such a date. You've been awarded a scholarship." So I got my—I got Choate free.

ROBERT BROWN: He was a remarkable man, wasn't he?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Wonderful man. He became one of our closest friends, he and his wife, Clara, who was the sister of President Seymour of Yale. And, you know, he owned Morse's Mountain over here. The first time he came to visit, he came to visit us, and he thought it was so beautiful and so on, so it took him years but he finally bought up all the property and built a house over there, and then he left the whole thing to Bates College as a nature preserve. But in any event, they—he and Clara became very close friends, and we saw a great deal of one another afterwards, and I dedicated a book on American art to them, because I thought of all the things that I could do that they would appreciate most, that would be it.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: So I went through four years of Choate, and on the basis of that they took my brother on scholarship, too.

ROBERT BROWN: He was three years younger.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He was three years behind me, yeah.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Three.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Three years, yeah. But it was a wonderfully fortunate experience from every point of view. I mean, it couldn't have been a more interesting—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Wonderful teachers.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, marvelous!

ROBERT BROWN: Maybe can you describe some of them, mention a few names?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes. There was a fellow named the Baron, whose name was Wheeler.

ROBERT BROWN: The Baron, huh.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And he had a rather dignified and formal manner, and a wonderful sense of humor, and he taught Latin. And he taught it extremely well. It made me wonder about people like George Hinman who made it just an inquisition when there are people like Wheeler who could make it just a pleasure and a joy. And when he had us translate, you know, from the Latin in class, he—if you hadn't done your work, and he'd—was obvious that you were just—wanted to disappear on the spot, and you were just doing terribly, he would create diversions. One time, he dropped a book into his wastebasket, and it made an awful noise, you know. He said, "Oh, dear, I've dropped my watch." And then another time he pretended to throw up in the wastebasket at one boy's performance. And so everybody loved it because it was done with such good humor, you know. And he would crack jokes in Latin and explain them on the board, you know, and this kind of stuff. And we read letters in Latin. And by this time, you see, my mother's father, who was a Scotsman named Kennedy, was, like all Scotsmen, brought up with one hell of an education, and he knew Latin and Greek. And he used to write me letters in Latin, and I'd write him letters in Latin, and he'd correct my Latin with his Latin letters. And, of course,

the teacher was so delighted with this, he accepted this as classwork. And he'd ask me to read the letters. And, of course, my grandfather would make cracks in Latin, you know, and some of which I didn't get because I didn't know that much about it, but that was fun.

ROBERT BROWN: But your grandfather did.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He did, he did.

ROBERT BROWN: Was he someone who lived in—also near you when you were young?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, no, he was in Chicago. He was president of the Chicago Street Railway Company. And his father had come as the younger son of a well-placed Scottish family, to seek his fortune in America, 'cause there was no money in the family. He was well over six feet, and he was elected the marshal of the outpost of Chicago. And he became its first police commissioner when it changed to sort of a city government. And I've got a gold-headed cane of his that was given to him at his retirement by one of the precincts. And he was a very picturesque person whom I never knew.

ROBERT BROWN: But your own grandfather was likewise—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: My grandfather—

ROBERT BROWN: —a pretty striking person.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He was a striking person, but he was much more dour, whereas his father must have been quite a broth [ph] of a boy. But no, my grandfather, he loved to keep up with his languages, you see, and this was fun. It was the closest we ever got. He was not a naturally affectionate man. He was rather austere. And so this connection through letters was, you know, really, probably the closest I ever got to him. And his wife, my mother's mother, was Clara Barton, another Scottish family, who owned great tracts of timberland, up in northern Michigan. And my grandfather went up as a young guy, and had summer jobs working in the lumber camps up there. And it was there he met the boss's daughter, who was a tiny, little person, very vivacious, very dark eyes. And they were married. Unfortunately, she had this heart condition, this congenital condition, which made the greater part of her life—made her an invalid, and it was passed on to my mother. But the descriptions of my grandfather working in this lumber camp was quite something. It must have been—I guess it was quite an experience for him, because he described how they'd—that he'd served food, you know, come—like, cook would cook up, you know, several dozen eggs at once, and he'd come in, one immense fellow—was a French Canadian, great, big man. He just grabbed the whole platter and put it down in front of him, and ate a dozen eggs right there. And I guess it was quite an experience for him. But the amusing thing is, James's father's first job was as a claim agent with the Chicago Street Railway Company, whose president was my grandfather.

ROBERT BROWN: Ah. So there was a connection long before you knew there really would be.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And that he went on to be—

JANE MCLANATHAN: He [inaudible] everywhere.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Then he went on to be the United States and Canadian manager of the Zurich Insurance Company, Jane's father did.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Died on his fourth wife. [Laughs.]

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes, he did.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] Is that right? Hmm, we'll explore that in a moment. [They laugh.] So there was not only a New England connection; you had a Chicago—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, and my mother was born in Oak Park, just a few miles from where Jane was born, in Riverside.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Isn't that funny?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

JANE MCLANATHAN: And we met in New York.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So there's all sorts of connections.

ROBERT BROWN: But, uh, Choate for you then was a—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, it was wonderful.

ROBERT BROWN: —wonderful time. Was it four years?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I was there four years.

ROBERT BROWN: Four years.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I was ready for college after two years, but obviously much too young.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And so they made up courses for me. I studied Chaucer with Dudley Fitts, and I studied Anglo-Saxon and Middle English with Douglas Shepherdson.

ROBERT BROWN: Now, were these notable—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: They were professors at Choate. They were awfully good. Dudley Fitts was a very decent poet. He afterwards went to Andover and had quite a reputation, and he wrote extremely well. And, let's see, other things—well, I remember I was at the—in the dining hall they rotated the seating so that everybody had a chance to sit at one or—at every table, each presided over by a faculty member and his wife. And everybody therefore, for a while, would sit at the head's table, where George and Clara St. John presided. And I remember her asking me about how my college boards were going. And I said, "Well, the only thing I'm really lacking is I've got to learn geometry, plane geometry." And I was wondering about how I could fit a course in, you know. And she said, "Oh, don't waste your time with a course." She said, "If you have an hour a couple of days a week sometime," she said, "We can go through it, and you'll learn it in no time." So by the end of two weeks with her, I passed off my college board in plane geometry. Then I enjoyed that. That was fun. It was interesting.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Isn't that interesting? [Laughs.]

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And I'm naturally three-dimensional, as a person, my mind is, whereas Jane's terrific in flat-pattern, and she was a fashion designer, and this, of course, was perfect for that. And she got her degree from the Chicago Art Institute, which is a wonderful background to have. I'm very three-dimensional. And so I went on and studied with Clara St. John, and I think it took a month for me to pass off solid geometry. But this was over in no time, you see, and it was fun. She was charming. She was a delightful person. And she just thought education ought to be fun, it ought to be an adventure, it ought to be an exploration, which it was. And so I went into Harvard with a working knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, Chaucer, and, you know, a lot of stuff that nobody would touch until they'd get practically toward graduate school.

JANE MCLANATHAN: And you haven't mentioned your museum experience in Andover.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, I haven't. My first job was being—

ROBERT BROWN: This was before you went to Harvard.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah. My first job when I'd ride down my bicycle, uh, was opening up the Addison Gallery and being in charge of it on weekends. One little teenage guy. And in the—

ROBERT BROWN: This is just after it's opened, right?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes, yes, and this was when Charlie Sawyer went on to be the head of the department at Ann Arbor, and who was also a family friend, as was his father and mother. And he gave me the job. And I'd go in, and I had the keys, and I'd open it up at a given time, and I'd take people through and show them things, and watch out that nobody pilfered anything or touched anything they shouldn't, and I had no trouble at all. And it was loads of fun. I enjoyed it thoroughly because it was quite a responsibility, and I recognized it, and I was very serious about it.

ROBERT BROWN: What would you recall there being there in the collection by that time? Was it quite large already?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, it was a good collection already, and it was very strong in American art, and some real good classic Americans were there. Uh, there were—and Charlie, of course, was very much interested in the whole field of American art, and he knew my father's work, and I think there's some of my father's paintings in the collection. Uh, there are some of my drawings in the collection, unless they've thrown them out, which they might well have by now; I don't know. But there was a very nice Allston, I can remember, and there were a couple of Stuart portraits, a Copley, and then a bunch of the American Impressionists. Uh, there was an Eakins.

Oh, there were some very, very good things. And so I just learned an awful lot by just being in association with them, and finding out about them so that if people asked me questions I could answer them.

ROBERT BROWN: Was, uh, Sawyer—did you get to know him pretty well at that point?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

ROBERT BROWN: What was he like—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He, he—

ROBERT BROWN: —as you—to you as a very—as a young—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, an awfully nice fellow.

ROBERT BROWN: He was a pretty—a fairly young—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —man himself then.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes, and he's a very gentle soul, and he married the daughter of an old family friend, whose last name I don't remember, who was Kitty, Kitty Sawyer, and she was adorable. Awfully nice, attractive woman. And they frequently came to the house for dinner, and so did his father and mother frequently come to the house for dinner, because his father was the treasurer of Andover for years. And they were very, very interesting, pleasant people. All of this was wonderfully fortunate. I mean, it was just luckier than anything, because, you know, when I got up here to Small Point as a small boy, I used to go with my father and his artist friends when they painted, and I tried watercolor myself, and I did some oils, and I did some drawings, and things like this. And so I used to love to comb the beach, the big beach down here, Seawall Beach, and, uh, 'cause it was a nesting place for plovers and turns, and very few people—it was considered a real private beach for miles. And the dunes behind it and everything else, it was another world. And so I used to go out exploring on the beach odd hours of the day, [inaudible]—one time I ran into a man who had brown sneakers with holes in the big toe and no socks, and sort of khaki pants that were too short, and a shirt with no undershirt, and he had a canvas satchel, and he needed a haircut like everything. And it was John Marin, and he let me watch him paint. I was just a kid, and interested. He—that didn't put him off at all. You know, he thought that was kind of—I guess it was fun. And so I watched him paint. I used to meet him on the beach, and he asked me what my father did, and I said, "Well, my father paints, too," but I said, "he doesn't paint the way you do." And he said, "Well, how does he paint?" And I described it. I mean, it was a—it's nice, splashy watercolor. But, of course, Marin's stuff was, you know, at that time wild. I thought it was pretty fascinating. And he—in his sneakers, he'd wade into the water and dip a cup of saltwater, and use it with Winsor & Newton paints. Uh, nobody knew that this was possible, but didn't stop him any. And then he'd paint away with these great, big, broad brushstrokes. And I don't remember—only once did I see him painting in oils. This was a time when he was doing mostly watercolors.

ROBERT BROWN: So you did see him from time to time—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT BROWN: —when you first met him.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I must have met him probably a dozen times.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And—

ROBERT BROWN: This, this was during your teenage—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, your family, how were their—what was their situation following the, the crash, the Depression?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Well, my—

ROBERT BROWN: You're still able to come to Maine.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, my father made a comeback, uh, and—very courageously. And it, it was—it didn't work, because in '29—thank you—he went bankrupt. And so immediately he gathered himself and started to take advantage of what he could to get himself back, and he got himself going again when the second part of the crash came. And so he managed gradually to recoup somewhat, but the family lost all the money it ever had, and after that it was kind of—you know, a very different kind of life. And I think he found this very depressing, because I don't think he was a terribly courageous man especially, but he certainly did his damndest to make a comeback, and then to get swatted the second time when it just seemed—this, I think, was pretty bruising.

ROBERT BROWN: Was the second time when the banks—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —closed for a bit? Yeah, yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But we kept the house in Small Point, and—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Because it wasn't expensive then.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No.

ROBERT BROWN: No, it wouldn't have been.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Not expensive at all. The taxes on it, with quite a bit of property, were \$60 a year.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And it wasn't expensive to live in.

JANE MCLANATHAN: No more.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: That's not true today.

ROBERT BROWN: Of course not. Yeah. Did you know you were going to—you knew, of course, you were going to go on further, on to college.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT BROWN: There was no doubt—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I planned to go to college.

ROBERT BROWN: But you didn't know—but what—

[END OF TRACK.]

ROBERT BROWN: Harvard was to be the place? You were pretty much—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Harvard was the place I wanted to go because Dudley Fitts recommended it very highly, and a great friend of his, who was also a poet, named Ted Spencer, Theodore Spencer, was willing to take me on as my advisor. And Dudley thought this was just too good an opportunity not—so I went on scholarship, and working, and one thing and another to make out. And it was a struggle, but I did all right, and I graduated in the class of '38.

ROBERT BROWN: For many boys at that time, I mean, their families were likewise caught up in the toils of the Depression, weren't they?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: At Choate and at Harvard.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes, they were, they were.

ROBERT BROWN: So it was not a—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: But there were very few scholarships then available. There was none of that policy that they have today that it doesn't matter whether you have money or not. It's—nowadays if you're bright enough you can go to Harvard, and that's it, and they'll pay everything if you don't have anything, but they demand a

great deal of you, just the same as they always did. And I found it, uh, sometimes kind of tough, because I felt pretty isolated, because I was on very short rations as far as money was concerned, and so I couldn't belong to any clubs, or do anything like this, or have any of the kind of social life that you'd normally expect to have. And—but I still got a great deal out of it, and a great deal of it was perfectly fascinating. And I was very well prepared for most of it, because I already could go into more advanced classes, which were smaller, where there was more individual attention, and, uh, where there were—there were—things were more run on the basis of discussion and conference, and then individual research, and this kind of thing, which, of course, was what I'd become used to at Choate. And so also I found, to my delight, you could sit in on any course that they gave with the permission of the professor. So I heard that a man named Shorty Blake—and don't ask me now what his first name was—he was a great, big, immense man, gave a course on commerce and commercial relations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Middle Ages, and he was married to a Georgian princess.

ROBERT BROWN: And this intrigued you, both these things?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And both of these things intrigued me, because he was a friend of Ted Spencer, my counselor, my advisor. And so I met him at Ted's house with his exotic and absolutely delightful wife. And so I thought, I don't care what this guy's teaching; this sounds fascinating. So anyway, I asked him if I could sit in from time to time on his lectures. "Oh, by all means, by all means." It was a graduate course. So I sat in, and I found it fascinating, because he paid very little attention to the description of the course, and he just taught whatever he thought was interesting. And he was up on extraordinary things, like navigational—the state of the science of navigation in the Middle Ages. And he brought in a Portolan chart, you know, on a calfskin, original, a real one. He'd found it someplace, in some back alley in Istanbul or somewhere. So, I mean, this was just fascinating. If you were interested in anything, you could ask him questions and he'd take off like a rabbit in that direction. And he had that wonderful background of tremendous general knowledge, great humanistic interest. And so his reading list involved assigning books in several languages. He just expected you, for God's sake, to be able to read 'em. What were you doing at—in a course like this if you couldn't? You just weren't prepared. And so that sort of thing I enjoyed very much, and I often didn't sleep too much 'cause I had so much fun going to these various courses that I could get permission to sit in on, and then I had to keep up on my regular courses that—to keep my marks up so I could keep what scholarship help I could get.

ROBERT BROWN: You found Harvard to be at least as flexible as Choate had been.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: It, it was for me. It certainly was for me. I think any big college—that's especially an Ivy League college or university—has the potentiality of great flexibility if you know how to use the system. And what I'd learned early on, they had a system of hour [ph] exams after you'd only been taking a course for a few weeks. Well, everybody was terrified of them, because they could ask you anything they pleased, and you just had to do pretty well or else, or else. And I soon found, by talking to a couple of older people that were at the graduate school, whom I'd met through either Spencer or Blake or somebody, that you could go into the dean's office and look at examples of all the hour exams in that course that had been given in the last 20 years. So I'd go in and I'd look them all through and I'd make notes. Inevitably, there were five or six questions, and in case after case after case, just three or four subjects came up in different forms in every damn exam. So I boned up on those. And so the result was I did very well in my hour exams. And I did the same things with the final exams, and the semester exams, and so on. I didn't waste any time trying to learn everything at the last minute the way so many people did, because I've seen these poor guys just fall asleep over their blue book in an exam they're so exhausted, you know. So this stood me in very good stead, helped me an awful lot.

ROBERT BROWN: And you learned as much as you were likely to learn from an exam.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah. And also, but I learned a lot from the actual subjects, the lectures, the research, but I didn't have to try to remember every—

JANE MCLANATHAN: The report—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —everything. I just—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I boned up on what was really important, and it worked. But there were some wonderful people. John Livingston Lowes was teaching then, the man who wrote that marvelous book on English Romantic poetry called *The Road to Xanadu*, and it's still a very, very great book. And he was teaching the Romantic poets. And he—they had to give him the biggest lecture hall they had, because he was such a superb lecturer, so lively, so enthusiastic, and so utterly fascinating. And he was a little, short man, and he kept teaching even after he started to have Alzheimer's. And I'll never forget one time when he gave the same lecture twice because he couldn't remember. And he got a standing ovation. He was a Senior Fellow in the Society of Fellows, so when I was elected a Junior Fellow he was a Senior Fellow. And we used to have lunch together every Thursday at noon, and have dinner together every Monday night. And Lowes didn't want to come to the dinners,

because he just felt he wasn't mentally up to it. He knew damn well he was—what his shape was. He was not one of the people who are happy because they don't know it. He knew it. So a couple of us used to go down to his apartment on the river, and—accompanying him up to the Society's rooms for lunch, and he'd have lunch with us, and then we'd deliver him back. And he loved it, because he knew that we understood, and he knew that we did it because we wanted him there. And Alfred North Whitehead was also almost at every one of those luncheons, as well as the Monday evenings. But there were many more people at the Monday evenings. Those were much more formal affairs. But he was another one of the really, really brilliant and wonderful people.

ROBERT BROWN: You were mainly with people in literature.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, I majored in English. I majored in English, and did a lot of—took a lot of history courses, too. And I didn't have to go on to do anything. I didn't do anything more with Latin or anything else, because I'd had, I guess, 10 years of Latin anyway. So I could be pretty diverse. And I studied English with—I studied American history with Sam Morrison.

ROBERT BROWN: Was he a good teacher?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Another man with an exceedingly short fuse. Oh, God, [laughs] not like George Hinman, but boy. But he was a good teacher, because he was very enthusiastic, and he did want you to do—

JANE MCLANATHAN: That's his trick.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: That's his trick. He doesn't think he's getting enough attention.

ROBERT BROWN: So you were saying Morrison, then, was pretty—not too approachable.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, no, very formal. Very formal.

ROBERT BROWN: Were most of the—many of the teachers in—at that time still rather formal?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes. For the most part, they were. And, of course, that fellow who taught the History 1—oh, what the heck was his name? I remember—great, great big guy with a shuffling gait, a bald pate that sort of went up to a peak, and he taught these immense courses in History 1. And I took History 1. I didn't have to, but I took it because I wanted to. I'll think of his name in a minute. I guess it's my own Alzheimer's is cutting in here. But he was a real campus character. And I remember a drawing in *The Harvard Lampoon*, that showed this sea of kids, you know, sitting there, some asleep and some, you know, and here he was up there, booming forth, because he didn't need a public address system. He could've addressed the county. And, uh, he was—and the caption was, "But, gentlemen, the number of his concubines." And incidentally, [they laugh] all these little guys were waking up. And then there was another cartoon—you know, he was a very friendly guy, but obviously kids were a bloody nuisance. I'm sure we all were. But another cartoon, you know, where he's greeting this callow freshman at the door of his office, saying, "Don't hesitate to come around any time you'd like. Uh, next year, for instance," you know. [They laugh.] What was his name? Anyway.

ROBERT BROWN: I bet he had a great sense of humor.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, a lovely sense of humor, and he—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Is he the one that used to sleep on the desk?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, no, that was Russell Ayres at Choate, and Russell Ayres taught me history at Choate, and he was marvelous. He was just a great teacher, a delightful, delightful fellow.

ROBERT BROWN: But he had the habit of sleeping on his desk.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Well, it—one time he came in, and he had a reunion with some college friends, and they'd done a lot of drinking, and he was hungover. And he said, "Gentlemen, you all know your assignment." And he said, "There's one additional proviso: don't even breathe too loudly." And then he laid down on the desk and went to sleep. But he was a terrific teacher, and a charming man. And the other man who taught history was Courtenay Hemenway, who couldn't have been more different than he.

ROBERT BROWN: At Choate.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: At Choate, yeah. And Ayres, Russell Ayres, was a great, tall, gangly guy who—I think he'd been a pitcher on the Yale baseball team, and he had the, you know, the tall physique, so on, and he was a natural athlete. And he, too, had a lovely sense of humor. And he had a charming wife, and six sons. And he also had a beautiful black and white Spaniel—I don't know what kind, but larger, you know. And I remember he and Courtenay Hemenway were talking on the street, and he was—his dog was with him, and so often, he—the dog

often came to class with him, you know. And the dog was sniffing at a female dog that happened to be there, and Courtenay said, "You know, it's amazing how revealing one's pets are of their owners' attitudes." [They laugh.] But anyway, he and Hemenway kept—

ROBERT BROWN: You heard him say that.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I heard him say that, you know. And they were always taking these cracks at one another. And they were great friends. And Hemenway was also a very different style, but a brilliant teacher, also with a lovely sense of humor. But I was awfully lucky all through.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, when you—you finished Harvard in '38.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And did you know that—what you wanted to do at that time, or were you—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, I wanted to come back to graduate school, and—but my brother still had a couple of years to go. And so I went and took a job at teaching at Allen-Stevenson School in New York. So—

ROBERT BROWN: In Manhattan?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: In Manhattan, so I could help pay his—some of his expenses to help get through. And then as soon as that was over, I was there three years, and I became the head of the lower school, and I enjoyed the teaching very much. It was fun. The kids were great, and the other faculty members were interesting people, and it was fun.

ROBERT BROWN: Were you teaching literature?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I was teaching literature and history, and a lot of other stuff. I mean, I'd fill in whenever somebody else was ill or something. And it was fun. I liked the kids, and I got along fine with them, and I didn't seem to have a discipline problem. The great thing, though, was that I'd run the assembly in the morning, starting at eight o'clock, and then I'd run the dining room at noon, and I was the only master there. And that was a trial, because I had a—one of these little bells, you know, that they used to have on desks of hotels. And if the kids got too loud I'd ding the bell, and they'd all have to quiet down. If they got too loud again, I'd ding it again; they'd have to be quiet for five minutes. If it went to the third time, they'd have to be absolutely silent until the bell rang at the end of that lunch period. There was no way on earth of enforcing this, no way on earth. It was just pure mind over matter. [Laughs.] I mean, it was—

JANE MCLANATHAN: It was your stomach muscles.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes, it was! And I tell you, I didn't eat a hell of a lot, but—I was too busy trying to look stern and in command. But it was a very interesting experience.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Well, you must speak about Dr. Simboli.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes. Dr. Simboli was a—

ROBERT BROWN: Now, who was that?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —lovely Italian who was on the faculty at Choate—at the—

ROBERT BROWN: Allen—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —Allen-Stevenson School.

ROBERT BROWN: How do you spell his name, Sim—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: S-I-M-B-O-L-I. Uh, just after the—his family came from the island of that name. And he was a great help to me, because he was—had many intellectual interests, and he saw what I was trying to do, and I was really teaching these kids far more than was needed for the class or for the college boards or for anything else, because I was fascinated with the subject. And he told Jane, he said, "You know, you've got to get him out of here. He's too good for this. He's got too much imagination." Because, for instance, I was using—it was at a time when—oh, the great big guy who did the *War of the Worlds* and the *Invasion of the Martians*.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, Orson Welles.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Orson Welles did the recordings, those Shakespearian recordings of *Henry IV*, both

parts. And I was teaching history and he teaching literature, so I got ahold of the recordings, and we played them day after day, and the kids sat around the floor and listened to them. And they loved them. And they so completely participated in it, you know, that I remember one time, one nefarious character—I forget which one it was—Bolingbroke, I think—was—had a speech that's obviously, you know, false and so on. And one of these little guys, he sat there, he said, "The dirty bastard!" So they entered—they entered right into it, you know. Well, you see, I was free to teach that way in that school. All I had to do was those kids had to be able to pass their final examination so they could take the college boards. But in the meantime, I made a pact with them: "The first two weeks we stick precisely to the book, and you work your tails off. The last two weeks we do the same, because you'll have forgotten everything by then that you learned in the first two weeks. But in between, if you'll do this, we can have some really interesting times." And so I assigned reading lists of all kinds, and individual projects, and they'd give reports. And these were little fourth formers. But they did wonderful work, and they did—all did very well. And after—even after years later, when I came to—was on the staff of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Frank Gilbert, who was a grandson of Brandeis, and whose father and mother were both Superior Court judges in the New York system, he was in several of my classes. And he went on to be editor of the *Law Review* at Harvard. And he used to invite me to lunch to meet some of his fellow budding lawyers, and I'd invite him to lunch at the museum, where we could eat in the staff dining room with the curators and the scholars and the so on. And he loved it. And he used to write these articles for the *Law Review*, and he'd bring them over for me to read. And he said, "Wouldn't you red pencil these for me, sir, the way you used to?" Which was really wonderful. And then he'd bring in friends. And I remember one time he came into my office. I was secretary of the corporation. I had one of the most dignified offices you ever saw, with a half-acre desk. This—

ROBERT BROWN: This was Fine Arts?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: At the Museum of Fine Arts. And I remember his coming in, and I had this formidable secretary, Annie Jackson, who was—oh, she was some—everybody was scared to death of her.

JANE MCLANATHAN: She was a doll.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And she was a dear. She was a real sweetie pie. Both Jane and I were very fond of her. And she guarded me. Oh, she didn't let anybody come near me if she didn't think it was the right thing to do.

ROBERT BROWN: Wait.

[Audio break.]

ROBERT BROWN: Now, I'd like—yeah—to get back to talking perhaps about your time in graduate school. And you began there after a few years work, teaching in New York.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I was two years in Allen-Stevenson.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. Well, during that time in—you were married, too.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT BROWN: Right? Can you talk a little bit about that?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, Jane and I were married in—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Traumatic.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —'42.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] Forty-two.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And she was a very successful fashion designer in knitwear in New York. And I can remember she wore the most gorgeous hats, which, because of my New England background, embarrassed me. But I knew they were gorgeous. She looked great. And, uh, so we were married, and we moved into her apartment, which was a one-room apartment, on Madison Avenue, at 68th Street, and—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Right across from Schrafft's.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: There was a Schrafft's right across the way.

ROBERT BROWN: Huh, which was at that time a standard—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, and—

ROBERT BROWN: —what, tearoom, sandwich—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Nice sandwiches that we used to take when we went out on picnics or something. But in any event, it was a small apartment with a bay window hanging out over Madison Avenue, but in the middle of the bay was a fireplace.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Working.

ROBERT BROWN: My!

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Working fireplace, with the windows—tall windows on each side. And it was an absolutely charming little apartment.

JANE MCLANATHAN: And we disconnected the refrigerator and kept your shoes in there.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Because the closet space was not great, and the cooking facilities were hardly there.

JANE MCLANATHAN: They didn't exist.

ROBERT BROWN: Did not—did Jane not really cook?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, no, no. She was a very hardworking girl, and her hours were long.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Besides, the apartment only cost \$45 a month. Can you imagine?

ROBERT BROWN: No. Well, how had you met? Can you describe?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, oh, we met because I'd known, apparently, that Liv [ph] had a house in Sandwich, on the Cape, and they wintered in an apartment at 400 East 49th Street, right on the river, the East River, before the UN was there, of course, and before East River Drive was there. So just from below their window, right down, there were just some rocks, and there was the river. It was a wonderful place. And since Jane was a single lady, she, of course, couldn't have an apartment of her own, so she lived at a girls' club. And, uh—

JANE MCLANATHAN: The Ladies' Christian Union—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes.

JANE MCLANATHAN: —on 36th Street, between First and Second Avenue.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Opposite Sniffen Place, which you may know, very picturesque little court. And so anyway, there she met one of the two girls of this family whom I had known, and when the family moved to Sandwich for the summers, she had a job in New York. And so, of course, she wouldn't want to stay alone, so she lived at the club. So they got together and they shared her family's apartment on the East River. And—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Because in those days no single person could live alone in an apartment.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No single lady, [inaudible]—

ROBERT BROWN: No single woman.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Woman.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Yes. Nobody properly brought up could—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Female.

JANE MCLANATHAN: —female—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

JANE MCLANATHAN: —could live alone. And when Richard came to call after this started, he could only stay in the apartment 10 minutes and he had to go out. Now, my mother was 1,500 miles away, but this stuck. And so we did our courting in Café Society downtown. You can't beat that.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] Now, a young man, on the other hand, could live on his own, right?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah. But anyway, so, I'd known this Evelyn Harvey for a long time, and she and Jane shared the apartment, and she and her family asked me to see them up in Sandwich, and they were up there,

and Jane was up there with them, and—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Over Rosh Hashanah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Over Rosh Hashanah, 'cause she got all the Jewish holidays, 'cause, of course, all of her business was Jewish, and run on a Jewish calendar. She barely got Christmas off.

JANE MCLANATHAN: That's not true.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: But all the others were—all the others were.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —absolutely—

ROBERT BROWN: So you went on that holiday in September, I guess, or so.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], just about now is our—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And so then, after we got back, I went over to see her. And that's what started the whole business right there.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm. So you were married in 1942, in New York or in—you were from Chicago, right?

JANE MCLANATHAN: Yeah. Well, we went—we went on a sit-down train to Chicago—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Sit-up train. [They laugh.]

JANE MCLANATHAN: —sit-up train to Chicago—

ROBERT BROWN: Yes.

JANE MCLANATHAN: —to meet my family—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: So I could meet her family.

JANE MCLANATHAN: —on, uh, Christmas, for Christmas. Then we came to Andover to meet his family for New Year's. And then he was going to be inducted into the Army on Monday. And so his father was nice enough, and had enough pull, to get our Wassermann test faked, and we got married—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And our marriage license expedited.

JANE MCLANATHAN: That's right.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And he got a judge friend of his to do the whole business for him, because they knew us well and had known us for years. And so we were married in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and then we had our one-day honeymoon in Publick House in Sturbridge. And then the next morning at six o'clock I was in an iced-over open truck with benches on each side leaving the town hall in Andover—

JANE MCLANATHAN: At 6:00 a.m.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —at 6:00 a.m. to be inducted into the U.S. Army in order to save democracy.

ROBERT BROWN: And what happened on that score?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And so I went in for my examination, you know, and they lined us all up bare-assed, and they put us through that whole process. And I got in to where they test your eyesight, and a fella said to me, he said, "Take your glasses off," so I did. And he said, "What can you read me on the chart?" And I said, "Where's the chart?" He said, "It's on the wall over there." And I said, "I'm sorry, I can't see it." And he said, "Well, son, I guess you've done your bit," and that was it. But after that, of course, they tried desperately to drag me in. After I tried to get in the front door, they tried to drag me in the back door. But in the meantime, I'd gone back to graduate school.

ROBERT BROWN: You went—this was shortly after you were married. You went back to graduate school.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, back to graduate school. And I started teaching the V7 courses for the Navy.

ROBERT BROWN: Now, what were those courses, V7?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Those courses were to try and educate all of these ensigns who'd been given their little, young, beginning commissions as officers in the U.S. Navy, to try and give them a kind of a background in what was going on in the world, what they were in the Navy for, what was going on in terms of why we were at war, why the thing was going on, what they were going to expect, in addition to enough to try to make them literate, because they came from the most diverse backgrounds imaginable. Many of them came from community colleges that were just two years and things like this. And so there was a tremendous diversity. Very few of them—most of them were guys from the Midwest and way inland, and very few of them had a regular four-year college education. And this was an attempt to try and even them out in a general degree of general information and education so that they could know what they were doing and assume the responsibilities and communicate and one thing and another.

ROBERT BROWN: And where did you teach this—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: At Harvard.

ROBERT BROWN: At Harvard.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And I was one of dozens who were teaching there. And I had these immense courses, with sections, and I'd give lectures, and then I had other people who ran the sections, and so once a week there—the section of perhaps 30, 40 people would meet with that section man, but there were hundreds who attended the lectures. And I'd get other people often to come in who were specialists in some kind of area that was important to lecture about the political situation, and about the government. And they didn't even know about the government of their own country, mostly. They just didn't understand any of this stuff. They'd never been taught it, never been brought up to. So it was a marvelous opportunity.

ROBERT BROWN: And you were doing this while you were also starting graduate school.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes, while I was also working in a graduate school.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And so it was a fascinating job, and most of them were just terrific. They saw this as a hell of an opportunity, and they worked. And we would ask a lot of work of them, and they did [inaudible]. And then I got approached, because this was a big course with lots and lots of people involved. It was very easy to organize, really, even though there were many, many, many people, because there was all kinds of bureaucracy to help out, keep records, and that sort of stuff, because I couldn't do that. It took a group that knew how to do it, and they knew how, and they could do it, and it was no problem for them. And so I was approached by an officer, and he said, "You know how to run a course." He said, "We need somebody to teach the army of occupation of Japan." At that time we were being sorely beaten by the Japanese.

ROBERT BROWN: Didn't seem like we would be occupying it [laughs] for some time.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And we were—

JANE MCLANATHAN: A while.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —absolutely on the run. It was just appalling. The news was dreadful. And I said, "I don't know anything about Japan. I've never studied anything about the Far East, except for one course on Chinese art with Langdon Warner." And I said, "That was utterly fascinating, but it didn't tell me a thing that would be useful." And he said, "Look, we can give you experts who can tell you what the information should be," but he said, "none of them are capable of running a course like this." And so I said, "Sure, I'd be willing to try it." So I had all these people who'd give me the information. They were mostly people whose families had been missionaries, and lived there, and who knew the folkways, and the habits, and the attitudes, and the states of mind, and the social structure, and all of that stuff, which is pretty important to know about in the enemy. And so I learned an awful lot. But they—I had them there to back me up, and I organized—it was not a great, big course like the other one. There were only a few people in it, and some of them very high-ranking officers. And so for the 55 minutes that we had these discussions, I did the interpretation that was given me by these various experts about—which I organized, organized the whole, you know—the plan and the thing, along with the—with them, with the officers who were backing it. And they—I had for 55 minutes—I had an honorary rank of one notch higher than my highest pupil. So for a while I was up there practically with General Marshall a couple of times.

JANE MCLANATHAN: For 50 minutes.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: For 55 minutes, 55 minutes, like a psychiatric hour.

ROBERT BROWN: So you were able to cram and bone up on things, and—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, I crammed and boned up, and I had so many of these people right there with me to help me interpret. But I ran it and led it, because they were all a bunch of shy people who didn't really know how to express themselves very well and just had no background for this kind of thing. And so we got—there was an awful lot of good information, I think, that was traded out there where it would do some good. This didn't last for too long—I don't remember how long it lasted—but we certainly got a great deal of information in about Japanese history, Japanese society, Japanese government, Japanese attitudes, Japanese religion, and all of these things which are pretty important, because you're up against a bunch of madmen when you—when these guys are willing to fly their planes right into the middle of your battleship. And so I think it probably was fairly useful, but it certainly didn't become useful for a while, because we never stopped retreating and started to win a few things in the Pacific before they could use any of this. But I think after that probably it did some work, did some help. But it was an interesting, interesting thing. But in the meantime, I was getting suggestions that I'd better get into the Armed Services, you know, that I was healthy, and my eyesight might be lousy, but why didn't I go and teach illiterate Marines in Quantico how to read orders. And, I mean, this just didn't wash, because I was frozen into these jobs in Cambridge, because the people that were charged with military—they were charged—they were both Army and Navy—and I don't remember if the Marine Corps was involved—figured that this was priority stuff. But it was fascinating for me, so I fought a vicious war in Harvard Yard.

ROBERT BROWN: And how long was this? Was this in—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And I got no Purple Heart or anything.

ROBERT BROWN: Was this in the spring of '43, or even longer than that?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: It was longer than that, but it was in that area. It was right in that area.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And these things, they were fairly brief, you know, because these were cram sessions for the most part. They were very intense, the whole idea being to just get as much as possible in as short a time as possible, to liberate all of these people to do their job. Well, that was fine by me. I found it fascinating.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, how did you balance this with your formal graduate school requirements? And first I should ask, why did you—when did you decide to go to graduate school in fine arts?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I majored in English—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —and sort of minored in history, and I decided that I was very much interested in the history of art, and especially the history of ideas. I was deeply interested in education. And so at that time I gradually reached the kind of pattern of my—that my life has taken, a combination of the arts and education. And that's been pretty consistent, I mean, because it's been my writing and my teaching and my lecturing and my television work and my radio work, and being a visiting professor, and all that kind of thing. It's those two things that together really gave the pattern to my life. And this, I think, was one of the things that came out beautifully, was brought out by good old Carroll Williams in that tape that you've seen on the Society of Fellows.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, on the Society of Fellows. But who—would this have—would you have gotten all this training in the Fine Arts Department, including education and that? Or would—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No—

ROBERT BROWN: —did you also—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —I'd already been teaching, and I had a responsible—

ROBERT BROWN: Right.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —job teaching. And then I was teaching at Harvard, and, of course, Harvard was doing everything they could for the war effort. And so my other course requirements and so on were diminished to allow me time to work at this. But I did carry on other things, like doing research and so on. And then I fell into the Society of Fellows, which was the most fortunate thing, when I was inducted to that, that ever happened, because at that time that meant that I was free to do anything I damn well pleased. Anything.

ROBERT BROWN: You mean it freed you up from your conventional graduate student—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Absolutely.

ROBERT BROWN: —requirement.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: The whole purpose of the Society of Fellows, which was created by Lawrence Lowell, was to free up young graduate students who are already mature enough to follow their own line of investigation, to free them from the requirements of the various departments, which are often very time-consuming, very rigorous, and, for lots of people who could stride ahead, very holding back, you know, and interfering with natural progress.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. You—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And so—

ROBERT BROWN: You said that you were recommended to the Society by Chandler Post, is that—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Chandler Post and Leonard Updike [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: And were these men you met as a graduate student, or had you known them earlier, as well?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I studied with them both. I brought a course. It was the biggest fine arts course there was in terms of numbers, the big introductory course. I'd run that course for Leonard Updike. It was such a big course that we had seven section men. I did all the organization for that, which is what set me up for doing the stuff for the Navy. See, I mean, we were all set. I mean, the machinery was all there. It was all set. And I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was a fascinating business. And, uh, Leonard and Chandler both recommended me for the society. And so Chandler posted a very clever thing. He said, "I want to recommend you for this because," he said, "you certainly deserve it, but I really sort of doubt whether you want it or not."

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: What he was doing was setting me up not to be uptight when I met these really famous, world-famous scholars, who were going to give me not only examination in any usual sense, but to discuss with them what my interests were. And by loosening it up for me, so this wasn't a, you know, a great—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Do or die.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —do or die thing. It was psychological. He knew me well, and he was absolutely right. So when I went in and I met the senior fellows, and there were—I think there were half a dozen of them there—I think there were eight in all—I'm not sure—but there were half a dozen there—all we did was have a perfectly delightful conversation. And they asked me about my interests, and what I really was pursuing, and what I'd like to pursue. And they didn't ask me the kind of questions as "What is the date of this?" or anything like that. There was none of that. They already knew that I was beyond that. And so I had this perfectly delightful conversation with them, and I got picked.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Yeah, but tell him what the questions were.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, they asked me the—one of them said—one of them—I guess it was Arthur Nock. He said—

ROBERT BROWN: Now, Arthur Nock you've mentioned before.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Arthur Darby Nock, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: He was a—what—a professor at Harvard?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: A professor of History of Religions at Harvard, and a very delightful, eccentric, and charming guy, and a considerable and formidable scholar. And anyway, I think he asked me—he said, "I understand you've been interested, according to what Chandler Post tells me, a great deal in studying the Italian Renaissance." And I had been. I'd been doing a lot of that. And he said, "Well, now tell me," he said, "if you could go back in H.G. Wells' time machine to any place that you wanted to pursue your interest in the Italian Renaissance," he said, "Where would you go and what would the date be likely to be?" And I said, "I think the most exciting thing it could be would be to return to a meeting of Lorenzo de' Medici, uh, Academy and be able to listen in on the discussions that he,"—and I named off all of these people—Marsilio Ficino and all of the other great scholars and so on—who were part of that Florentine Academy. And I said, "I can't think of anything that would give me more of an insight into the thinking and the ideas and the ideals and the purposes and the philosophies of this extraordinary group of men than to be able to listen in on that." And he asked me a few other things like this, and they were not questions like, you know, you've got to say yes or no, or you've got to

know this, or you've got to know that.

ROBERT BROWN: Right.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: They were perfectly free, you know. And, and it turned into a very friendly discussion. And so there was apparently no question. They didn't even consult one another. I was elected.

ROBERT BROWN: And you found the Society to be a very rewarding experience?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Absolutely wonderful.

ROBERT BROWN: The chance to meet with these brilliant senior figures, and—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, we had—every Monday night we had dinner in Lowell House, in our own digs. And the thing that Lawrence Lowell did, when he founded the Society with his own money, independent of Harvard, was to lay down a wine cellar. He said, "I think that the best possible environment for genuine communication between different people of different generations and different interests is with good food and good wine, in a comfortable and inviting kind of an environment." So the first thing he did was to lay down a wine cellar. The next thing he did was to take the whole food service out of the hands of the—[laughs] of the Harvard food service business so that it could be really good food. And then we mostly planned our own menus. And for a while there I was buying wine for them, because Henderson, who was a great friend of Lowell, and who

ROBERT BROWN: Alger [ph] Henderson, yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —who knew his wines—he was a Francophile, and he had—and he knew his wines extremely well. And so he liked to encourage this kind of thing. And so I would go and see, and I remember buying a couple of cases of a delicious Anjou that was almost gone, but even in its beginning wreckage it was delicious. So I got the cases back, and he and Arthur Nock, we opened a bottle, and he tasted it, and he said, "Richard, you've done beautifully, but we've got to drink it fast."

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] And that was one of the pleasures of the Society was to do so, huh?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And then Lawrence Lowell felt that the best salad dressing he's ever had was made by a man, whom we came to know, 'cause he always stayed at the, uh—well, the place Aaron Stanley stayed in Paris.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Ritz.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: The one on the big—beautiful, big square.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Ritz.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: The Ritz.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And the chief chef there was someone whom he'd cultivated and got to know, Lawrence Lowell had, 'cause he often went abroad. And he got him to give him—give him the recipe for his French dressing. And so he bought the best imported olive oil and the best wine vinegar and the best everything, and the directions were explicit, and I had to make it in a bowl that was nested in a bigger bowl with ice in between, and it was so much of this and so much of that, and in a certain order. And I used to do—it was fun to do, and it was damn good dressing. Since then I've made dressing in any number of different ways, hardly ever as elaborate as that, but it was kind of fun to follow the tradition, because everybody respected it, and they were sure to get the best of greens so that it was a delicious salad, all—

ROBERT BROWN: So this—the Society, then, was a combination of fine social setting and the social graces and wonderful conversation.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, and wonderful communication.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. And were the youngest members, such as yourself, were they typically graduate students at the time they—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —came in?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: They had to be graduate students, and, uh, they—if they were married, they were paid more than if they were not. But you were paid a stipend, and you didn't have to do a damn thing for it or show a thing for it. If they took you in, they trusted you completely.

ROBERT BROWN: You were paid a stipend, and was this sufficient to help you in your graduate studies?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: It was—

[END OF TRACK.]

ROBERT BROWN: —Society—the stipend from the Society was intended to cover the basic costs for your graduate education.

JANE MCLANATHAN: It was \$176 a month—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah. What it was—

JANE MCLANATHAN: —as I remember it.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —supposed to do was to support us, and one of the requirements was I was to take no course for credit. The whole thing was to free me up to use my own time and my own effort and my own research, taking advantage of anything that Harvard had to offer.

ROBERT BROWN: So you didn't have to strictly fulfill any course requirements.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Nothing.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, not a thing.

ROBERT BROWN: Because you were enrolled with the Fine Arts Department, weren't you?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, but I was beyond that by—

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, you were beyond that by this time.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And I was also listed as a member of the faculty, so if I wanted to I could offer courses or seminars, and they'd be listed. And a number of us did that. And it was at that time that Carroll Williams started to open up a second laboratory to investigate genetics while he was still a Junior Fellow. And it was still as a Junior Fellow that Woodward made that incredible breakthrough in physics, for which he won a Nobel Prize. And he was still a Junior Fellow. So he went from being a Junior Fellow to be a tenured full professor on the Harvard faculty. And so, I mean, it was an incredibly wonderful opportunity. And the older men who were there were the most interesting and delightful people imaginable. And the person who was especially influential on me was Alfred North Whitehead. He was a great friend of Lawrence Lowell, and he retired already twice in England.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Tell how he came to Harvard.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And Lowell knew him, and was devoted to him. And his wife came from the Isle of Jersey, and her first language was French, and she was charming, and she chain-smoked cigarettes with a little wire pincher holder. And she was totally bilingual, and a delightful person. And so when—after Whitehead had had to retire because of his age from I guess it was Oxford—it was either that or Cambridge—he went to the University of London who allowed people, you know, to be five years older before they retired. When he reached the end of that, Lawrence Lowell frequently went abroad, went to Europe, and so on, got together with him and said that, "Now, come to Harvard. We don't have any such foolish requirements. You can do anything you please, whatever you'd like, but we want you to come." And so Whitehead—and his wife told us this—he said, "I always—I must discuss it with my wife." And so he discussed it with his wife, and then, as she said, he came in and he said, "I don't want to do this without your approval." And he said, "But Lawrence has offered me a university professorship for life at Harvard." And he said, "It'll mean moving to Cambridge, and it'll mean quite a change in our life, and so it's up to you as to whether you decide whether we're gonna do it or not, but I must warn you: it's a choice between God and Mammon. So they came.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Isn't that nice?

ROBERT BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. So he'd been there a few years by the time you—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: —knew him.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And he'd been there, and he was absolutely a most wonderful part of the university and the university life. And he, of course, encouraged me in all of my sort of nonacademic—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Wayward pursuits.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —ambitions. I mean, he was a brilliant, brilliant scholar, but he knew the limitations of academicism. He knew I was much more interested in the arts and the humanities from a human point of view, and in terms of the arts and education. So he just encouraged me in all of these, really, as Jane says, rather wayward ideas. And so although I was all set for tenure at Harvard, because I had an absolutely impeccable graduate record of an average of A+ in the graduate school, and I was all set to go on, but instead I decided to go across the river to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, which dealt with the great American public, and where there were the most distinguished group of curators you could find at that time of any museum in the Western world. Absolutely wonderful, wonderful people. And so I did that, and I took some courses with Harold Edgell, who was—had been the head of the School of Architecture at Harvard, and who was an overseer of Harvard, all the rest of it. And he was the director of the Museum of Fine Arts, and he welcomed me with open arms. I'd already taken a research course with him, which he was delighted with, thought it was beautifully done. And so I started in.

ROBERT BROWN: At the MFA.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: But before you went there, you had done coursework at the graduate level at Harvard. Maybe we could talk a little bit about some of your teachers there. Edgell was one, is that right?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Edgell was one.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. And how was he as a teacher?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, he was terrific.

ROBERT BROWN: Terrific lecturer, wasn't he?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, absolutely one of the most brilliant lecturers I've ever heard in my life, an utterly charming man, and he was a natural-born communicator. And he had no side [ph] at all; he was just an open personality, and a very, very nice person. And I also worked a lot with Chandler Post. I—

ROBERT BROWN: And what was he like?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Chandler? Oh—

JANE MCLANATHAN: A sweetie.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, he was a kind of little—he was an old pussycat. So he was a single man who was sort of married to his mother, and he was a—

JANE MCLANATHAN: But tell—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —formidable scholar.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Tell about his connection with my mother.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, absolutely. This was amazing.

JANE MCLANATHAN: You won't believe this.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Chandler Post came from the Midwest, as had Jane's mother. And when Jane came and visited us, and I mentioned Chandler Post, and she recognized the name.

JANE MCLANATHAN: She said, "Chan Post."

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah. She said—

JANE MCLANATHAN: "Chan Post."

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —"I know him." She said, "I remember."

ROBERT BROWN: And you had no idea there was this—yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And she said, "I remember at Star Island he fell in the water in his sailor suit." [They laugh.]

JANE MCLANATHAN: So they got—the meeting of the two of them was just as amusing as could be, and they talked about it. It was outside of Detroit, because Mother lived in Ann Arbor, in Saline, Michigan, and he lived in Detroit. And his family had the Rose Soap Company. Am I right? I think so. Anyway, that was—

ROBERT BROWN: So there was a—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: So he became the great swell in, of course, the art of Spain, Spanish art.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And this—and he wrote that absolutely amazing two-volume work on the history of sculpture years and years and years ago. It's still a classic. And then he wrote this shelf of books this long on Spanish art. And he just spent his life studying Spanish art.

JANE MCLANATHAN: But he was so Puritanical that we had great meetings back and forth, and he'd come to our house, and we'd go to his, and so on. But he was a great friend of the Cowley Fathers, and he—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Used to call them the Cauliflowers.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative], they're the high Episcopalian monks, right.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

JANE MCLANATHAN: That's right. He would not sit on his sofa with me. Wasn't proper.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He wouldn't let you sit with a—

JANE MCLANATHAN: No.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —Cowley Father, no.

JANE MCLANATHAN: No, that's right. No. Isn't that wonderful?

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] But he was a beloved presence for you during those years.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh yes, a very benevolent person.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He was very interested in everything that I did, and I did good work for him, and he loved it. I got A pluses all the way from him. And he was just a great influence in his encouragement, and his whole approach to scholarship, of course.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Impeccable.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Absolutely, absolutely.

ROBERT BROWN: How about other teachers? Arthur Pope?

JANE MCLANATHAN: Oh!

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Arthur Pope, marvelous.

ROBERT BROWN: You said he was—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Oh, Richard loved him.

ROBERT BROWN: —he was a great teacher.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT BROWN: And what did he teach at that time? What was he—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He taught design.

ROBERT BROWN: In the—I mean, did you actually design things, or would he talk about design?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Basically—so it was design and color, theory, all kinds of things, but with a lot of studio exercises and so on. But absolutely not tight. The whole thing was wide open. It was free. And, I mean, he would—he used examples of Japanese brush painting to teach lessons in the structure of trees and bushes and things like this, to give the principle of design an order, and the various types of order, in a very sophisticated way. And he was marvelous: quiet-spoken, a complete gent, and just a naturally ideal teacher. And he wrote very well. He was very literate. And unlike so many of the others, he was so far beyond his specialty. I mean, he knew—he was very widely read in literature and history and all the rest of it, especially in poetry. And he would play back and forth in all of these forms, including music, to suggest what structure is like as a creative expression, and so on. It was a terrific course. Absolutely wonderful. And he was a great friend of Edward Forbes, and they came out of a similar social background. And they were—

ROBERT BROWN: You mean both were, what, old New England and prominent New—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Old New England patricians, inherited money, vast experience, very intelligent, imaginative—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Free.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —free people, whereas Paul Sachs, of course, was a driven man.

ROBERT BROWN: Paul Sachs. And you would've had him, what, in a—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I did have him [inaudible]—

ROBERT BROWN: —connoisseurship course, or—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: I took the course in—the museum course. Two years of the museum course. And Paul, of course, was jealous of these others, and tried his best to try and be like them. I mean, that's why he bought Elmwood and all, lived in it very grandly, and all of that, because that had all the old Emersonian—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Trappings.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —New England connections. And he wanted desperately for that sort of thing, and he tended to be arbitrary. Uh, he had tremendous ambition to be the power in the museum world.

JANE MCLANATHAN: And was.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And he was.

ROBERT BROWN: He was, huh?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He wanted to be able to place his students in top positions. He wanted to control their lives and plan their careers. And, uh, that's where we had a bit of a falling out.

ROBERT BROWN: He tried to do that with you.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He tried to do that for me.

ROBERT BROWN: Now, what would he do, sit down and say, "Now, Dick, it's time?"

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Well, he tried to get me to go take a job in Detroit, for example. Well, Detroit was okay. We went out there, and we—I stayed in a hotel, which was really a whorehouse, but it's—

JANE MCLANATHAN: It was during the war.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: It was during the war. And it was a—Detroit Museum at that time—I don't know if it still is—was a branch of the corrupt city government of Detroit. And the whole thing was pretty raggedy, and so on, and just no money involved, and it—since that famous German director—

ROBERT BROWN: Valentiner?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —yeah—had left, I mean, and it was before Ted Richardson had taken it over, I mean, there just was not much there. In the meantime, Harold Edgell had urged me to come to the Boston Museum, infinitely better job.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Sachs had not arranged it for me.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: So he didn't like it at all.

ROBERT BROWN: So Sachs had a rather prickly ego, did he?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Very. Well, he was only barely five feet high, and that had something to do with it, I think.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Tell about Rick's—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And he was Jewish, and I think he felt that, which is too bad because Jakob Rosenberg was Jewish and it didn't make a difference to him. You know? And there were a lot of other people that were. But he felt that sort of thing. And he'd been a very successful bond salesman. And somehow he—I think he felt that he had to get out of that and beyond that. And he felt this was the way.

ROBERT BROWN: So when you didn't follow his urging, he was a bit miffed.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He was very miffed.

ROBERT BROWN: Very.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Very miffed. And I know for a fact then that he not only didn't recommend me for some other jobs, but he told them that I wasn't the person. But I had a very interesting couple of talks with him. He just—he admitted he couldn't overcome his prejudice. And I told him, I said, "Paul, I'm so sorry, because," I said, "I learned a great deal from you, and you've been very helpful, and I really—I regret this exceedingly, but," I said, "I've had some wonderful opportunities," and I said, "I always tried to plan my own life as much as I could," and I said, "I appreciate your help just tremendously, but I wish we could overcome this hurdle." And he said—he said, "No, Dick, I'm afraid we can't."

ROBERT BROWN: The hurdle of your not being willing to be manipulated by him.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And his wish to manipulate you.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Huh.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Tell about Rex.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes. Uh, we had a wonderful superintendent there, Milton—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Worthy [ph].

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —Worthy.

ROBERT BROWN: Where, at the Fogg Art Museum? Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Great, big, nice-looking, very capable, competent guy. He was a sweetie pie. And we had a police dog as a part of the guard system for the Fogg. And the police dog's name was Rex. And he was immense. You know, he was a big, big, big German shepherd. And he was just the friendliest dog you ever knew. [They laugh.] And I doubt very much if he'd have done anything but wag his tail at a robber. But he was formidable looking.

JANE MCLANATHAN: And he—his woof.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, and he—

ROBERT BROWN: Was powerful, huh?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, it was very powerful. And so after the museum closed at a certain time—five o'clock, whatever, six o'clock—I forget what it was—Rex was let loose, and he'd wander through the galleries, and he'd go anywhere he pleased, and all of this. And sometimes I'd be staying late to study—and I could do that; I could go out the back door; everybody knew me. You know, it was fine. I was part of the establishment.

And sometimes Paul Sachs would stay late. And Sachs had very—a very grandiose office, much bigger than Edward Forbes, who was the director, you see. Much bigger.

ROBERT BROWN: Interesting.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And so anyway, I could remember one time when I was up on this balcony floor there, where Paul's office was, and I saw the—there were no lights on, but it was dusk. It was, you know, the skylight lit, and slightly gloomy light. And Rex was padding around, you know, and we'd been—I'd been talking to him. And I saw the doorknob turn on Paul's office, and then Paul had to practically reach up to here to get the doorknob, because the scale was way beyond him. [Laughs.] And I saw the door open a little bit, and Rex was right there. Rex went—was wagging his tail. He woofed, and Paul pulled the door back closed. [They laugh.] And I stayed there, I stayed there and I watched this happen two or three times. And then I could hear Paul calling Milton Worthy at the back door.

ROBERT BROWN: To come—[Laughs.]

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: "Milton, for God's sake, come up and get this animal out of here," you know, really dressing him down terribly. And so Milton came up, and I met him, and I told him what I had seen, and he nearly died laughing. And so all he did was, "Come on, Rex. Come on, Rex." He said, "Professor Sachs, it's all—the coast is clear." And so Rex and he went out, with Rex's tail wagging. It was a very interesting and amusing, but also revealing, thing.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, very illustrative.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Because can you imagine a man like Edward Forbes, I mean, feeling like that? I mean —

JANE MCLANATHAN: He could put his arms around—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, he invited the dog to lie down beside him while he did his work, you know.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, Forbes was utterly different from Sachs.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, totally different.

ROBERT BROWN: And he'd been there a long time, and—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT BROWN: He was—was he pretty much universally loved?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, yes. Yes. Well, he was the one who was responsible for that—the Fogg becoming the great center of conservation. He started the laboratory. He got George Stout and all of those other guys there.

ROBERT BROWN: And Alan Burroughs even earlier, I think.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, yeah. And then—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —the others—and there were half a dozen of them—they were very distinguished, very, very good in their fields. And he financed a lot of it out of his own pocket. And it was a fascinating, fascinating thing. And he started that publication, that quarterly publication, that became so useful. And he was one of the founders of the International Conservation Association, of which he was a founder and Plenderleith, who was the—

ROBERT BROWN: In Britain, mm-hmm [affirmative].

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —in Britain—the chief conservator for the British Museum, and several other people like that—a person who was chief conservator for the Louvre. And I have my diploma for that. And I was—I think the number on it is something like 23. I mean, it was way back to the beginning.

ROBERT BROWN: So you went through this conservation program—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah, I worked in the laboratory.

ROBERT BROWN: —as part of your graduate work.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Huh. And this was a special interest of Forbes. It was conservation.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes, yes. And he loved Medieval Italian painting, really loved it, appreciated it, collected some perfectly wonderful, wonderful things, because he had a great eye. And he was a very interesting, nice man.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you talk to him now and then? I mean, was he a fairly conversational person—

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes, he was perfectly, perfectly—

JANE MCLANATHAN: Approachable.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: —approachable. Very.

JANE MCLANATHAN: I remember his hair was split in the middle.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yes.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, did he—what would he—what would you talk about for—typically, with someone like Forbes? Practically anything?

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Oh, he was fascinated in all the progress going on in the Conservation Department, but he was also fascinated in anything that came up in the field of Medieval Italian painting, especially painting but not just painting. Sculpture. He was very much interested in all of that. And I was doing some research in some of this, you know, and so we'd talk about these things. And he'd been a great friend, and a sponsor of Kingsley Porter, who was another Olympian, also rich, and also totally dedicated.

ROBERT BROWN: And he was still there.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: No, he'd already died.

ROBERT BROWN: He'd already died, yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: He was lost on the beach in Ireland below his castle that he went to every year, which belonged to Henry McIlhenney afterward. And the amusing thing is so many people never believed he died. Somebody reported that they saw him in a pub in Brittany, dressed as a fisherman. He was a very romantic character, and so there were lots of things said about him, and, you know, and written about him.

JANE MCLANATHAN: Mrs. Queensley.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: And his wife was called Mrs. Queensley Porter, because of her manner, but she was a very, very kind person, a wonderful hostess, and she loved to invite people like graduate students and so on, give them a good meal, and help them to meet interesting people. And she presided in a definitely queenly way. There was no question. But it was generously done, and, of course—

JANE MCLANATHAN: It was great, yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: It was wonderful. And, of course, that series of books he wrote on the Pilgrimage Roads sculpture and so on is absolutely a landmark series. And Walter Wright worked in connection with that, too, you know.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, Walter Wright, yeah.

RICHARD MCLANATHAN: Yeah.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]