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Oral history interview with William Ashby
McCloy, 1982 Oct.-1992 June 30

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with William Ashby McCloy on May 20, 1982, June 30, 1992, and Oct. 19, 1992. The interview took place in Uncasville, CT, 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: [00:00:00]—1982, Robert Brown, the interviewer. All right, your childhood, you were born in Baltimore, you were very early taken to Shanghai, China, by your family. This is something your father, in his profession, it had carried him there, around 1913?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, that's part of the old what, late 19th-century, early 20th-century missionary zeal. He was at Johns Hopkins, the medical school. Not to be a doctor, his whole aim was to get full knowledge of kinesiology, and physiology, and that type of thing, for physical education. At the end of his third year, John R. Mott, the old YMCA evangelist, appeared in Baltimore. And my father and mother went, apparently, and at the end of his impassioned speech that said there's an opportunity for service around the world, my father went and said, when can I go? And that's what brought him to China, they went to China in public health and physical education with the YMCA.

ROBERT BROWN: The YMCA wasn't simply a religious thing?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, he went as an educator essentially, because—

ROBERT BROWN: Now, physical education itself, was that a broadly, do you think a fairly broad-based discipline at that time? I mean, were a lot of people into it? Was it thought, was it a usual part of a curriculum?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, in fact it was a pioneer field. And because they talk about those days as the glory days, the great days of Springfield College and things like that. That's true, the field was quite different. And physical education had relatively little to do with athletics. Today, there's a separation between physical education and the department of athletics, [00:02:00] and usually conflict between them. And quite rightly, people who take a course in physical education are not the same people who are on the athletic teams; they take business administration and that type of thing. But, they went out there for service, so he was there for 13 years, after 5 years he dropped from the YMCA, and tied in with a government university, so established the school of physical education, remained with that.

ROBERT BROWN: A Chinese government university?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: Wow. What are some of your recollections of China?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, wow, because I just went back there, so—

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, were you?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I was back there a year ago. I went back to that old university, that's one of the things I wanted to do, because it was not on the itinerary, I requested that I go back to the old summer resort, which is off limits, it's near Hang Chow [ph], and can I go back to the old university? And we whipped around a bend in Nanking, and there it was. And I knew my way around; I said, "All right, now follow me, I'll take you right back to where the old athletic field was." That's where I did my first track activities, and played basketball for the first time. It was quite changed, but I did know my way around.

ROBERT BROWN: Was this a university, and there were very few Western students, I mean you were simply—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, in Nanking at that time, there were three schools for higher education. Ginling College, which is still there. That's a college for women that's run by a church. Nanking University, which was I think run by I think Presbyterian denomination, or something like that. And Southeastern University, which is where my father was. And that was a Chinese government university.

ROBERT BROWN: Southeastern?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, now all three of those campuses still exist, [00:04:00] but my father's university became Central University, and it's now part of Nanking University. So this had two campuses.

ROBERT BROWN: But you were there then until you were, you were but a small boy. I mean this was your early schooling.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I left at 13, I got to grade school, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: But you were in Chinese-speaking classes, I mean you were just—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, English-speaking classes.

ROBERT BROWN: You were, weren't you largely with Chinese?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No.

ROBERT BROWN: No. Oh, I see, there was a Western community in Nanking.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Right. When we were in Shanghai, it wasn't, you know, Shanghai's full of international communities. We were in the international zone. But our school was Shanghai American School. We had classes in Chinese. When we moved to Nanking it was called the Hillcrest Foreign School. No classes in, that involved studying Chinese, and no Chinese students in either of the schools. So our contact with Chinese really was outside of the academic world. My father had a lot more, because he was with a Chinese university, he was the only Westerner in the university, but all the others had big Western faculties, and there was a missionary community that had a social life, and a business community downtown, mostly British, that had its social life. There were not that many Chinese tied in with it. My father was the only one that had intimate Chinese friends, and my mother's best friend was a Chinese woman. And I had no close Chinese friends except one brief interlude when we lived across the street from a military governor, and I used to pal around with his, one of his children. He had a couple wives and concubines, and things like that, and I never was quite sure of the connections there. But, I did have a close Chinese friend.

ROBERT BROWN: But you had fluent Chinese at that time, or it sounds like that?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I spoke Chinese before English. It's an easier language to learn, to speak [00:06:00] anyway. And I was with the Ama [ph], and—

ROBERT BROWN: —your nurse?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Right. And so, before I went to school, I really was probably around Chinese as much as anybody else.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you, and of course you were just a child, but did you sense a cleavage between Western culture and Chinese culture, because your family—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —I don't know. Looking back, there was a sense that Westerners were somehow superior, I suppose, but I don't think there was any of the kind of prejudice we associate with racial prejudice here. Probably because we also had, you know, many Chinese friends that were on the same economic and the same educational level. So, and while we tended to be segregated to a certain extent, there wasn't an onus attached to the segregation. But, true, there's no other way to have, no other contact with any other group that lead to any kind of prejudice. I don't know if this was good or bad, not to have those contacts. I saw my first black, for example, some kind of hiker or something, sitting outside the post office, downtown Nanking. He was obviously a single black male—where he came from, who he was, I haven't the sunniest idea. He was a great curiosity, disappeared.

ROBERT BROWN: How did Chinese react to you, or your family? I mean when you were moving around the city. I mean, in walking around and all, was there a deference, or was there hostility, or could you tell?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: It varied. No. There must have been some tension, because the standard phrase was [Chinese]. We were always referred to as [Chinese], "small foreign devil." That was their kidding term for little white boys and little white girls running around. [00:08:00] And usually with a kind of good humored exchange of insults. So, there had to be some tension there. And it grew. When we left China, it was just the beginning of the very strong anti-foreign developments. We left in 1926, about a month before riots in Nanking that burned our house down, the first house that was destroyed. And there were a lot of troubles. Mostly, the hostility was directed against the British and the Japanese, but there was big sign painted on our wall—our house had a wall around it, it was a compound. It said, "We oppose the British and the Japanese only." That was a major sign. But when the trouble broke out, you know, Americans got it too, same as everybody else. So, I think the only reason they were less hostile to Americans is that there wasn't an American concession, for example, that took over a

large section of Shanghai, or Tensen [ph], or someplace like that. But the Americans were there in the international section.

ROBERT BROWN: Is that one reason your father—you came back to America in 1926?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Came back partly because he hadn't been able to get any money out of the government for his salary for about three or four years, I don't, you know, I don't know the details of it, and how we got enough money to survive at all. But there was constant civil war between our province, Jiangsu Province, and the adjoining province, Zhejiang Province, I think it is. And then, use all the funds from taxation to support the military government. So there were several different governors, there's a military governor, and there's a civil governor, and my father got his money from the civil governor. He wasn't getting any money, because—

ROBERT BROWN: The military governor preempted the money [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I've read some histories of China recently, [00:10:00] and the names of our warlords, Jiang So Ling [ph] and Fung Sha [ph] and so on, appear right through that whole history of the debacle of Chiang Kai-shek so on. Chiang Kai-shek was just coming into the picture, so.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you get to meet your friend's father, the military governor?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh yeah. Oh yes, I used to go over to their place, and—

ROBERT BROWN: Was there still a lot of traditional formality in their life, or how would you characterize it? As you remember it.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I wasn't that aware of—I was aware of him, he was a big, kind of good humored—I think he was amused that this Western boy wanted to play with his boy, more than anything else. I didn't see him that much, I saw more of the women of the household, because yeah, there was a big military base with airfields, and a military academy across the street from where we lived. And I suppose he was associated with that, you know; I was too young to be that concerned. I just liked to play with his kid, and climb his trees, and look at his goldfish, and things like that.

ROBERT BROWN: What was it like for you, coming back to the United States? Did you want to come back? Merely curious?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, we'd been back once on furlough. We came back, I think, in 1919, because the war had just ended. And so, you know, I had some knowledge of, you know, I was in second grade or something, so I wasn't very sophisticated, but you know, I don't remember having any feelings particularly one way or the other coming back. There were some adjustment problems, obviously, but our whole community—well, for example, our whole school, Hillcrest School consisted of everything from kindergarten through senior high school. And we had about 100 people in the whole school. And the first school I went to in the United States was in Detroit, [00:12:00] Northwestern High School. My homeroom had 500 people in it. See, and I walked in this building, and I tried to find a classroom. And then I never got in a building as big as that, or as confused as that, and that, it took me a couple days just to find my way around. I didn't really have any serious adjustment problems, and all the class sizes were not that much different, and classes were actually, I suppose they're not that much different. The teachers were quite [inaudible]. We had a big advantage in the school system in China over school systems in the United States. First of all, you know, the general intelligence level of the students was higher than the general intelligence level here, because they were all children of doctors, or teachers, or something like that. And most of the teachers, certainly in Nanking, were not professional grade school or high school teachers. They were there because they wanted to stay in China for a few years, and they took a job teaching, they were college teachers in many cases. And the environment was quite different. And I would say almost everybody who graduated from high school over there had a distinguished college career over here, whether he was a good student there or not. You know, we had several outstanding examples of that, people we thought of as a little bit on the slow side, came over here, who went and had brilliant college records when they came here, because the preparation was so superior.

ROBERT BROWN: It's quite a disciplined school, too, [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, you're—there was no such thing as absence of discipline. If there was any rebel in the school at all, I suppose, I was the rebel, and I didn't ever rebel in a class. But I would refuse to take—

ROBERT BROWN: —in what sense then?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I refused to take certain things seriously. [00:14:00] And I'm not quite sure why that was the case. I was called into the principal's office one time because I had gotten a very poor grade on a test on the Bible. See, it was a missionary school, really, in the sense that the community, everybody went

there, who sent their children there was a missionary. So we had required chapel every day. And we had required Bible class. So I didn't do well in Bible class. And when the principal called me in to see what the problem was, because I obviously wasn't stupid, it didn't faze me one way or the other, you know? I don't remember what my answer was, I wasn't perturbed by this, and I didn't expect to do well in Bible, because I really wasn't that interested in it. I was the only kid in school, in the town, in the school community, who didn't go to Christian Endeavor.

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] community thing, or [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, you know, everybody was expected to go to Sunday school, to Christian Endeavor, and then to church. The children were supposed to go to Christian Endeavor, Sunday school, maybe to church, it depends on how old they were. That was the Sunday routine. And I never went to Christian Endeavor. And I told him, I said, "I'm doing you a service," because they had a membership committee, and there was nobody in town for them to try to persuade to join, except me. And they never dropped the membership thing—they always asked me every year if I would join, and I would say no, I didn't want to join.

ROBERT BROWN: And your parents supported you in your independence?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, they didn't—I went to Sunday school, which was pretty boring, and I didn't see any reason to go to something else that was pretty boring. No, they never tried to persuade me one way or the other.

ROBERT BROWN: But you were already having some interest in drawing, and things like that, you took a cartooning course, I know.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I guess I didn't mention that. [00:16:00]

ROBERT BROWN: Were you beginning to—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —well I don't—really, I was trying to think of this the other day. I don't remember drawing that much, except I used to—my first recollection of drawing was drawing horses. And because my attachment to horses was called to my attention on several occasions, and the toys I preferred were toys of horses. And I had a little bickering with my sister once, who was having a birthday party for her doll, and I insisted it was my horse's birthday too, you know, I wanted to get in on the act.

ROBERT BROWN: Why do you suppose you were fixed on horses?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Laughs.] I haven't the slightest idea.

ROBERT BROWN: In Detroit, did you do much in your high school there, when you went to Northwestern High School?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, as a matter of fact, one of the reasons I was able to adjust, well, two reasons really. One was, I had certain art abilities which they could call upon. I was—right from the beginning, there was a man named Jerome who was the, was the room superintendent, whatever you call it. He, I don't know how he happened to pick me out, out of these 500 people, but he found I was from China, that helped.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.] Curiosity?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible.] Yeah, there was an attraction right away. And I was active in sports from the beginning. And I could draw, so they had asked me to put the illustrations and cartoons on the blackboard [inaudible]. So, at least I wasn't totally ignored and overwhelmed by the environment, I got a little special attention. I suppose that's where this cartooning force came in. But, you know, I had, I still don't have any aptitude for cartooning. And I was just thinking about it, you know, my parents never quite—could quite adjust to the kind of art that I finally developed, as long as I was being very academic, they could [00:18:00] understand it, because there was the skill factor or something like that, they could recognize. But my father in particular always wanted to turn this to very practical ends. He wanted me during the Depression to take a backpack and an easel and some canvases and go from farm to farm, and paint portraits of people for \$25, and earn some money. So, in a sense, that's his family background. Norman Meier—I don't know if that's a name that ever means anything to you—I took my master's with Norman Meier, psychology of art. One of his theories, which is terribly easy to demonstrate, is that people who are, get into the arts, and are successful in the arts, always have a family history of somebody in the crafts, or in the arts. Because everybody does, you go back a couple generations, with almost no exceptions. And I had a, my grandmother did some painting, nothing has survived except a charcoal enlargement of a photograph she did of her son, my father, my brother owns it. And her father was, among other things, I don't know what he really made his living on, but he painted landscapes that decorated the sides of touring cars. Now I've seen a few of his paintings, they're straight 19th-century folk art

paintings, really. A little bit more skillful than that. But that was a practical application. She came to visit us in China, stayed out there about six months, and she's the one who must have noticed that I drew a lot or something, because when she got back, she sent me this Edward C. Lannon [ph] correspondence course of cartooning, it came from—I think it came from Cleveland. And I very conscientiously did it, you know? And I kept these things until oh, [00:20:00] maybe 15 or 20 years ago. I had them stored in a box in the garage in the Winchester Road campus down here, and it got all mildewed and stuff; it was so rotten, I finally threw them away. But it became a problem. So I must have been about 11 years old or something like that, and you know, most 11-year-olds are not very flashy as cartoonists anyway. And the kind of assignment was—dealt with things that I had no familiarity with, and the one I remember in particular was, make a drawing of a German butcher. You know, first of all, I didn't really know what a German was. We had Germans in the community, I suppose, but it never occurred to me to identify one or another. I had never seen a German butcher, and if so, I didn't know what would be funny about it. So I had to ask, you know, what—ask my parents, what am I supposed to draw for a German butcher? And so I made something, a round-faced person with a white mustache, and so on. It was a pretty bad drawing. And the people, I must say, in Cleveland, were very helpful. They sent back these real slick corrections, and it's like this famous artist's school—I suppose that's the type of thing they did.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you suppose it may have, through repetition, through their criticisms, developed your facility?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, it helped. You know, for example, one of the questions had to do with elementary perspective. And you know, and others had to do with proportions of faces, and things like this—and no, I learned, I did all 10 lessons or whatever it was, and—but yeah, I didn't do other things that were very serious. One summer, in the summer resort, we had a visiting English woman who came up there, I don't remember her name, something like Lamb, only name that comes to mind. And she decided she wanted to have a little class with watercolor painting. And I got involved [00:22:00] in this, and I don't remember too much about it, except I did do it for a while, and then I got hung up on tennis, and I dropped watercolor for tennis. I started to play tennis from eight o'clock in the morning until six o'clock at night, and I didn't do any more watercolors. But I was her star pupil for the few weeks that I did this, and I won a competition—got a prize of one dollar. That must have been in the eighth grade—this is our last year. The competition was to make a drawing of the school. And I do have a copy of that. It was reproduced in the school paper. Awful. It was better in the original, but they—it was done in pencil, so my recollection was that I messed it up, because they couldn't reproduce it in pencil. It had to be gone over in pen and ink, and I couldn't handle the pen. But, I still have a copy of that paper, and—

ROBERT BROWN: —did you continue then beyond it, when you got back to the States, Detroit, and the other high schools you went to, did you always, be something—you went to White Plains briefly, and then you went to Phillips Andover. [Crosstalk.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I didn't want Andover.

ROBERT BROWN: Because that was a place that was beginning to develop a considerable art—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —yeah, not then.

ROBERT BROWN: —education, just before that time [crosstalk].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. They were beginning to collect, my senior year at Andover, I was there from—

ROBERT BROWN: —'28 to '30?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —'28 to '30, right. And so my senior year, they began to collect some of the things that are now in the Edison Gallery. But the, I think the building was being constructed. They had just built a new library, and they had some of these things upstairs in the new library. And I remember *The Writer* in particular, and I remember that because I touched it, and a piece fell off. And I've seen the painting several times since, and the piece is there; it looks like it's never been off. I took it off very carefully and put it beside it. [00:24:00] *The Writer's* in not very good shape anyway. No, but I was the art editor of the school annual there, but my interest mainly was caricature, I did a lot of caricature, and I did spend a lot of my spare time just doodling, mostly caricatures. And again, you know, that's—I don't have the aptitude for cartooning—most of them were kind of cartoons.

ROBERT BROWN: Was this encouraged? I mean there was a certain role to be played in traditional school life, and cartooning for, or caricaturing for the school annual, and [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh yeah, [inaudible] headings of, yeah, I still have a copy of the—because I did cartoons in the junior year. Somebody else was art editor, then they asked me to be art editor, because I suppose I was more gung ho. I did more than anybody else. And so, I took it over, made a little bit of money, not

much money.

ROBERT BROWN: Was there art studio study of some sort?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No. Well, what did happen was one of the English teachers set up a kind of class, I think all they did was draw still lifes. This was in the library. And I was walking to the library with some friend, I don't remember who it was. And I saw what was being done, and I think, believe it or not, I thought what they were doing was kind of interesting. So, today I would think it would be really boring. [Laughs.] So I said, "Well I'll see if I can do that," and—but I still had to draw. I did a charcoal drawing—I had never handled a piece of charcoal—of a big bottle and the drapery, or something that like. That's the kind of thing they did. The man's name is Stowbridge or something like that; he was in the English department.

ROBERT BROWN: But it was distinctly an extracurricular thing.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Right, there was no credit, you know. They have a marvelous program up there now, very sophisticated program. But there was absolutely nothing like that then, about—so I left there. You know, my aspiration [00:26:00] was still physical education. I was going to be my father's successor.

ROBERT BROWN: I see, that was—and you were in sports quite a lot at Andover? That was a major interest there?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I was on the swimming team there. My field was diving. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —what about academically? Was, were you very interested at Andover? Were they very rigorous? [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I would say I was not a great student, I was a conscientious student. I didn't like particularly to do poorly. I was on the honor roll most of the time.

ROBERT BROWN: What was that like, as compared with other schools?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I didn't really have that much basis to go on, so my experience [inaudible] at Northwestern High School, as a freshman, was pretty favorable. And White Plains High School, I went to half a year. The only basis of comparison was when I got through a half a year there, it was about—for example, one class in particular I had some trouble with was French. When I went to Andover, my half a year was about what they were covering in about three weeks. So I was way behind. So, all the teachers were very cooperative, they said we'll give you time, we won't call on you until you've had a chance to make up. So, I did all this making up on my own, I didn't have any tutoring or anything on that. But I did all right. Actually, I did very well in French. I remember I got a 95 at the end of the year in French.

ROBERT BROWN: You had a competitiveness about you, perhaps.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, but I didn't do that well, for example, in Latin. That's a special story in itself, that's a story of Georgie Hinlan [ph], the character at Andover, and then anybody who's been there in that generation would know Georgie Hinlan.

ROBERT BROWN: Okay. Is that—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —Georgie, he looked like an old Roman emperor. Dark curly hair, ruddy complexion, big beet nose, a wooden leg. No, he was a character. [00:28:00] He had the best record of any instructor at Andover when it came to scores by his students on college boards. But usually, only one or two people in his classes would pass. That was the standard routine. I got a 60 at the end of the year. And I got a 90 on my college board. Of course, then I came back and I—he gave me a makeup, so I could get a passing grade, which must have been 70, or something like that. He never looked at the makeups, you know, he'd just raise the grade automatically. No, he knew—weeks on end, he'd never call on anybody except one or two people that he had confidence in. But every once in a while, he'd break away and he'd say, "Now McCloy," and he'd ask me to pick up. Because by this time, maybe I was asleep or drawing, or something like that. And he'd let me start. If I made a single mistake, he'd stop me. He'd be livid, and he'd come up and he'd take a sheaf of blue books and shake them in front of your face like this, and say, "Fill 'em in by eight o'clock in the morning!" You know, that kind of thing. No, very—or he'd make you stand up and right the mistake, or correct the mistake on the blackboard for the rest of the hour. So was a real intimidating kind of personality, and—but it ended up that the year I was, took classes with him, he ended up, he was calling regularly only on one person. He had a second person, a boy named Miller, that he'd call on about third day, and nobody else would he call on. This is a whole year long. Yeah. And yet, at the end of the year, these intimidated people, you know, they knew their stuff when it came to college boards. But that's, the fellow did well.

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] was still a residue [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Was a way to get, you know, information across. People, they were ready to work, [00:30:00] they'd do their work for fear of that public ridicule, I think, was [inaudible] when they were called upon. But Georgie, on the other hand, was the most popular teacher in the college, in the prep school.

ROBERT BROWN: Wow. Once you were away from that intimidation—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —right, and he was, he gave the best talks at the pep rallies for football games and things like that. He would never snitch on anybody if he saw them off campus. You know, you weren't allowed to go downtown between classes, only after five o'clock or something. If he happened to see you down there, he wouldn't see. He'd stomp past you with that wooden leg, and he wouldn't even look at you. So that kind of thing, yeah, young boys would appreciate it.

ROBERT BROWN: It went a long way, sure.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: And Georgie off-campus was very popular. But he never was [inaudible]. But that, I got two low grades. And one was in [inaudible] and the other one was in history. Yeah, I was an excellent art historian, but I hated history. I always got high marks on the test, but [inaudible] because even though I was conscientious and I did the work, I never seemed to be able to remember a thing [inaudible]. I didn't make their, some kind of special honor roll at the end of my senior year, because of this low grade in history. By that time, I was doing well in Latin, four years in Latin, that was one of my better courses. And the history, the teacher came around, he apologized to me. Even though I'd been getting 90 on the tests, you know, I ended up with about 65 or something like that on the grade. He apologized. I must say, I said that didn't faze me one bit, but I really hated history.

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] retained the [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I don't know why. Because you know, when I got art history, I had no retention problems. On the contrary, in fact, once I got interested in art, I used to read art history books as novels.

ROBERT BROWN: But why do you suppose the teacher apologized, because you didn't—your grade plummeted?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, [00:32:00] I think he felt a little bit guilty because it really came down to a test, I always did well. But, I was always so vague [inaudible]. I just found it kind of boring. And it wasn't that I was sophisticated and mature, and could put this in perspective, it was just I didn't really want to do badly, and I just didn't have any interest in history. I think in many ways, it probably wasn't taught well. And you know, most of the classes we take are not taught well. How many outstanding teachers did you ever have in your entire career? You know, I can think of two, and I went to school probably as many years as most people, went through all this graduate school and things like that.

ROBERT BROWN: Sure.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I had one mathematics teacher at Andover, Michael Sides [ph], who was, I thought, an outstanding teacher. And I found his classes stimulating, and I wouldn't have minded majoring in mathematics, because I did very well. And an art historian, Bill Heckscher, you may have heard of him, who was in his own kooky, perverse sort of way, a brilliant teacher. Otherwise, Stephen Insidio [ph], people like Lasansky who are, you know, so highly extolled as teachers, Lasansky was not really a good teacher in an orthodox sense. His students always did brilliantly, but I've never quite been able to figure out just how he was able to impart this.

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] almost in spite of him.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, because he didn't speak English very well, and he left all the basic instruction up to somebody else—Don Stewart, notably. I don't know if you know Don. He's the master printer for what, Universal? Someplace like that, out on Long Island.

ROBERT BROWN: But the, you came at Andover was, socially was it any change for, you know, was it, at that age, it didn't matter much? [00:34:00] [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, it was probably bad for me, in many ways. If I look back from a social adjustment point of view, it's probably bad for me, because you know, I've never lead what you might think of as the normal American social life. And to go to a missionary community, had a lot of prejudice against relationship between the sexes, for example, even a high school kid didn't date, for example, and dancing was frowned upon, and things like that. And in a big city like Detroit, I wasn't there long enough to make any friends, and I didn't know any girls at all.

ROBERT BROWN: And then that was prolonged at Andover.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and then I worked for my board, and it sounds pretty conscientious, so I did well as a student. Mainly because I—when I got out of a class, I immediately went back to my room, and I did the lesson for the next day. I did this partly because I wanted to have my evenings free, so I could doodle around, or read. But most of my literature education, I got just reading things that I thought I should read on my own.

ROBERT BROWN: So you weren't really too involved in, apart from girls, socializing, I mean general clubs, and [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well—

ROBERT BROWN: —what I also ask, when you chose to go to Iowa for school, it must have been quite different in terms of the social spectrum at Andover that [inaudible] rather narrow social spectrum among the student body, select group.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. But again, I'm a bad person to ask that, because—so I lived at home when I went to the state university. And so I never was that close to, my closest friend at the university was a teacher in the art department.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh I see. So even there, it wasn't as though you were plunged among population [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No.

ROBERT BROWN: So it didn't matter.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I never had what you'd call a normal American middle-class [00:36:00] social upbringing. Like, the contrast between my experience and my brother's experience, okay, he's pretty much an American born and bred, he was born in China, but he went through the public school system here, and his whole attitude towards society is totally different from mine. And just because [inaudible] more rarified kind of thing. That's true, he went to school while he was at home, but he also joined a fraternity. I joined a fraternity for six months, and I said, forget it, it's a waste of time. I didn't [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: So you were developing pretty pronounced individualistic ideas fairly early, possibly [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, once I got interested in art, I didn't really care about too many other things, so.

ROBERT BROWN: Why did you go to Iowa? Was it just a matter of your parents?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, my father, yeah, my father. When we came back to the United States, he taught one year in Detroit at what is now Wayne State; it used to be Detroit State Teachers College.

ROBERT BROWN: Now he would teach exercise and then lecture on physical fitness, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, his classes were a little bit more sophisticated than that. I don't think—he may have coached basketball at Detroit. I'm not sure he played basketball. He never was involved in that aspect; he used to teach things like the physics or mechanics of physical education, kinesiology, test and measurement. His background really was rather unusual. And so, a very creative person, and this is a long story that has nothing to do with my art background, [inaudible] much more driven, I would say, and much brighter I think than any of his children. The one that comes closest is my older sister. Because he was a very creative mathematician; factor analysis was developed by my father in China, independently, and Thurstone at the University of Chicago. He had to develop it to carry out the kind of research that he was doing in China. [00:38:00] He had to use an abacus, because he didn't have any calculators. And he worked out this, I don't even know what factor analysis is, except it's a kind of a three-dimensional mathematical statistical approach.

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] what kind of research was he doing?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: That's hard to say, some of the research he did after he came back. Because I used to be involved in some of the testing. It had to do with something we now take for granted: the relationship of body structure to what you actually should weigh. And they used to have these charts that said if you're five foot six, you should weigh 135. Well, he worked out all kinds of procedures, measurements that can tell you much better what you should weigh. He had research on the relationship of posture to bone structure. He went to Cleveland one time, where they have a big collection of gorilla and orangutan skeletons, and a lot of X-rays of spinal structure as comparative anatomy kind of thing. So I can't stand straight for sour apples, because my vertebral structure goes this way. Well, my brother stands straight, his vertebral structure is this way.

ROBERT BROWN: I see, [inaudible] horizontal [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I mean it's no effort for him to stand straight. For me to stand straight is work.

ROBERT BROWN: So your father then refined the measurement of this sort of thing, and understanding of it? And this then would be taught in physical education as a way of—coaches and others, people teaching exercise to accommodate, to adjust from person, to person, to person?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, the last kind of thing that he was concerned with had to do with maintaining good physical health, and after graduation from college. And I'm not sure how crazy he'd be about just jogging routine, [00:40:00] but he pushed awfully hard for maintaining good physical health, you know, throughout an entire life.

ROBERT BROWN: He had a good deal of effect, say, at the State University of Iowa? Many, many people who were in his discipline?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, yeah. I'm not exaggerating when I say that at the time of his death, he was the foremost figure in physical education in the world. He was president of every international organization. He has all the medals that go with this kind of thing. And he was a very distinguished person in his field. Which is one of the reasons I think he was a little bit frustrated, because none of his five children continued in physical education. See, so when I went to the University of Iowa, I fully expected to go into physical education. And I didn't for a couple of reasons. One was I thought, well, I'll take a year and try things out. Now that was a radical decision on my part, because I really expected to go right in. And I didn't really want to get involved in too many sciences. At that time, a physical education major was the toughest major in the university. You had to take I think three sciences, physics, chemistry, and zoology. Yeah.

[Audio break.]

ROBERT BROWN: —scientific, the physical education is very different from what we think of in the last two generations, it's very rigorous.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: It's changed a great deal. Yeah. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —and you, do you think it was trying to please your father when you said you would try this out? Were you yourself sincere [crosstalk]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, when I said I was going to take a year to try things out, that—in a sense, that was contrary to his expectations. So I think he really expected me to be gung ho and go right in there and follow in his footsteps. And I really had always expected to do that, and my older sister was in physical education initially—she has a master's in physical education—then she got out of the field, too. And none of the other three even started in physical education. Now I decided I would take an art course, among the other things I would try. And I've always been a little bit baffled with why I was fascinated with the art that I took, because I've always used this class as an illustration of how not to teach art—I mean just nine hours a week cast [ph] drawing. So that was what the course was. [inaudible] it was a whole year, nine hours a week, three hours each session, the word art was never mentioned. Nothing was ever said about organization, even simple things like how big to draw the thing on the page.

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] role of the teacher, consist of?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, that's—

[END OF 1 OF 7 SIDE A.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [00:00:00] —to go to, whose major virtue was that she could draw quite sensitively herself. And she was sympathetic, but she was almost totally inarticulate. Her major criticism consisted of coming up behind you and giggling. And yet, you know, I learned a lot. She never would put into words what I felt to be the major problem. You know, I had, I really had to struggle with something on my own. I read, I went to the library, I read every book that they had in the library, which wasn't very extensive at that time, the university library. They only had one art history course, taught by a young man who became my close friend, Nathan Arnold. So they didn't really have many books, but I read them all. Most of them were on American art. I read everything on Sargent, I was particularly fascinated with Sargent. I was terribly naïve, I'd only been in one museum in my life, I'd been to the Boston Museum when I was at Andover, a friend of mine took me there one time. And I was mostly embarrassed. I knew nothing, and I was self-conscious of all the pictures of the nudes, which you know, is very adolescent and very immature. So yeah, I really knew nothing. And the teacher didn't really help, the faculty there were all very academic. Most of them had studied at the National Academy of Design in New York, and they'd taken courses with Hawthorne in Provincetown. They, not one of them really was articulate. And they had—

ROBERT BROWN: —they just learned the method or the technical side they knew, they sort of demonstrated [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, they didn't demonstrate. No, in fact you know, looking back I don't really see, we were given things; in this cast drawing, we were given a plumb line and a ruler, charcoal, [00:02:00] a razorblade, and a needed eraser. That was our equipment, and charcoal paper. So we were shown how to plumb things to align them, and use the ruler to see how many heads high something was. So, that kind of mechanical instruction, but no place was there any indication of what quality would consist of. In fact, they never even made any mention about accuracy. You know, accuracy is not necessarily conflatable with quality, but for many academics, you know, if you draw accurately, you must be therefore good, I suppose.

ROBERT BROWN: I gather by making you start out with a ruler and a plumb line, they were aiming you in that direction.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: And accuracy.

ROBERT BROWN: Right. At least that.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: This woman's name was [inaudible] and yeah, I was always very fond of her. She certainly encouraged me. I learned a lot, but I learned because I began to see—the main thing I saw is I really wasn't very convincing at getting a sense of three dimensions. And there's no mention of the fact that that in itself may not be a very good objective, because you do have a responsibility to deal with the paper, too. But I did drawings that were accurate two dimensionally, and no sense of space. And by the end of the year, they were quite three dimensional, and I could see some kind of improvement. But for some reason or other, I was fascinated with the process, and with this whole drawing business. I started to take Saturday morning painting classes. I decided I wanted to speed up, because I began to realize that's really what I wanted to do. So I took Saturday morning painting classes at the local high school with somebody who also didn't know how to teach painting. But so, I just, you know, I got started that way. And from that time on, the whole idea of physical education disappeared. I was active in sports, I went out for football weighing a dripping wet 135 pounds, which was foolish. [00:04:00] I only stayed on a couple weeks. That Big 10 competition.

ROBERT BROWN: You got knocked about a bit?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, as a matter of fact, I didn't, but I hadn't been very good even in prep school, so if I'd been on the varsity at Andover or something like that, I played club football at Andover, and I went out for the swimming team, I was on the swim team. And I went out for track, I went out for tennis, and I was active, and I also worked out in the gym with my father in gymnastics.

ROBERT BROWN: Now your father kept up?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh yeah, he was strong as a bull. He used to work on the flying rings, maybe they don't do that anymore, they use a—they have these stationary rings. In those days, it was flying rings, a lot more fun.

ROBERT BROWN: So you did that, but your father finally had to realize you weren't going to study, and that wasn't going to be your study.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, he didn't put any pressure on me. I think he was always disappointed a little bit, and after I was making a living in the field, you know, and when I had success as an exhibitor and things like that, I never quite understood that, that he always wanted me to write and do research. And so—

ROBERT BROWN: —do you think that's one reason you turned toward art history eventually?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I was, art history had nothing to do with history. You know, I always enjoyed—

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Matter of fact, my research in art history, well, played a very minor role. I was more interested in my own, call it original thinking, and theoretical aspects of art, and art history research. Now he was a realist, even after I graduated and was in psychology for a while, and I did well. They were going to elect me to Sigma Xi, and he talked them out of it—[00:06:00] said don't give him Sigma Xi, because he's not interested in research. And he was right, he told me that. And I didn't resent it.

ROBERT BROWN: Really?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: In fact, I hadn't expected to be considered for Sigma Xi, because I didn't take psychology that seriously.

ROBERT BROWN: You had a pretty close relationship with your father.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, we were, I was closer to him than anybody else in the family. Probably because I was closer to him in age, I suppose. So you know, I used to play games with him, and as he got older, I used to play handball with him, and a game called kickball that he tried to introduce in this country. And I'd play—after I could beat him pretty easily—I'd play along with him. You know, we were very close friends. And he tried to be a closer friend with me than I wanted to be with him, but this is a different background. I was more inhibited in what I would communicate than he would communicate to me. And I'm ultimately sorry I didn't write down a lot of the stuff he told me, because now I've forgotten, and there is a biography that exists of him that's very poor.

ROBERT BROWN: And he was an outgoing, gregarious sort?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, you have to be, to be president of all of these organizations, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, that's true. [Laughs.] But you did then continue though in your sports, I see you were All-American in diving in 1932, so you were top quality.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Not really, no. No, not—the term All-American in those days, so it didn't mean what it means now. It's true, there were only four All-Americans in diving that year, and today they have classification, you have All-American in different classifications. But I really got that on the basis of my performance. And yeah, that's not the way you do it anymore, and on that one performance I guess I was pretty good, and I should have been better than I was. [00:08:00] But that's, after I got out of school, I did my best diving after I had been out of school for about 10 years, when I was in the Army. I decided I'd dive for relaxation when I was in San Antonio during the war, and I was better because I played around and practiced harder. I didn't really like to practice very well, I don't like to swim in cold weather, and you know, things like that.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] But you continued, I gather, within—your major was in art, eventually. As an undergraduate [inaudible] you continue with more of these sort of poorly taught studio courses, and what else did you end—you had some art history, you mentioned.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I only had the one course in art history, that's all that was offered.

ROBERT BROWN: And this was with a man named Arnold, right?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Aiden F. Arnold [ph]. Yeah, he's—but he had no background in art history.

ROBERT BROWN: What was his?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: He was a painter. And I'm not quite sure why they asked him to teach the course, except he was maybe the junior member in the department. See nobody knew anything about art history, and in fact when I took his course, I knew as much art history as he did. I met him at the home of a professor in, [inaudible] was it zoology? I guess—a man named Dill [ph]. We got to chewing the fat, mostly about art history, because we shared a lot of ideas and found out that we had a lot of things in common, and I began to see him a lot. I played tennis with him, and golf with him, and things like that. And I hadn't taken an art history class; all the art history I had was from my reading. So when I took the class, he knew I knew as much as he did, so he asked me to show the slides, and things like that. And I didn't take the tests or anything. Because—

ROBERT BROWN: —but you enjoyed it, didn't you?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh sure. [00:10:00] I got quite compulsive about art history eventually, and that's the one field I was compulsive about, excessively compulsive, when I got into graduate school. In fact, when I went to Yale after I graduated from Iowa, I took an art history course in Italian Renaissance painting, and I made a little card catalog of all the connections among the artists, I finally threw it away a year or so ago. But, you know, every obscure artist practically in any history book, I had a little card for them, and where he studied, with whom he studied, and all that kind of stuff, and I had this all memorized. So that's when I began to think if I didn't get 100 in an art history course, I was letting people down. Now that's compulsive.

ROBERT BROWN: You really wanted to master this aspect of history.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, but I never wanted to be an art historian. It's just, that's something that's measurable, I suppose. Because I never was that compulsive about success in the studio courses.

ROBERT BROWN: Why did you go to Yale the year following graduation? Had you met anybody, or heard about the art school there, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, as a matter of fact, Yale at that time, you probably recall, was the successful school for Prix de Rome. It probably got more publicity than any school in the country.

ROBERT BROWN: And the Prix de Rome was well known as the—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —right, and they got—

ROBERT BROWN: —European finishing for a young painter or sculptor would be to go to Rome, for an American —

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —that was about the only big award there was. And they got a lot of publicity, not only in art magazines, *Art Digest* and, but the Sunday supplement of the *Times* and the various and sundry papers with, in the rotogravure sections, reproduced these things. And I'd gotten this fellowship or scholarship when I graduated, Theodore F. Sanksy [ph] scholarship award. [00:12:00] I guess, and it was for graduate study, \$500 towards graduate studies. So I applied for that, and I won that award, and I said I wanted to go to Yale. Actually, one of the reasons why I was going, when I went to Andover, I had planned to go to Yale, my preparation was for Yale. If we hadn't moved to the Midwest, I would have gone to Yale. Then I probably never would have been in art; I don't know what I would have been in. Because they didn't have a—if you went to Yale College, you didn't take art courses in those days. You know, I guess you still don't, except maybe one or two. But, so I went there expecting it to be quite different from what it was. I actually, at the end of the year, I applied for an extension of this award, saying I'd stay on at Yale, even though I knew that was really kind of stupid, but the Yale program really was a disaster.

ROBERT BROWN: Was it? What do you mean? Can you describe some of those [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, it was at the—when I went there, it was at the very last stage of a period that I suppose was meaningful for the time, but it was totally anachronistic. The head of the department was a man named Edwin Cassius Taylor, I think it was. Is that right, Edwin? Right. [Inaudible.] Yeah, his—I bumped into his studio by accident one time, looking for an art history room, and I saw these paintings that looked like Bouguereaus. Literally, you know, very clever Bouguereaus. I'd go in there partly because they had this fabulous success with mural study under Eugene Savage. By the time I went there, Savage was no longer teaching the mural painting class. He taught a figure painting class. Not really—Dean Keller really was the instructor for Savage. [00:14:01] Keller would come in because he was there; Savage would come in and out from New York. And I still have the things I did for the composition course. Yeah, the term composition today is not a very respectable term, and this is probably one of the world's worst courses. So I never had a course in composition, so I took it very seriously. I came in there. I wanted to get into their advanced courses. I graduated from the university, and they put me in the first and second years of composition. That's, they said you can go as fast as you can go. So I got through the first two years of composition. Awful stuff.

ROBERT BROWN: What was so awful about it?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, on the, when I compare it with the kind of things we teach now routinely for untalented freshman students at a liberal arts college, it was just really kind of naïve. If you're familiar with the field at all—the field, there are no really good courses, or books, or texts, that deal with the question of composition. Because I said, in fact, I tried to write something up on my own at one time. It dealt with very elemental things, really, you know, make a design showing use of S curve in drawing a figure, you know, that type of thing. And speaking of which, I didn't do very well. I didn't do well until we got period things in, you make a painting in the manner of Jericho, or something like that. Composition, and to fit a certain kind of frame. But that's pretty naïve.

ROBERT BROWN: What were they training you for?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I haven't the slightest idea.

ROBERT BROWN: It sounds as though it were a craft, you were going to go out and be highly skilled workmen.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I got slicker and slicker at these little oil paintings on paper, and I have most of those still, [00:16:00] and the grades went up from 60 to the 90s, you know, when you got 90—they follow the old Beaux-Art tradition, if you got a 90 in the class, you could move to the next class. So I was getting 90s, so I moved up into the Beaux-Art renderings.

ROBERT BROWN: Which were more complicated?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: They came from New York, and got this mural designer, something like that, and there was a national competition, they sent him to New York, and he'd get first mention, second mention medals, or something like that.

ROBERT BROWN: Was self-expression a taboo [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I would say if you wanted to pass, you had to toe the line. The fourth and fifth year students were expected to do a single masterpiece. I think the fourth-year ones were supposed to do two in a year, the seniors, they did one painting. They were given so many hours and free use of a model, they had to make an underpainting—in what I would now consider in a technically unsound way, underpainting in oil paint, using monochrome. And then they'd tickle the surface, and the subject matter was straight out of the French Academy. At the end of the first semester, two of the more independent-minded painters, in the fourth year—I guess they were in their senior year—they did things a little bit Rivera-influenced. I say Rivera, made all the sensation in New York about that time. And they were both failed. Well, the failure didn't count on the final grade. They had to drop that. And they did Greco-Roman subject matter for Taylor, who was teaching this advanced course, and they got their passing grades and got out of there. But you know, the students, even though they worked hard, and so they were all aware of the fact that the world was a little bit different from that. And the successful phase of it—you know, Radio City Music Hall was decorated with, by Ezra Winter, [00:18:00] who was the same tradition as Eugene Savage, and we used to call that kind of thing Steamboat Modern. Because they decorated the dining rooms, ballrooms of ocean liners in that style. But, you know, that limbo phase between the first glimmer of some kind of modern orientation in the United States, and the World War II, post-World War II generation.

ROBERT BROWN: These, were you resentful during this [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No. I was very placid. No, I didn't rebel. I, the only thing I rebelled against really was the formula that Keller and Savage seemed to insist on in figure painting. In my own development, if I'd been influenced by anybody, it was by Hawthorne, who used to have a direct color observation as an approach. And I really focused on seeing color sensitively. Now I didn't use an Impressionist technique or anything like that. I really tried very hard to do that, and when I went to Yale—it must have been about the first week I was in—I had blocked in a figure, and Savage came around and he said, now next week when he showed up, I should have a canvas there, a raw canvas, and palette all set up, and he'd show me how to proceed. I thought I'd kept that, but I can't find it any place. So he demonstrated this. Now he had a palette that was, I thought, geared to these darn murals that he was doing. That didn't involve direct observation of anything. And I kind of resented that. It was essentially an earth color palette. The shadows had to be either burnt sienna, or raw sienna. Your half [inaudible] involved raw [00:20:00] umber, or burnt umber. You didn't use any cadmium red, for example, or vermilion, or anything like that, it was earth red. Venetian red. No, light red. And terra vert for the green. You know, everything was very muted. He could use that [inaudible] reasonably French-looking. But, you know, [inaudible] mechanical, you know? And Keller was the one who really insisted on this. He was like—I don't know if you know him, have you ever interviewed him? He's still around, I think he teaches at Old Lyme Art Academy up here. He's retired from Yale now. But, so I just didn't play ball with that; I continued to try to paint the way I wanted to paint. At the very end, I did something that was a little bit cynical, I must admit. I wasn't getting very good grades. The way they graded there was, you might say, public humiliation. You turn in your canvases once a month, and then they take them, and line them up in order of quality. Then they take a piece of chalk and write on it what the grade was. They'd start usually about 60, and end up at like 92 or something like that. Very rare that anybody ever got in the 90s. So, to begin with, I was way down on the 60s. I remember overhearing a couple of the senior students that were talking about the work, and one of them said, "Well too bad about that fellow McCloy, after the first day, his are the best paintings of anybody's." But, you know, I wouldn't finish them off, and I wouldn't follow through in an academic way. At the very end, I thought, well, I'll do one their way, see what happens. So I did that, and I—the grade was 90. I was way at the other end. There wasn't anything I couldn't do, [00:22:00] it was just, I didn't want to do it. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —were these teachers at all, ever seemed to be enthusiastic about what you were doing?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh no. No, nobody paid any attention. There was no personal relationship. There was good—as I think in every art school—good camaraderie among the students. Morale among the students was high; there was a lot of it out there. But I didn't see any evidence of any close relationship with the faculty. Probably because most of the faculty came from New York.

ROBERT BROWN: They commuted up.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. My drawing teacher was a man named Runye [ph], who was a sculptor. He drew a little bit like Bridgman, and I thought my drawing at the end of the year was poorer than it had been when I came, because his focus really was on efficacy of anatomy and surface finish. And the only thing he said about quality and drawing, or placement, was, begin about this far from the top of the page, and end that far from the bottom of the page. You know, that kind of instruction—again, this is a whole year in which nobody ever said anything about what the whole question of art was all about.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you get a chance while at Yale to talk to others in art history, or some of the other people who were around?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, the art history crowd—I took an art history class, and my grade on it was 102, but they had a bonus system for a paper.

ROBERT BROWN: Who was that?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: It was Rathbone [ph], who also taught the composition course, so he wasn't really a professional art historian. And that was an area of which I was terribly compulsive, and I read every book I could get my hands on—especially hot on CNEs.

ROBERT BROWN: But you would meet people beyond the school of fine arts. I mean—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —no. No, we had some exchange with the architecture students, because there were common problems. But I wasn't directly involved in that.

ROBERT BROWN: Did that also seem to be like, still quite Beaux-Art, the school of architecture?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh yeah. No, you see these—they're dragging up [00:24:00] these renderings—no, the rendering was fabulous. Now I took this, what, the last few months I was involved in the, that third-year program, which was a Beaux-Art program, and the focus there was essentially on rendering. Architecture were better at it than the studio people were. When they did a mutual problem; the architects always did the rendering, not the painters. So the painters, maybe we could contribute as mural designers, but the actual rendering was done by the architect.

ROBERT BROWN: As you went back, did you keep up with a number of your fellow students? Did you see how they turned out? How could they ever shake free of that very rigid [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No. As a matter of fact, you know, the people who were there when I was there, there are a couple of names that appeared. One usually in a very negative context, a fellow named Zorthian, who is now in Los Angeles, still doing what he was doing at Yale. He had a very bizarre, kind of morbid imagination. Technically, he was very skilled, very powerful kind of painter. He's probably still doing this. And now it's kind of kitsch. The other one is Warren Doolittle. That should be a name now. There were several others that—Warren Doolittle went to the University of Illinois, and—

ROBERT BROWN: —but he too never shook free of that?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I don't think so.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you think maybe these fellow students, many of them really weren't very, didn't have a great expressive urge, really? They were essentially extremely skilled craftsmen? They were inclined to be that?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: It's hard to say, you know, if you're really going to be interested in art, why would you go to Yale? You know, in those days. Now you might go to Yale, you're not going to get any better instruction at Yale now, in my view, but you're going to have very sophisticated students, and a very good contact with New York. [00:26:00] But—

ROBERT BROWN: —then that wasn't the case.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, there was no contact with New York, and they were not sophisticated students, they were hard working students.

ROBERT BROWN: You weren't ever encouraged to go to New York to look around?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I went there a couple times, I didn't have any money. You know, my \$500, that was it. I had to pay tuition, materials, and I worked for my board, and so I didn't really have the money to go in. But I did go in a couple of times. Nothing, it's a pretty strange kind of thing, but that—essentially that's the old academic discipline, you know? It still exists, in fact it's coming back a little bit here and there. Why, I haven't the slightest idea. I can't find a philosophic justification for its coming back. It's just as irrelevant as it was in those days.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, were you glad to go back to Iowa in some ways? You started in '34—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —no, I was at loose ends, you know—1934, you know, what was anybody to do?

ROBERT BROWN: Was there pressure for you to find some kind of job?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I don't remember being, having pressure put on me. I didn't really any problems, because when I went back, I was offered a graduate assistantship in psychology. I didn't apply for

anything. This fellow Meier, Norman Meier came around to see me, and wanted to know if I had a job, and I said no, I didn't, and I was trying to get this money to go back to Yale, and he said, "Well, how about being a graduate assistant in psychology?"

ROBERT BROWN: Why did you think you wanted to go back to Yale?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Inertia, I guess. [Laughs.] So, you know, I started a program. I hadn't gotten into the courses that I wanted to get, but I really wanted to get into that temper course that Louie York was teaching.

ROBERT BROWN: Why, was he known to be a little more exciting as a teacher?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, no, it was, I thought the work they did in that course was more interesting than any other courses. No, Louie was not a particularly exciting teacher, but it was a course that—[00:28:00] well, I suppose I was interested in methods to some extent, and—but you, there was a waiting list for that, and just coming in as a second-year student, you know, I couldn't get in. But no, it was mostly inertia, I was like, well, I'll go on and try to finish the program. But—

ROBERT BROWN: —Norman Meier offered you a—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —graduate assistantship. Now this was, I had taken a course in psychology of art, as an undergraduate I took two courses in psychology. I took the basic course in psychology, and then I took the psychology of art course.

ROBERT BROWN: Was it a very theoretical sort of thing? Did it pique your interest?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No. As a matter of fact, no, it kind of bored me. I always liked Meier, but I didn't really have a great deal of respect for his insight into art, or anything else for that matter. But he offered me this, and I kind of shrugged my shoulders and I said, "Well, why not?" That's about what it boiled down to. So, you know, I had this degree in psychology, but it was not because I had any great interest in psychology. All the courses were the straight psychology master's courses. And I did them, I would say, reasonably conscientiously, I was a little rebellious, a little arrogant once in a while.

ROBERT BROWN: What were they about, I mean just in general, teaching you to measure things, survey things?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: You mean the art?

ROBERT BROWN: The standards of psychology courses.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, just basic courses, psychology of adolescence, psychology of childhood, I took statistics courses, I took laboratory psychology, that type of thing. And I suppose I got A's and B's in most of them. The one—I would say I was an obnoxious person from time to time—was the course in psychology in childhood taught by a very distinguished [00:30:00] person, Beth Wellman. I was only vaguely interested; that was a course you more or less had to take, so I took it. On her examinations, she always had one question where that was to associate an author's name, or the experimenter's name, to the search problem. You know, match the author with the product. I was interested in the product, I couldn't care less who—

ROBERT BROWN: —who'd done it.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —who'd done it, right. And, I knew she was going to ask this question. She did it every time, every test. So, when the question came up, I wrote the message to Beth Wellman, saying that I knew you were going to ask this question, I said, but I didn't think it was worth my time studying for this. These are the associations I remember. Well, that doesn't [inaudible] do on a test. But if she had—if I'd been serious about psychology, I never would have done it. I didn't really care, and actually I can remember about two-thirds of them anyway. But—

ROBERT BROWN: —so you found a lot of this was just wasteful [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, why spend time doing that? It's a little bit—yeah, in art history I ran into the same kind of thing once in a while, [inaudible] your question, identify this slide, and tell me what museum it's in. I always felt that was a little bit irrelevant. Well, it isn't in some respects, because if you go to Europe, yeah, I bumped into—when I did my dissertation, I did it on Hugo van der Goes, and I forgot what museum, a major one in Scotland is, and it wasn't in the museum that I thought it was, and I suddenly stumbled on it, and I should have remembered that, at least in my own field.

ROBERT BROWN: That'd be the [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. But no, that's the kind of thing I—

ROBERT BROWN: —you broke that, you say you went the summer of '35, you traveled in Europe.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Was that just general travel with friends, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, alone. [00:32:00]

ROBERT BROWN: Now what impelled you there, to do that?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, see I was still painting, I'd never given up the idea that art was my major field, just because I was in psychology. And I had a little bit of money, \$52.50 a month, I saved, I was living at home. And my mother, like most mothers, are more supportive than your fathers. Even in the Depression, she saved a little bit of money, and she gave me a couple hundred dollars, and that was enough for me to go. I've forgotten how much, or how little I had. It cost me \$120, or \$110 roundtrip on a freighter to go. And I was over there for four weeks, took two weeks to get there, and two weeks to come back on the freighter. It was a freighter that was used mainly to transport mules. Fortunately, there were no mules on it when I went over, because we ran into a couple of hurricanes that were, you know—the thing was making no progress, and bouncing up and down, and mules get seasick, too. You know, [inaudible] very unpleasant. But I—I knew pretty much what I wanted to see. And I went to Holland, and Belgium, and France, and Italy.

ROBERT BROWN: You went to paint, or mainly to go to museums?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I didn't take any painting stuff. I just—

ROBERT BROWN: —this opened up, because you'd really only been to essentially one, or seen very little museums before [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, but you know, I had read an awful lot, and—

ROBERT BROWN: —did it look a lot different, and seem quite stunning?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, but in fact, you know, I went to places that I had a particular interest in, and a couple of them for general surveying. For example, I went to Brussels World's Fair, because they had some big art collections at these fairs, and I knew I'd see major works. Now it just was, I looked at churches, and I looked at early Christian [00:34:00] mosaics. I was particularly fascinated with those, so in Rome, I was scrounging all over the place for that kind of stuff. And my major interest at that time really was Italian Renaissance painting. And I wasn't that interested in Flemish painting, and also early Christian stuff, for some reason or another—I was very interested in early Christian, particularly the mosaics. So, you know, that was a generous gesture on my parents' part, because they didn't really have any money. My father's salary was being cut every year, because of the Depression. And so, I came back and finished up the psychology, got my degree, and I was a little rebellious, and again, I was a little bit insolent then. I've been embarrassed by this since that time. Because I was very unkind to Norman Meier, who was very supportive all the time. And he had quite a body of people working for him in graduate assistants, and we were putting out a bulletin periodically with articles. And he took, he was the one who suggested the research topic I was working on, which had to do with some kind of measurement of creative imagination in children. And so, I did it in a conscientious way, did the statistics and all that stuff. When I got through, my essential conclusion was that really, what we'd done was a waste of time. So, I didn't really measure anything, I redefined what we meant by creative imagination, that, my redefinition appeared in subsequent literature, as a matter of fact. I referred to it as active creative imagination, and passive creative imagination.

ROBERT BROWN: The distinction being?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, there are some people who are very perceptive, and they can read out of works of art [00:36:00] what the artist put in, or they can read out of it some very significant things, but they can't create anything themselves. And I think that's true, and others can do it the other way around. And they, they're both creative imagination, per se, but you're not quite sure what you're measuring. And I try to work out a measure of one and then a true measure of the other. We can do better on the so-called passive. Although I never was quite sure because our control was not reliable. When they tried to say now the right response to this is such and such, they'd ask 10 experts to come up with the right response. But the—first of all, I didn't think the experts were experts, and their agreement had to be kind of statistical, and statistical, and not necessarily related to quality. But anyway, when it got through, Meier asked me to extract three or four aspects of my paper, and write them up for publication. And I said, I didn't really want to do that, I was bored with the whole thing, you know, and I refused to do it. Now that's not very [inaudible]. And so he did it, and he said, "Well do you mind if I do it?" So, he did it, and it's published with his name and my name. Which is, I mean it never, I didn't want to take credit for it; if he left my name on it, I would never have objected. And so, then he wanted me

to stay on—actually, I was offered a job. I decided when I got my master's, I'd better get a job. By this time, I was married, and—

ROBERT BROWN: —had you met your wife there as a student?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: She was a secretary of Meier's. That's where I met her. She was working in the psychology department. And so we were married, and she had, she was getting a salary, [00:38:00] and I was getting a salary. Well, Meier—well, I got a job at Brownsville, Texas. At a junior college and a high school, and I applied for it through a teacher's agency. This job came up, I applied for it, I was offered the job, I accepted the job. I never went down there. I was to get paid something like \$1,200 a year to teach courses all over the place, including courses that demanded certification, which I'd never had. And I wrote to the president [inaudible] I said, you know, how can I teach this course? You know, I'm not, I'm not certified. He said, "Well come on down, we'll take care of it. But, the head of the graduate school was Carl Seashore, at the University of Iowa.

ROBERT BROWN: Seashore?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, you've probably heard that name.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, how do you spell it?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Like seashell on the seashore.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, really?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Now he was one of the father figures of psychology in this country, the man responsible for musical aptitude tests, and for art aptitude tests, the Meier Seashore art aptitude test, really stems more from Seashore's ideas. Well, he heard I was taking this job down there, and he thought that was a disaster, and he called me in and said, why didn't I stay on as a graduate assistant, but shift to the art department? And I thought about it, I said that's fine, I'd rather do that than go down there to Brownsville and do all these things that I didn't know anything about. Which also seemed to include coaching basketball.

[END OF 1 OF 7 SIDE B.]

ROBERT BROWN: [00:00:00] The second tape, William McCloy. We were last talking about your marriage in June of '36, and then your teaching in 1936 and '37, while as a graduate assistant. Department of art. You switched into the department of art at the University of Iowa. You taught studio art, I gather, and it seems from what you said earlier that you had the students look into the methods, the technique, of the Old Master painters. Was this possibly a carryover from something of your instruction at Yale, or what were you, was it simply your interest? You had that trip to Europe, I know. Which—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —yeah, if I told you that, that isn't quite accurate. Because I ran into problems. Some personality problems, mostly mine. That, I had a nice little long—not little, a long knock-down, drag-out fight with the man who was in charge of the funds, who had nothing to do with the art department. He was George Stoddard, who subsequently became, what, superintendent of education in the state of New York. He was dean of the graduate school, and he was in charge of the funds. The funds actually belonged to the child welfare department, not the art department. They were making a very special dispensation, you know, favor to me to use these funds to continue my support, but working for the art department.

ROBERT BROWN: Really? And child welfare department?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Child welfare, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Had they helped sponsor some of your psychology of art studies?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, the—

ROBERT BROWN: —that's how they got—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —that's, yeah, I got the fund originally from the child welfare department for psychology of art. And] they were very supportive; [00:02:00] they got me out of this Brownsville job. And they continued me with these same funds. That's when I had the little argument with Meier, because he really wanted me to keep the funds in his department, because he needed them. But they hadn't told me that they expected me to teach, me to teach classes. And I got, when I look back on it now, it's kind of stupid, I thought they really kind of double crossed me a little bit. I thought I really was just going to be supported to do painting and take classes. But, where this Old Master technique came in was, they said also that I had to write a report about my painting to justify this too. I couldn't just paint. So, I thought to a project, Mark Sterner's [ph] book on materials and methods of the Old Masters had just come out. I was reading it and I thought, this is interesting.

And I thought, okay, what if I make kind of a systematic survey of the methods of the Old Masters, and I'll write a report about my findings on it. And they, that seemed to satisfy them on that. Then I had to teach a course—it was a freshman art course, beginning course, in the art department. Actually, I didn't mind either one of them. You know, once I calmed down, and I knew Stoddard very well, I used to play golf with him, otherwise I never would have had all these big arguments with him. You know, he had a worse temper than I did. He could throw his golf clubs farther than I could ever throw mine. But, so I taught this freshman class, it was not a good class, I followed the outlines that they had had, and the six weeks of teaching perspective, or something like that. And then, [00:04:00] did a little bit of teaching of, kind of, abstract drawing, which had nothing to do with perspective, and it was kind of a mishmash course. And nobody really had thought it through very well.

ROBERT BROWN: But they had abstract drawing, by the way?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Was that a fairly new introduction?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, it was—yeah, but then they went from that into something else. Now, it didn't really reflect the philosophy of the department, whatever philosophy it was. Somebody should write up the history of the department at that particular stage, because it's really quite interesting. You know, when I was an undergraduate, modern art in Iowa was kind of a modified Impressionism, under the leadership of a man named Cummings, who had established an art department at the University of Iowa. At the—

ROBERT BROWN: —what was his first name?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: It wasn't e.e. I think it was Charles C. Cummings. I think that's right. And he was actually not a very good painter, the only paintings I've seen of his recently are portraits he did from photographs of the founding fathers of the State University of Iowa. But he was responsible for starting the department, he was chairman of the department for a long time, and he hired most of the people who were teachers when I was there. And people forget that, how recently Impressionism really was thought of as kind of radical modernism in this country, and especially in the Midwest. So the department was very, very conservative. About 1935—I think it's the year I was at Yale, maybe '34—Carnegie apparently sponsored—

ROBERT BROWN: —the Carnegie Foundation?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, they brought Lester Longman in as head of the department. I don't know what engineering went into that. Do you know what, who Lester Longman is at all?

ROBERT BROWN: No. [00:06:00]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Is that not a familiar name?

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Well, his job really was, in a sense, to modernize and bring the art department up to date. And well Lester—

ROBERT BROWN: —so this had occurred through the intervention of a dean, or someone who thought it should be up to date?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No. That I haven't the slightest idea about. Longman was, is a philosophy major originally from Princeton, has a PhD and something to do with medieval art, as I recall. He had taught in Canada before he came—from Master's College, I think, someplace in Ontario. Before he came, he had no particular reputation, but he had a kind of a mandate, about maybe a year off on this, because meanwhile, Grant Wood had been hired as artist-in-residence. They had this nice new art building they built; they brought Grant Wood in, who had a state reputation. Then they brought Lester Longman in. Well, Grant Wood and Longman were polite to each other most of the time; they didn't see eye to eye about anything. Now meanwhile, I was over in the psychology department, getting rumors about the battles going on over there. And when I moved in to teach classes, Wood was still teaching, and Longman was bringing in his instructors, and you know, the place was in a little bit of a turmoil. Well, Longman, in the history of American art, has a fairly important position. Someday somebody will recognize it. But his idea of modern was essentially van Gogh, Gauguin, that generation. And the instructors he hired today would be considered very, very conservative, but for Iowa they were very modern. Included people like well, Jim Lechay [ph], Eugene Ludins [ph] is probably not a name [00:08:00] that means anything to you. And Lasansky, you know, Lasansky essentially is a Picasso-based artist, Picasso really, in our present context, is not modern. You know, he's the last of the old masters, in a sense. But—

ROBERT BROWN: —these were the people brought in by Longman?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Right. And all the people I studied with were eased out—a little bit like the Yale situation, when Albers came in. Those that had no tenure were dropped. The ones that had tenure—one was not dropped, not because he was particularly good, but because he played tennis, and Longman liked to play tennis. I mean this is all—I would say literally the fact that he was probably the weakest of the people there, and was the most recent one brought in. And he stayed until he retired, a man named Oakerville [ph]. The one who had tenure, the former acting chairman, she was never given the title of chairman, a woman named Catherine McCartney, ended up having no classes. Her name would appear in the catalogue, but nobody ever recommended that a student study with her, so she did nothing. Same situation that was at Yale, you know, with Keller and Rathbone, and people like that.

ROBERT BROWN: But when Albers came in, yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. So, and meanwhile there was this cleavage, Grant Wood versus Longman.

ROBERT BROWN: So, and Wood was more conservative in his outlook, was he, than Longman?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. The Wood situation was a very strange one. And again, you have to know a little bit about the history of what was happening in Iowa. I first heard of Wood, probably while I was still in undergraduate. Mainly through his influence on the state fair. The major place to exhibit in Iowa was the state fair. In fact, that was probably the only place to exhibit except in your college [00:10:00] galleries. They had been under the domination of the Iowa Art Guild, I think was the name of it, a very conservative outfit. In fact, when I was a senior, I was invited to be a member of the Iowa Art Guild. I was considered to be a promising academic painter. And even though I didn't do anything except that, I turned it down. Somehow, I felt very uneasy about identifying myself in an academic art institution. But meanwhile, Wood began to influence the kind of things being shown. And it was controversial, they used to reproduce these things in the *Des Moines Register* and so on, and his brand of Modernism really was slightly more—this is, the term I use advisedly—a little bit more abstract thinking about design, because his own procedure—I don't know if you know this—is based on dynamic symmetry, it's a very mechanical way of perceiving. And concerned with more contemporary subject matter. And enough to escape this still life and landscape, the nude, and so on, which had dominated before that. And when I was a psychology student, I had my—I first met Wood, in a sense, by accident. He volunteered—because he made a big reputation with *American Gothic*, and was now a statewide-known figure, in fact a nationally-known figure. He volunteered to have an open criticism for anybody that wanted to bring things in, so like once a month, or whatever it was. That's about the same time he established the Stone City Art College, which only lasted I think one, maybe two summers. Well, they had to find a suitable place on the campus. They used my studio—so the psychology people had let me use a little operating room as a studio, because nobody was using it. I had it all set up. [00:12:00] And they were looking for a place where they had seats, and this, this ability, and somebody said, what about this place where McCloy's working? And they brought him around—I have the photograph here of the studio. He used the photograph of my studio as a publicity photograph. So, people were to come. So, I was kind of forced out of my studio as a consequence of that. That's when I first met him, you know. He came to look at it, I showed him the space.

ROBERT BROWN: What was he like?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Hmm?

ROBERT BROWN: What was he like?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, my relationship with Wood, we were always very pleasant. He was a very quiet-spoken, always good humored looking, you know, he had this round, kind of beaming face. Actually, a very complicated kind of personality. And I'm sure you've read about the quirks that he had. I used the studio after I became an undergraduate assistant. I shared the studio with this art teacher friend of mine. And he still hadn't been let go. He was on the way out, but he let me use the studio, and I painted more hours of the day than he did. And I was right next door to Wood's studio in the same building. And he used to ask me to come in once in a while and look at what he was doing. He was peeking at what I was doing. But we never really had any very direct arguments, or anything like that. He gave me a few suggestions once in a while, because he was a teacher and I was a student. And I was always invited to go to his formal openings, which he opened—when he finished a painting, which wasn't very often, he'd have a very, very formal opening to which all the dignitaries in town were invited, and it was on an easel with, you know, [inaudible]. And so, he treated me in a sense as a peer. He was very pleasant that way. Before I entered the department again, [00:14:00] I had been very critical of the way he taught. Especially the way he taught painting, and I still think it's probably the worst way to teach painting that's ever been devised.

ROBERT BROWN: Why?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Now he'd take a class of people who had never done any painting before in their lives, at the end of the year, they would have done one painting. Because they followed his cut and dried procedure,

they'd make preliminary drawings, they'd make a cartoon on wrapping paper, divide the rectangle into thirds, make all these connecting lines, that's the system he would force that scheme into that network of lines, complete that as a charcoal drawing, and then go through all these stages of canvas buildup that he went through. And at the end of the year they'd have a painting that looked just about like a Grant Wood. So he used his—by the time he was teaching that, the painting class, he used a whole set of assistants to go through these stages. He had a man named McCray who did a lot of his drawing for him. A man named Allen who did the preparation of the panel, and the preliminary putting those colors in flat. By that time, see, Wood was up to the stage where he did the final work. And so, he divided his labor up that way, in a very systematic way. Students did it. And I think, you know, how are you going to learn to paint? You're all going to end up painting like Grant Wood, and you really haven't learned anything about materials at all. So I was very critical of that. As a matter of fact, he was eased out of that kind of thing. I mean, he was teaching figure drawing, which had its own problems. Wood—now I never saw this directly. So I just have to go from what I was told by people who took classes with him, because I didn't, you know, I didn't take any classes with him. He couldn't stand to be in the same room [00:16:00] with a nude female model. So, he had an assistant, this fellow McCray. So when they had a female model, McCray did the work with the students. When it was a male model, Wood would do it the work with the students. So, you know, he had his own psychological quirks. But you know, as I—he was probably the right man in the right place. And he made a break in the department from the academic approach that really was kind of an obsolete approach. It was a transition to Longman's approach, which really wasn't nearly as modern as Longman thought it was. So I'd say Longman's major position in history will come from establishing a graduate program, which became known as the Iowa Plan, which practically universally is used in graduate schools from MFAs and so on, around the United States.

ROBERT BROWN: And how have the—what was, could you describe it? What was it?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Hmm?

ROBERT BROWN: What was that plan? What—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —well essentially, I suppose what is the central thesis was that to be an effective artist in this day and age, you had to have a good solid background in art history and principles of criticism, so you would have some knowledge of what you're about, and the significance of what you're doing. And MFAs have to write a thesis—that part they've abandoned, they don't write theses anymore. So, this graduate program, built up both in art history and in the studio, was dominated by studio. All the art history was kind of handmade for the studio people. Which caused some friction with people like Heckscher who thought of art history as the climactic [00:18:00] kind of activity, if anybody engaged it.

ROBERT BROWN: Was Heckscher there by then?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Heckscher was brought in by Longman, yeah, and became the dominant art history figure. Well, he built up both areas, and then had no real art history part of that. And I think the very strong art history class. Longman himself taught mainly a freshman class, lectures accompanied the studio. And no, I [inaudible] that's not correct. He taught the basic art history class, which was 50% theory, and 50% art history. And this was for freshmen. You should look at this—the vocabulary is so abstruse, and the ideas are so complex, for people coming in from Iowa rural communities in particular, you know, it's a terrible strain. And I had, later on, when I came back another time, I had to serve as graduate assistant in that area, too. And the comprehension of those issues was tough on the graduate assistants, because they weren't used to thinking in those terms, either.

ROBERT BROWN: Was Longman himself, he was, he tended to muddy things? Or he tended to talk very, in a very rarified way?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, no, he used big vocabulary, and he always refused to translate his own words. He used the argument—I'm sure you've heard it before, that if you don't understand the word, you really should go and look it up. You'll retain it better if you look it up than if I tell you what it means, or use some kind of alternate vocabulary. But by bringing in relatively important American artists to be the teachers. He brought in Fletcher Martin, who was another one. And he finally got Lasansky, and by building up the art history department, he made a much stronger department. And he, where his influence on American [00:20:00] development came in is, he started to develop a graduate program for people to be chairmen. And he wanted to have a PhD for the administrator, and not just art history PhDs—he had a studio PhD for a while which he really thought of as a PhD for administrators. Because he wanted to send his little disciples out around the country. And in a sense, I became one of those disciples, because I went out and I became a chairman [ph]. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —how would he train you in administration? Teach you how—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —well, no never in administration in the sense of, how do you talk to your secretary or file, or anything like that. No, it was the general philosophy of, you know, what's behind being a successful

artist, or an important artist. In many ways, he was very conservative. And he subsequently, he went from there to UCLA, and then he had a big hassle in UCLA, because he was one of the first to say that, you know, we people who are art educators have been hoodwinked by the Jackson Pollack kind of thing, and you know, we'd been had—the line the candidate came up with. And in fact, I gave you that letter from Casper Wymer [ph], but when I wrote and said, you know, Longman really was more conservative, right from the beginning, which he really was. But at least what he has was a point of view that insisted that there was a relationship between society and the work of art, and there was, you know, that he had meant something besides just being a pretty picture, and it wasn't escapist, or something, levels of consequence [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: So that was a useful corrective for the students [00:22:00] to realize that art wasn't, didn't just exist in isolation? [Crosstalk.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, it certainly—yeah, it was certainly a very stimulating environment, and I think all the students, all of—and nobody ever warmed up to Longman, because he was kind of a cold fish. But, they all had an enormous respect for his program. And they were really proselyters [ph] and there are plenty of them floating around, even now, that yeah, the great verbalizing among some of your teachers around here, in many cases, have been influenced by the Iowa Plan. But meanwhile, I tended to—so I was trying to be a painter, I spent most of my time in the studio. But I was forced by this need for written paper to deal with this Old Master technique stuff. And in many ways, I've thought about something [inaudible] that probably was unfortunate [inaudible] because I had been painting quite well, I couldn't paint any better, you know, in a more direct painting way, and all of a sudden, I had to sit down and be much more methodical. And, you know, now if I paint more freely, it's almost an artificial thing, and I have to, you know, switch gears, and I'm doing something totally different. I think it did, has led to this fact that I jump around from one kind of thing to another. It didn't, I must say, hurt the exhibit, exhibition development. Because when I was a graduate student there, I began to show in national shows with no problems at all. As a matter of fact, I got into everything that I submitted to.

ROBERT BROWN: You would do this on your own? I mean, would the school pack and send things off for you? [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, they didn't [inaudible]. Yeah, I had to build the crates, and—

ROBERT BROWN: —and these shows were some of importance, I mean the Art Institute of Chicago, for example. Its exhibitions were sort of national attention?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, [00:24:00] in those days, galleries didn't play that important a part. If you wanted to establish a reputation for yourself—I suppose if you lived in New York, you still did it through galleries, although there were competitions in New York. But otherwise, every major museum in the country had a competitive show, a juried show. And the results of these were published in the few art magazines we had, and your name gradually would be known. I think people still were looking for galleries, but there certainly weren't that many galleries. And well, in looking back, in fact I'm always surprised to pick up an old painting. Usually, I forgot that I ever showed the painting, [inaudible] and for a while, I kept rather systematic notes, I had photographs of where [ph] shown here and there. And I got one out [inaudible] right now, a small painting like this, of an artist associated with the University of Wisconsin. I'd forgotten I ever showed it. I showed it in two places, Pennsylvania Academy, and the National Academy of Design. But that's what you did. I mean when you did something, you looked around for places to show it, show it three or four times, then you retire it. At least that's what I did.

ROBERT BROWN: Were you just partly curious to see what reaction would be? Were you filled with trepidation, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, you know, people still do this, in a way. If you're applying for a job, you have to write down your professional experience. You write down all of these little places where you've shown, or had somebody write up, write something about your work. It's much harder for people today to come up with an impressive list of names. They tend to be small community shows, or something like that. I'm always surprised that they put these in. You know, they have a painting in the Groton Public Library or something like that. In those days, at least we had a chance to say, [00:26:00] well, major museums, and I continued this up until the time I was drafted [ph]. I was having no problems, you know, you get turned down every once in a while—that's discouraging, it's expensive if nothing else. You had to pay it one way in any case; if you're accepted, usually the museum will send back, at their expense. If you had to pay it both ways, I mean pay for the crate and for somebody like Budwurst [ph] to handle it. You know, it really became kind of prohibitive. Especially in the Depression, where you're really investing something every time you do this. Nobody expected to sell anything, it was just—

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —a comparable, a publish or perish, you know, exhibit, make a reputation, or get out

and do something else.

ROBERT BROWN: There was some pressure, actually.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, most of the pressure was self-induced, but there had been pressure in the, on the faculty, even in the early days when I was starting out. They were expected to show, especially at the National Academy of Design. And if they didn't get things in to get publicity for the department, that was a black mark against them, I guess—whatever kind of recrimination they might have had otherwise.

ROBERT BROWN: This sounds like it was a time in the administration [inaudible] trying to upgrade the school, or at least make it known for quality. [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Again, this fellow Seashore was really mainly responsible. Hence his position in relationship with the arts is, I suppose it's been recognized. But he pushed the drama department, and said, so you should give a degree for the more creative aspect of it, you know, for directing, [00:28:00] or writing a play, [laughs] instead of just a history of. And give a degree for painting pictures, or an artist's workshop is there, all stem from that pressure that he put on the administration to accept the creative arts as a dignified aspect of the curriculum. So, good old Seashore, because he has a building named after him [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] did you get to know him a bit?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh yeah. Matter of fact, I made some caricatures of him that he heard about, and asked me to come up to his office. I got the call one time when I was a graduate student. Seashore wanted to see me, so I went up there. He says, "I hear you've done a caricature of me. I want to see it." Actually I knew him quite well, because you know, he was very friendly with my father, you know, and particularly, he was a very interesting guy, he still played golf and when he was about 90, he had to force him—all of them were about the same age, they'd go out there, slowest foursome in history. They'd go 150 yards down the fairway, but never to one side, you know, boom, boom, boom, and they kept it right up to the bitter end. He was a very unusual character. Dry humored kind of guy.

ROBERT BROWN: What was his background? What was his background in?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, he was—I don't know anything about his origins. He was Swedish, [inaudible] something like that, with his name, translated into Seashore. And he was a psychologist, essentially. I told you, he was in this psychology of music, and psychology of art, and so right from the beginning, he had that kind of interest.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you get along well with Longman?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. [00:30:00] For a variety of reasons, partly because I also played tennis. [Laughs.] But uh, I always got along well with Longman.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, after one year there, then you got a position at Drake University in Des Moines.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you feel you needed to get a job, another—a better job, be out on your own?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, yeah, I wasn't working seriously on a degree. Um, I took—I committed to take art history. I took art history, even in the summer. Because I wasn't doing anything else, I might as well go to school, you know? And I took the art history course. No actually, I was looking for a job all the time, and I've forgotten how I got information about this Drake job, but so, I applied, and they were interested in maybe, two things. One was, was I married? Because some fellow had been there before, and had not been married, and he'd gotten into some hanky-panky with some of the girls. And in those days, you didn't do that. And they also wanted to know if I would come for \$1,200. And I said no. That, you know, I could stay—Patty was making something like \$76 a month, and I was making \$52.50 still, and so we were having an interesting life. I could stay on more or less indefinitely that way. And so I said no, I wouldn't do it for \$1,200. So after a week, they raised it to \$1,600. So, I really preferred to be out of the graduate assistant business. So I took the job. Now I was at Drake for two years. And not particularly eventful years, I had very little time for my own work. Because I had classes, I forget—about five or six days a week, but most class days, it began at 8:00 to 5:00, [00:32:00] solid, except I had six hours, 8:00 to 10:00. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, I had no class until 10:00, but otherwise, I was booked solid all day long.

ROBERT BROWN: So they really worked you.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and I taught two art history classes, and I taught crafts, and things like that I no interest in. I taught a design class, which I'd never taken. Had no interest in.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible] were you about it?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Two.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: A woman named Edith Goldman, who was the surviving faculty member, she was the chairman. I taught one half, and she taught everything else. It was that kind of situation. Her background was quite different from mine. We were friendly, and I had a philosophy of teaching at that time which I modified, that I would say essentially, pretty naïve students are pretty passive. And I worked them very hard in art history. And the studio, I worked them very hard, but mainly by insisting that they carry things through as far as they could, and if they get bored with something, then I would challenge them [inaudible]. I mean that's the best you can do, but you know, you never can really say that's the best you can do, [inaudible]. That was a very effective way with the Drake students. But, I don't know. It's kind of a dead-end situation. And in the middle of the second year, I pretty well decided that I'd try to get out, and go someplace else. And I signed up with a teacher's agency someplace in Chicago. The crowning touch there was, I was offered the chairmanship, which I thought was kind of dirty pool. They wanted to ease this woman out. [00:34:00] Not to get rid of her, but to say, "No, you're not chairman anymore, McCloy's going to be chairman." And I didn't think that was very fair, after all she worked hard, and I didn't want to be chairman. [Laughs.] And uh, she should have it, you know, I didn't want it, so I thanked them very much and said I would go someplace else. And because I did some exhibiting, I did get a number of paintings done, and I did get enough money to go to Europe again in the summer for a little bit longer.

ROBERT BROWN: Summer of '39?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and Patty, she was working downtown in, for some—for her brother-in-law, he's a psychologist, and—

ROBERT BROWN: —another one. [Laughs.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —so you went to Europe then, following your stint at Drake in '39? Or was it the summer before?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: It was '38, [inaudible] between, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Before the war.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, because I remember, like when we came back, I had to give a slide lecture to the women's club or something like that. So, it was between my two years at Drake University.

ROBERT BROWN: What was Europe like, on that second visit?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, it was altered. And in some respects, I suppose the first time I was over there, France in particular must have been at the lowest point of its prosperity, it must have been an absolute disaster. Because one thing that had struck me was the prevalence of prostitutes every place in Paris. You couldn't walk down the street without having these girls come out and grab you by the arm, you know; they were kind of fighting about you. And so I warned Patty, I said, "When we go to Paris," I said, "you're going to see these girls all over the place. And it's kind of disturbing, because some of them obviously were very desperate." [00:36:00] I didn't see a single one. The Queen of England—the King or Queen of England? I guess that's—

ROBERT BROWN: —King then.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. They were coming over to visit, an official visit, and they were cleaning up the town, they got all these women off the streets, and the whole personality of the city had been cleaned up and changed. It took some of the playful aspect out, they used to have carnivals in the street, I used to hear a lot of music, and that was all gone, everything was very formal. But otherwise, see I remember that particular visit with the greatest fondness. Poverty is a great thing for people who are interested in the arts, you know, when they get processed, they build new structures, and tear old structures down. [Laughs.] And it spoils things in a way, so I suppose that was, you know, the war was being, was appearing, trains were full of people in uniform, particularly in France. And they had not been there three years before when I was there. And you could feel the tension building up, after all, '38 was a critical time. But we had a marvelous time, it didn't cost very much, hotels were a dollar and a half.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you go to other countries as well? Did you go to Germany, Italy?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, it was the same, same countries, so we spent most of the time in, in well, France and Italy, and didn't get as far south.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, this was—oh also, while you were at Drake, you were, you indicated you were a founding member of the Midwest Art Conference.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Can you explain what that was?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, it—yeah, it's kind of a Midwestern equivalent of the College Art Association. But this, I think this must have been Longman's idea. Now I'm not sure about this. They were trying to coordinate, [00:38:00] or cooperate among the colleges that had art departments in the Midwest. But a lot of people, I think, had felt and still feel that organizations like the College Art Association are too big, there are just too many schools, and you don't have a chance to kind of exchange ideas, and things like that. And so I was called as a Drake representative to, actually went to Chicago, and we had organizing meetings about this to establish some kind of philosophy about what we're trying to do. You know, I didn't even remember that until when Longman was—because he was getting ready to retire, or something like that. I got a memo saying, you were one of the founding members of, of this conference, you know? I had completely forgotten that; it's true I was. That's still going strong.

ROBERT BROWN: Was that an outfit, did it make—did you see it have a, make an appreciable change on certain things? [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, yeah. [Inaudible] because they put art departments in competition with each other, and to a certain extent, I think competition among arts is not a bad thing. A lot of people say, you know, art has nothing to do with competition. But uh, they worked out exchange exhibits, and things like that. And they, you did get an opportunity for staffs to get together and discuss issues. And there was more of an orientation on studio problems, College Art Association in those days was just art history. And because right now, College Art Association was split up into so many facets, as you probably know. And studio is a very big part of it, but they also have museum studies, and they have everything under the sun. But studio orientation was really essentially unknown [00:40:00] at that time. So they had made a big contribution there. I think they're supposed to have some kind of climactic meeting this coming year at Iowa, I was going to say.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, were they mainly then studio people, in those early days?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yes, they did have some art history papers, but that was the—

ROBERT BROWN: —oh, it was that formal? You mean they had papers, and so forth?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh yeah, in fact, and they had papers. Yeah, art historians are incapable of getting down and talking about things informally. [Inaudible.]

ROBERT BROWN: I mean you studio people talked, gave papers as well.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Probably in more panel discussions. Yeah. Studio people are not much on giving papers. But there are discussions of methods, and things of that kind, and demonstrations.

ROBERT BROWN: Was the Middle West, by then, feeling fairly isolated? A little—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —well—

ROBERT BROWN: —looked—looked down upon by the East or even the West Coast?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I don't know whether they felt, I know they felt isolated, because after all, we had no journals that paid any attention to the Middle West, particularly. But, you know, I just think that in those days, oh, that an awful lot of money to send people to conferences, it's better to have it in your own backyard.

ROBERT BROWN: Sure.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: And uh, I don't think there's anything particularly defensive about it. But I suppose in a way, if you want to be a little bit negative, it's a way for somebody like Longman to increase his influence some fairly easily. He had a much bigger trouble infiltrating the College Art Association, for example. If you can't do that, you just start your own organization.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: But, it has proved to be very successful, and [00:42:00] I didn't follow it too much, because when I was in Wisconsin, the same thing was still in operation. And, but I don't remember being terribly involved within—once it got started, it started, you know, and it continued by its own momentum, and uh, is still going strong.

ROBERT BROWN: It's just something that you knew you were involved with and didn't remember much about. [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: That's right, yeah, in fact I completely forgot about it until I was reminded.

ROBERT BROWN: And it just took off on its own.

[END OF 2 OF 7 SIDE A.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [00:00:00] Now, there's—seems like a feedback [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: This is—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, this is a [ph]—

ROBERT BROWN: — May 20th, 1992, continuing the interview with William McCloy in his home in Uncasville, CT. We begin—pick up where we were talking about—we had already talked about—I guess one of your first teaching assignments was Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, 1937 to '39. And you explained to me, there was a rather modest salary and the facilities were very minimal [inaudible] were you the only teacher in art history?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT BROWN: Would that have been a studio program?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, no, actually [inaudible] the chairman was a gentleman [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Stephen Zola [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah [inaudible] craft area, I think I taught [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Craft-oriented, okay, that's because of her [ph] training, or—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well [inaudible] back and forth, schools were just starting that program [ph]. I don't know how long [ph] [inaudible] but, uh, I was asked to support the craft [ph] [inaudible] yeah, I taught the modern art course, survey course, the history of northern Renaissance [inaudible] drawing and painting, you know, this [ph] [inaudible] and so—without the facilities, without the supplies [ph] [inaudible] I refused to teach them [ph] [inaudible] and [ph] [inaudible] and, um, they learned how to paint.

ROBERT BROWN: [00:02:00] What was Edith [ph] [inaudible] nobody [ph] [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: It might have been a [ph] [inaudible] yeah, we got [ph] [inaudible] uh, I left partly because I was [inaudible] and at my [ph] current job, partly because [inaudible] the chairman, and the dean came to me and he wanted to make—he's the chairman [inaudible] second year [ph], and uh, so [ph]—and [inaudible] school [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Teaching [ph] [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: That's—that's right [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible] and, uh, [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: What kind of students did you have at the [ph] [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, let me tell you [ph] [inaudible] any other [ph] [inaudible] and [ph] [inaudible] was my own stuff [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, they weren't—see how I could [ph] [inaudible] and I wouldn't let anybody stop, uh, painting until he or she had carried that experience as far as it [ph] could be taken at that point with the [ph] [inaudible] had. So, yeah, they don't get very many paintings [ph], but they struggled, I think [ph]. And, uh, I realized what an impact I'd made on them [inaudible] summer, one of the regular painting [ph] students showed up for summer school, because he was disappointed in my successors. He didn't have that nice [ph] teacher who would, you know, [00:04:00] [inaudible] "I know you can" attitude.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: By that time, the end of the first year [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, it [ph] [inaudible] so—

ROBERT BROWN: You didn't have to drive to, like, force them to do things.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well [inaudible] at the museum in [ph] Des Moines. But the major activity was [inaudible] actually, and, um [ph] [inaudible] Madison had some pretty decent painters. Now, the person who had the major interest, Marshall Blajer [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Marshall Blajer [ph] [inaudible] living in [ph] Wisconsin.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: — to which you went in '39.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Thirty-nine, yeah, I [ph] [inaudible] get me another [ph] [inaudible] and [inaudible] at the same time I was being [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT BROWN: I thought that was unusual, given—still the [ph] Depression [inaudible] were there any notably higher-salaried [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well [ph]—

ROBERT BROWN: — you were aware of?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I mean, that—and you're lucky to have a job [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible] automatic five percent, 10 percent increase, but it [ph]—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: That didn't exist then [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah [ph]. The—just before you went [ph] [inaudible] that summer of '39, I think you said [ph] you went to the University of Iowa, where you studied fresco painting with Jean Charlot.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: How was the—he—what was he like?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well [ph] [inaudible] answer that question. I mean, he wasn't really [ph]—sort of stuck in the back, you know [inaudible] very efficient teacher [inaudible] we had to do [ph] everything [inaudible] [00:06:00] [inaudible] um, it wasn't that I was that fascinated with frescos [inaudible] a wall in the basement of the art center there [ph] [inaudible] yeah [ph]. He didn't try to tell us very much about how to do anything. He came [ph] [inaudible] himself, actually [ph] [inaudible] he volunteered [ph] [inaudible] competition [ph] [inaudible] whole summer session [ph], and I never heard anybody [inaudible] and, uh [inaudible] I gave you a notebook, I [ph] [inaudible] and as I got [ph] [inaudible] I started right in my room [ph] [inaudible] and I looked at him and I said [ph] [inaudible] still [ph] pretty good [inaudible] and I—that was rejected [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, I'd gone to [ph]—beyond that in my own [ph] [inaudible] anyway, when I did go to the [ph] [inaudible] style, I [ph] [inaudible] window, the way the sun hit that [ph]. So, I [inaudible] color palette [ph] [inaudible] used the portable [ph] [inaudible] and [00:08:00] just scratched the surface, and [ph] [inaudible] and [inaudible] so, uh—and it's a good way to get into true [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, so, at the school [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible] you've always been interested in technique and, uh [ph], perhaps that's one reason you studied with Charlot? You were curious to [ph] get some—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, yeah [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: — understanding of—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [inaudible] and I [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Uh-huh [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: — another influence he had on me [inaudible] so he was [ph] [inaudible] the next one, the—all the next one, you know, and then [ph] [inaudible] and one of the early things he explained was, uh, the wave dynamics [ph] [inaudible] that—we would have a local [ph] [inaudible] panel [ph] [inaudible] he usually diagnosed it, because it's one panel to another panel not making a certain amount of sense [ph], so—

ROBERT BROWN: This connecting divide [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and so, if you're [ph] doing three different panels, you have to—should match [ph] one panel [inaudible] a certain point, and then you [ph] [inaudible] panel starts to [ph] relate to other panels. So, uh, you know, I need dynamic tension [ph] [inaudible] never take me [ph] seriously [inaudible] but it opened up some formal [ph] solutions that I wouldn't have thought of, you know, because I tried to find a couple [ph] [inaudible] so, I thought it was a very [ph] beneficial [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Certain [ph] dynamic—you would [ph] read about it? I mean, they were very [ph] [00:10:00] [inaudible] I guess at that time [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, but [inaudible] I would say [inaudible] after I started doing [ph] [inaudible] Wesleyan [ph] University library analysis [ph] [inaudible] I had to [ph] [inaudible] I had done some research on dynamic [ph] [inaudible] 'cause I was convinced that, I don't know [ph] [inaudible] Italian [ph] [inaudible] in many respects, but there's such a dynamic [ph] [inaudible] a lot longer, and it's the—if you go into any kind of [ph] [inaudible] they stem from, uh, kind of design that led to the gothic cathedral. And they have plenty of evidence that the architecture of [ph] [inaudible] secret guilds [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: And, uh, there are analyses [ph] [inaudible] so, uh, yeah, I had [ph] [inaudible] that in the north [ph] [inaudible] and it was inflaming some of the tensions [inaudible] and [inaudible] so, they still were lighter in dynamic fulcrums, but they tried to rely on [ph] [inaudible] they took that from the Italians, the tool—not reconciled [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: No [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible] they got these [ph] [inaudible] [00:12:00] tipped up figures that are [ph] sliding down the stage [ph], and, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you—they [ph]—apparently were very, very fascinated by this [inaudible] analyzing the design.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I tried to check the [inaudible] alphabetically, because [ph] [inaudible] by looking at works by artists [inaudible] if they utilized the golden mean line, the [ph] [inaudible] but anyway [ph], I did take some encouragement [inaudible] dynamic symmetry perfectly, and I—and part of the [ph] [inaudible] and I think it's back [ph] [inaudible] you know [ph]?

ROBERT BROWN: So, do you think a lot of people [inaudible] who had a wonderful compositional sense—that they arrived at something that resembled it, but without really being conscious of dynamic symmetry [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I think the sensitivity came first [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —that somehow delayed the [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Why would you want to [ph] [inaudible] why would a—at that time, I mean, there was a heyday of interesting, not only in contemporary painters, but also in the study of Renaissance northern painting [ph] [inaudible] why would—why the interest in—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I think one of the interest [ph] [inaudible] in a way, you know [ph] [inaudible] but, um, well, most of it [inaudible] beginning of a strong [ph] anti-naturalism. So, dynamic skin [ph] [inaudible] anti-naturalism, you'll have to force things into some kind of system, and, yeah, I went to [ph] [inaudible] although [00:14:00] I could see why he did it.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I [ph] [inaudible] than I was at that time [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: So, you went there in the '39, huh [ph]? You were an instructor [inaudible] art education [inaudible] the department you were in [ph]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, yeah, there was no art department—department of art education. They had a single instructor in art education, and [inaudible] but the department was anything but an art education [inaudible] department.

ROBERT BROWN: Then what was it? Art history?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No [inaudible] to me, art [ph] [inaudible] art department [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] completely apart.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: — and this was in the education department [ph] [inaudible] as soon as I got the job, I figured out that. That was, um—so, I came in there with [inaudible] and everything [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Uh, in the winter [ph], I got a lot of the snow [ph] [inaudible] they had a fellow named James Watkins [ph] in the art department. He was a new [ph] instructor in the art department [inaudible] he taught a history of techniques course in the art department. And he was working on his PhD in art history [ph]. So, [inaudible] he resigned from the art department, took a job in department of art history [ph] [inaudible] and the art department, the art education department [inaudible] they wanted somebody, or they wanted that course and a teacher [ph]. And—so it looked like I had to [ph] [00:16:00] handle that. So, that was one thing. The other thing [inaudible] right away—at that time, painting was dominated—there's a whole [inaudible] water colors, and [inaudible] very few oil paintings [inaudible] and the university had managed—just wasn't developing any oil paintings and they—my job was to somehow make oil painting a course [inaudible] that's a pretty big demand for somebody as inexperienced as I was.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: And, um, what made [ph] [inaudible] a real gentleman of the old school [ph], and not a bad academic painter [ph], but nobody had any respect—though [ph]—very nice fellow, but nobody had any respect [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: You mean including the students?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: So, you're—you said earlier, the students were very precocious, right?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: They were—yeah, they were pretty hard-boiled and very knowledgeable [ph]. A lot of them would take [ph] private lessons with [inaudible] I think [inaudible] taking a beginning [ph] course [inaudible] and, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: In other words, they were very intense—intent, rather, beginners [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Very ambitious, yeah, yeah. And [inaudible] got fired [ph], he was—they took away his—anything [ph] [inaudible] young upstarts [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, [inaudible] worked again [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, [00:18:00] for a while, yeah, I was saying, I—I practiced the same [ph] teaching [inaudible] and that didn't work at all—

ROBERT BROWN: You mean, you couldn't just be hard-boiled and pass that [ph]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, in fact, I was [inaudible] substantively [ph], I didn't believe in at all [inaudible] and I was, like [ph] [inaudible] type of thing, and I'd do [ph] the same thing—we'd call it [ph] [inaudible] and so we didn't [ph] [inaudible] got the idea that he's—didn't think that was a very useful thing to do [ph]. And then I made a breakthrough and contacted [ph] [inaudible] I decided [inaudible] and any student in the university

could come, any [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, [inaudible] and, uh, they came [ph] [inaudible] and they brought work they'd done outside of class [inaudible] much different level. I'd assume Sandra [ph] appreciated that, and, um—and with the change, and—there was an improvement in one thing, I must say, and I don't take total credit for that. But by the end of the first year, you know, oil painting was [ph] taken over for water color [ph]. And, uh, [inaudible] had never let up after that. Now, there were other [inaudible] painters in the state that had a lot of interest, so [inaudible] never heard of [ph] [inaudible] a guy named Collin Prudy—Prudy? [00:20:00] Yeah [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, by this time, I [inaudible] abstract [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Was the [ph] same group there?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, there was this [ph] rivalry between the Madison group [ph] [inaudible] became one of the foundation things that the art group [ph] [inaudible] may still be alive [ph] [inaudible] like a modern version of a Brueghel [ph] [inaudible] sitting out on the lawn [ph] [inaudible] water color [ph] [inaudible] some sort of [inaudible] artificial color that—that painter [ph] [inaudible] I had changed, too [ph]. So—

ROBERT BROWN: He taught outside the university.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Right [inaudible] and I don't even know if I he charged anybody [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Did you get to know him a bit?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Not very—uh, no, I didn't. I mean [ph], social relationship, I never was in the studio. He never was in mine [ph]. So, uh—and students [ph], I had very close relationship with the same students [inaudible] one is actually showing—New York right now, John Wilde.

ROBERT BROWN: Wilde.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: W-I-L-D-E?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, so it [ph] [inaudible] I—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —[00:22:00] think it was [ph] [inaudible] direct [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: There's—there—any of your [ph] [inaudible] what kind of background would they come from and want the—professionally [ph] and [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I—I never ac— looked into [ph] that, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: — I didn't teach [ph]—yeah, I didn't teach many of them [ph], and, uh, [inaudible] I'm 61 [ph] [inaudible] competition [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Well, did it the state—was the [ph] University of Wisconsin [inaudible] or were there a lot of out-of-state people [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Now, most of them come out of state [ph] [inaudible] graduate program [inaudible] and that was my first contact with graduate students. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: You mean graduate students painting?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and [ph]—

ROBERT BROWN: And [ph] [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [inaudible] yeah, and [inaudible] in the summer—

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: — and he couldn't take them as [ph] undergrads [inaudible] undergraduates.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: But, uh—now [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Curry [ph] was by then an artist-in-residence with yet another school or university, right?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible] yeah, when I show—

ROBERT BROWN: Agriculture.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, when I showed up on the, uh, campus, I had [inaudible] and, you know, I was very surprised to find [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: You knew he was there [ph]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I knew he was there, because [inaudible] Gettysburg [ph] [00:24:00]—.

ROBERT BROWN: It was very different from Curry [ph] —personality?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, yeah, uh, he was totally different kind of [ph]—he—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, but what was [ph] [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Well, let's hear it again [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and he was like [inaudible] bachelor [ph] [inaudible] program [ph] [inaudible] helped organize a kind of a Victorian club [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Victorian club?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, that just—they decorated the club room [ph] in a Victorian manner. They slept in the Victorian [ph] [inaudible] social club. He had the [ph] [inaudible] next to mine [inaudible] University of Iowa [ph], and actually, I used the [ph] faculty members' studio [inaudible] and his—he had the next studio in the same building. He'd ask me to come in and talk to him about his work and [inaudible] aesthetic and—about my work [ph], and I—and he invited me to his formal opening [ph]. When he finished a painting, he always had a formal party [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: You mean, sort of an open house, to his studio?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, he'd have—

ROBERT BROWN: Like how [ph]—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible] everybody [ph] [inaudible] and he'd invite all the dignitaries at the [ph] university and [inaudible] 50 to 60 people came [ph], and, uh, [inaudible] never [ph] [inaudible] talking about this, I mean, they [ph]—

ROBERT BROWN: Well, no [ph]—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] staying around them [ph]—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: So, when you got to Wisconsin, it was very—you know, Curry [ph] was not where you'd expected to find him [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and, uh, there wasn't [00:26:00] any [inaudible] and, uh, I [inaudible] art history people [ph], and they were hostile [inaudible] they were against it [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: Why? Why [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I was never quite sure [ph]. The head of the department was a guy named Oscar Hagan [ph] [inaudible] and that he had [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, a guy named John Teenuk [ph] [inaudible] taught modern art [inaudible] and he felt that nobody in the world [ph] had a right to think that [ph] [inaudible]

ad he had [ph] [inaudible] sat on the fence and wasn't a good politician [ph]. Very nice guy and a [ph] [inaudible] he had gone a long way [ph] [inaudible] yeah, I never was told by any of them [ph] [inaudible] the next time [ph] [inaudible] and he was [inaudible] so I showed up, so [ph] [inaudible] studio.

ROBERT BROWN: Which studio was that? On the new campus?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, it was in the temporary agriculture building [ph] [inaudible] 100 yards from the big building [ph] [inaudible] they'd built it for a guy who came there, an artist [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, no, it was a modern studio [ph], [00:28:00] and he had on the wall [ph] when I walked in [inaudible] drawing—he had a full-scale drawing for his standard mural [ph], which he was still thinking about, but he couldn't finish it [ph] until a couple summers after that. So, acutally [ph], we got along very well. Now, he wasn't very talkative [ph] [inaudible] and [inaudible] I wasn't either, and I was very [ph] [inaudible] common interest [ph] [inaudible] but he wasn't [ph] [inaudible] and [inaudible] take a look at [ph] [inaudible] but, uh, yeah, I—I was—this team was respected [ph] [inaudible] but [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, [inaudible] and insofar, I saw him a couple times. I [ph] [inaudible] if you ever need an assistant on a [ph] mural, then I've decided to help you [ph] [inaudible] and [ph] kind of laughed that off [ph] [inaudible] but, uh, the whole [ph] [inaudible] I'd say [ph] five percent of my salary that that teacher made [ph]—

ROBERT BROWN: Oh [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and they took it all out of my first check, so [ph] [inaudible] or not very [ph] [inaudible] but we were desperate for money, and we [00:30:00] [ph]—[inaudible] and, uh, I didn't [ph] [inaudible] to get through, anyhow, but [ph] [inaudible] soon as I get a paycheck.

ROBERT BROWN: You'd been married several years then, hadn't you?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah [inaudible] and, uh, and kind of guaranteed [ph] [inaudible] people about not [ph]—

ROBERT BROWN: Right [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —paying their loans ever again, that [ph]—and they wouldn't lend me the money [inaudible] by that, but [ph] [inaudible] um, and [ph]—

ROBERT BROWN: And you had quite a walk [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, that—we [ph] had a car.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, you did, but—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, it's just—I had a car. I painted a picture [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, I see [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —so, I had the [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —so—and that money [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Was her background in art, as well?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, she'd been secretary of [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: — as far as that [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Where you did your thesis [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and her [ph] [inaudible] and she [inaudible] studio [ph] [inaudible] but, uh, no, I —we decided to [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, so they came. I don't know what they expected, but [inaudible] serving them drinks. At that time, I'd never served [ph] anybody to save my life. I'd had a drink [ph] [inaudible] I probably gave them a [ph] [inaudible] right if they do [ph]—[00:32:00] but Kathleen [ph] [inaudible] hit it off so well [ph]—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: — and the next thing we do, uh, we're at their house [ph] [inaudible] they were out at our house, yeah, but not for long [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: So, but Curry [ph], you said, was not particularly outgoing or talkative about [ph]—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Uh, you know, I don't think artists are [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, no [ph], he couldn't make social chitchat, either, or he didn't care for conversation?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I think he [inaudible] other people [ph] [inaudible] Kathleen [ph] [inaudible] she [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Okay.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible] he would always say that [ph] [inaudible] because he felt that he hadn't had an [ph] education that I had had. I helped him on his law course, yeah, at the university, there [ph], and he asked me to correct the drawing on a major figure [inaudible] I was the professor, I was [ph] [inaudible] so, he came to me to make sure [ph] [inaudible] I wouldn't [ph] do it [inaudible] a drawing [ph] [inaudible] anatomically accurate enough [inaudible] anatomically correct and kind of [ph] photographically correct [inaudible] so, uh, I [inaudible] that's fine the way it is. [00:34:00] But, he finally [ph] did ask me to help on [ph] [inaudible] he had a project that he needed some help on [inaudible] and, uh, [inaudible] caught up [ph] [inaudible] the left side, so, I don't [ph] [inaudible] what part [ph] [inaudible] later that did bring, like, you know, the [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Bob Hodgell [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Hodgell.

ROBERT BROWN: He go on [ph] [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, yeah, [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: But, I mean, you both [inaudible] really guided by [ph] [inaudible] Curry's preliminary drawings, studies, you did pretty much [ph]—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah [ph] [inaudible] in fact, he [ph] [inaudible] the drawings [inaudible] projected it on [inaudible] all spaced out [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, I—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: And then, he had a—

ROBERT BROWN: Oh.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [inaudible] way of working. Now, this is different [ph] [inaudible] different way of working [ph] [inaudible] so—

ROBERT BROWN: And the wet plaster?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, this is on canvas—

ROBERT BROWN: On canvas.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible] all the drawing [ph] [inaudible] take my dark pattern, it's all there [ph]. And then, the—that was [inaudible] and then, he used that as a kind of under [inaudible] oil over that, as well [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, [00:36:00] I could [ph] simulate his arm movement. He was a—an arm painter, not a wrist painter [inaudible] or a finger painter [ph] [inaudible] and, uh, now [ph], from that [ph], he asked me to [inaudible] I worked on a law course [ph] [inaudible] well, it's a [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, right [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT BROWN: What was the other one [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, that was a state fair [ph] [inaudible] they showed a farmer [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Was this ra—uh, rather exciting, to be working with him, or how did you find it?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, it was very interesting. Hard work [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible.] I worked on scaffolding, it was a [ph] learning experience. Now, I never had been in real [ph] [inaudible] quite that way [inaudible] someone do that, a big landscape [ph] [inaudible] landscape [ph] [inaudible] and then reorganizing [ph] [inaudible] that [ph] [inaudible] the look of that [ph] [inaudible] but based on kind of [inaudible] Secretary of the Department [ph] of Justice [ph], [00:38:00] and he'd always wanted to do that. And Dwight Garrison [ph], who was the [inaudible] by that time, I was just [inaudible] left side, how the [ph] right side [inaudible] the middle, we always meet in the [ph] middle [inaudible] I said it was harder for me to imitate [ph] [inaudible] than it was Hodkins [ph], so I had to be very careful [inaudible] arm movement, and I tend to be more linear, more detailed [inaudible] hard to, uh, adjust [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, that was demanding work, then, wasn't it, trying to not really [ph]—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: — do the painting, but also the—to echo [ph] [inaudible] Curry [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, we didn't have any decisions to make about organization or anything like that, we're just strictly [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] of course, you had your painting and you had your own work to do, too. I suppose [ph] you'd welcome something—a little [ph] hard work [inaudible] you didn't have to [ph] [inaudible] be creative [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, I don't think I'd [ph] [inaudible] 'cause [ph] I put an awful lot of hours in the [ph] studio, and, uh, that was [ph] [inaudible] had a hard time getting very many hours in the studio. I'd put in, you know, 20 hours [ph] a week in the studio [inaudible] teaching [ph], and, uh, I couldn't [ph] [inaudible] to do [00:40:00] that [inaudible] three hours, at least, for each class [ph] [inaudible] twice a week, so it was nine hours [inaudible] four hours [inaudible] anybody who tried to [ph] [inaudible] Conceptual art [ph] [inaudible] change of studio habit [ph], you don't have the time to deal with the [inaudible] nine hours for [ph] [inaudible] first [ph] [inaudible] had only four hours a week [inaudible] had to take [ph] half a semester [inaudible] Curry was [ph] [inaudible] changed [inaudible] the last one I did [ph] [inaudible] First National Bank [ph] [inaudible] he was [inaudible] was working on that, you know, he came to me [ph], and he said, "How would you like to do that [inaudible] the bank?" [inaudible] and, [00:42:00] uh, [inaudible] figure out [ph] [inaudible] but I said, "I have a student," uh, who'd be interested in doing [ph] [inaudible] Bob Twillig [ph] [inaudible] but he's very [ph] talented—academic [inaudible] and, uh, so, all he had was a little [inaudible] and he sent me down to the bank—

ROBERT BROWN: That's very him [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, a little—

ROBERT BROWN: Thumbnail sketch, very small—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: — sketch.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: And he sent me down to the bank to make a sketch of the interior of the bank, in color [ph] [inaudible] what kind of color scheme to deal with. And, uh, he pretty much turned us loose. And I'd worked a week, two weeks [ph] time and he wouldn't [ph] even see anything I'd done. Well, first we had to do a full-scale cartooning [inaudible] I couldn't tell what kind of [ph] [inaudible] drawing [inaudible] show you how naïve I was about [inaudible] so, I went out and I got [inaudible] very detailed, all [ph] [inaudible] when he finally came in, I had—I'd finished [inaudible] and he looks at it [ph] [inaudible] I don't think [inaudible] yeah, I really shuddered at [00:44:00] [inaudible].

[Audio break.]

ROBERT BROWN: So, you got to—and Patty [ph] got to know the Currys somewhat socially. Didn't you—some point have a studio or live out very near [ph] them?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, they loved approximately [inaudible] and [inaudible] year [ph] [inaudible] [00:46:00] but they'd [ph] converted the milk house [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: The farmhouse, or had they [ph] [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: The farmhouse [inaudible] milk house [inaudible] make that over and turn it into a studio [inaudible] and Patty to live there. You know, the farmer [ph] [inaudible] and we didn't know how much [ph] [inaudible] and so [ph] [inaudible] \$1,800 the first year and \$1,800 the second year [ph]. And, uh, but we decided to do that, and [inaudible] and we moved out there [ph], and Patty and Kathleen [ph] became lady farmers, pretty much, had a big garden, and John [ph] and I were [inaudible] out there [ph] [inaudible] the barn every [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] were either of them [inaudible] John was a fairly prominent figure, right, in that [ph] community.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, he had a lot of [inaudible] lot of people [ph] [inaudible] and I think it's [ph] [inaudible] but he we knew all off those [ph] [inaudible]

[END OF 3 OF 7 SIDE A.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [00:00:00] But I worked in a place [inaudible] one or two pieces [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Eight-by-ten's actually legal, so—

ROBERT BROWN: So you had a studio there, too, where you lived, [inaudible]—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, the living room in the studio was off that room [ph], and I had a guest bed [ph]. And that—the original millhouse, it was back there [ph], a small bath, and a kitchen, and they had built on a bedroom, and [inaudible] facilities [inaudible]. So it was marvelous, right out in the country. And they must've had approximately ten acres of land, [inaudible] further [inaudible] beautiful [inaudible]. And, you know, I thought John was [inaudible] he went into the service, for some reason he decided to buy another house, [inaudible]. [inaudible]. But we lived out there for nearly [ph] ten years. And, you know, he saw a lot of what I was doing, because he'd come down to the house quite often, [inaudible] together [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Did his attitude or your relationship change a bit over those three or four years that you were there?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I never felt entirely relaxed. He did a lot of things that were very informal [ph], [inaudible] such as kind of [ph] [inaudible]. You know, we were good friends. But he always seemed to be uneasy about [inaudible]. [Inaudible] education [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: I'm not sure.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: You know, [00:02:00] [inaudible]—

ROBERT BROWN: At that time, and in that part of the country, people were very sensitive to that, I guess, that sort of thing.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible] didn't expect [inaudible] contact with other communities [ph]. So some of the things [inaudible] others [inaudible]. And I know [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: But he was a rarity, though, being a prominent artist, when everyone else was more like an academic, and they were—had taught in various schools. He had not, really [ph].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, but these friends were not academic.

ROBERT BROWN: Not the friends. No, I mean in the general—in the community he stood out, I mean, in the academic he stood out. Perhaps a dancer, I don't know, or other creatives, but—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah—

ROBERT BROWN: —most of you had had more college teaching experience.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Did he teach, though [ph], at all?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, he didn't—

ROBERT BROWN: He didn't teach—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: He was involved with the rural arts program.

ROBERT BROWN: Which involved what?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I believe he was hired to the School of Agriculture [ph] with Dean Pritchard [ph]. Dean Pritchard was trying to stop the acquisition of the farm. These young people get bored on the farm, and they go to the city. So the idea was let's provide some kind of cultural stimulation to people who [inaudible] consumers [ph] on the farm, other than [ph] [inaudible]. He wanted to get an artist who was sympathetic to farmers, who would take over the art department. And his job was relatively simple, and his salary was rather simple, then, too. It wasn't a very big salary. But he would make his studio available to people for consultation after four o'clock. [inaudible]. And then periodically he would take a tour of the state, and he'd go to town halls and [inaudible] centers. He'd give criticisms. He'd tell [00:04:00] people about technique, and how to put a ground on a canvas and things like that. And he did this very faithfully. In fact, uh, he was very good at it. He was very much at ease with it, with this role of farmer [ph]. I got involved with that because [inaudible] coordinator for that was a man named Jim Shwobak [ph], and he asked me if I could go to some of these places. And in the demonstration, we had this [inaudible]. So, uh, I got involved on this [ph]. I still have some of 'em [ph]. Sometimes I [inaudible] people there [ph] and help 'em [inaudible], and then I'd get them painting [ph]. I [inaudible] I'd check [ph] [inaudible]. I did a lot of demonstrations, but it's something that [inaudible]. But that's the way they taught in those days.

ROBERT BROWN: By demonstrating?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, it was an adjunct—I said to Michael the other day, [inaudible] electrical [ph] [inaudible] September 23rd [ph], and today we never do that sort of thing. But when I was a freshman at the University of Iowa, on the wall they had demonstrations [inaudible]. I learned more about the technique of painting by looking at those demonstration paintings than I ever did from anybody in the class. And he [inaudible] particular approach [inaudible]—

ROBERT BROWN: You mean he photographed the reproductions?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, they were the original demonstration paintings. He'd been hired to come give [ph] demonstrations—

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, I see.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —on how to do a portrait, how to do a still life, and then he trained about [inaudible]. [Inaudible] a couple of times. He sent me tickets, and he'd made [ph] [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible.] [00:06:00]

ROBERT BROWN: That's when you were back in Iowa, in the early '30s.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. And so it was—the tradition of going out and demonstrating was a respected tradition. I did it—uh, I was demonstrating all over the place at [inaudible]. I never did it here. [He laughs.] [inaudible]. In fact, after I came back, [inaudible] light on me [ph], I wasn't [inaudible] place, so I didn't get to pick the same kind of materials [inaudible]. I was the number one [inaudible] around the state [inaudible] information [ph] [inaudible]. So, uh— But he was ideal for that, because, uh—and he died. He had a heart attack [inaudible]. But that particular combination [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Did you all—was there sort of an idealism in this program, the rural program, in bringing in students to help with the murals?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, they didn't do that. No—

ROBERT BROWN: Well, no, but did—when you went out on the road, was there a, uh—for demonstrations—was there a feeling of helping people, or was this all—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Apparently [ph] it rained, [inaudible] matter [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: But nobody tried to [inaudible] bring a little culture to 'em. You were there to help them. And what they did was they had an annual exhibition at the [inaudible], and all these paintings—

ROBERT BROWN: From all around the state—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: All around the state.

ROBERT BROWN: —that you brought in.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and different kinds of crafts. [Inaudible] colored sand, [Inaudible] little landscapes. [00:08:00] And so [inaudible] actually before they had a big—just the [ph] memory of those good old days exhibitions [inaudible]. And, uh, [inaudible] getting a lot of people [inaudible], getting—it did result in a lot of interesting things.

ROBERT BROWN: But you were in a part of the United States, Iowa, that [inaudible] quite a high interest in education, and, uh, and culture, so they were taken pretty seriously, weren't they? Well, not culture so much, because that was more of an urban phenomenon, but learning was, wasn't it? History? Science?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: As I said, [inaudible]. You'd never say [ph] rednecks, [inaudible] a lot of other [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: There weren't—there were a few of those in places like Iowa or Wisconsin, right? Businesspeople who were agricultural businesspeople?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, they were small farmers, [inaudible]—

ROBERT BROWN: No, I don't mean agribusiness, but I mean they were—they were intelligent people who managed. They—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, none of 'em had, had a college education, and [inaudible]. Some of 'em were very skillful, because some had even had art school training. But essentially [inaudible]. But they took it seriously, and it kept 'em from being bored in the long days of winters when they're not out milking cows, [inaudible]. But, uh, [00:10:00] they were very happy with that. And, uh, he made it [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Did his wife enjoy being out there?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, she had nothing to do with [inaudible]. So, uh—at least I don't think she [inaudible]. She never went with him [inaudible]—

ROBERT BROWN: No, but I mean in, in, in—did she enjoy being in Wisconsin? They lived quite well.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible], you'd need to probably talk to her about it.

ROBERT BROWN: Okay.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. And, uh, I know [inaudible] people [inaudible]. And [inaudible]. Some of 'em were obvious [inaudible]. I never [inaudible] whether he was [inaudible] or what [ph]. [Inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: How would that come out nowadays, [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Uh, I wasn't [ph] [inaudible]. And, uh, otherwise [ph] [inaudible] wife, and she passed away. She helped him with this, that, and the other, and [inaudible]. And [inaudible] but the, uh, [inaudible] anyway.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, it just came out almost involuntarily.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. I worked in a studio with him on other occasions, but [inaudible] the, uh-- [inaudible] litigious [ph]. And I think he had a feeling if he hired somebody to come in there [inaudible] studio, [inaudible], [00:12:00] which is true. In those days it wouldn't have been [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: You mean you had to have where—more than one person with a model?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: You needed a chaperone, [laughs] yeah. And, in fact, [inaudible] one of the first experiences I had [inaudible]. Word got out in the Chicago Tribune [inaudible] our art class, but you would still—there was a lot of people [ph]. Now, they sent up a reporter to take pictures of drawings of naked girls. Now, we did have some professional models [inaudible] show up. All the drawings [inaudible] disappeared.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible] had some [inaudible] models, student models.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, sure. It's not easy to get [inaudible] models, uh, even though [inaudible]. So they used it [ph]. They were both [inaudible]. And, uh, wouldn't destroy the drawings, but we hid them until [inaudible]. But the, uh, [inaudible] very strange. We also had a—an accusation that the art department was full of Communists. And a reporter came up there to see about that. We'd hired a, a young man named Al Sesler [ph], who was a very quiet [inaudible], very [inaudible]. He had [inaudible], and that was [inaudible], and he said that was a Communist propaganda mural, and [inaudible]. And, uh, they came up there, and Sesler showed a, a picture of the mural. The red part of it was—[00:14:00] it was [inaudible]. Had nothing to do with Communism at all. But that's kind of a—the, uh, climate [inaudible]. We didn't know [ph] at the department there were [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, that was [ph]—

ROBERT BROWN: So these were hard times? It wasn't long after the Russians [inaudible]—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible] at this time. You know, [inaudible], particularly in all the urban areas. We had a couple people that worked in Chicago, and [inaudible], and, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: Well, Wisconsin was at that time one of the leading universities, wasn't it?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Got people from very [inaudible] backgrounds.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I thought it was outstanding [inaudible] city [ph], I used to listen to WHA and [inaudible] local radio stations, and they broadcast [inaudible]. I listened to [inaudible]. And they broadcast [inaudible] by this General Chuckers [ph] from [inaudible]. And, uh, [inaudible] what in the world is the [inaudible]? [inaudible] concentrate too hard on [inaudible] other times [inaudible]. Oh, it's a great school. But John did have [inaudible] to, uh, [inaudible] signatures [inaudible] some of the work [inaudible] had some other inscription [ph] [inaudible]. And, uh, maybe [inaudible]. [inaudible] Mac Otto.

ROBERT BROWN: Mac—what was the last name?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: O-T-T-O, out of Woodstock [ph], [inaudible]. He came in to [00:16:00] look at one of John's paintings, and—now, if you were thinking of [inaudible] all these things [ph] [inaudible], I'm just [inaudible] second half [inaudible] Otto [inaudible]. Uh, but Otto had left when John started [ph] back. And [inaudible] at home [ph]. [They laugh.] No, he had a marvelous [inaudible], no question about it [ph]. But he was very able to teach at the time [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: [He laughs.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [Inaudible] people [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you had to leave involuntarily, didn't you? That is, you had to go into the military.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Yeah, I went in, I guess, October of, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: Nineteen forty-three?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —forty-three, 1943. [Inaudible]. I couldn't remember. I think [inaudible] earlier. And, uh, I thought that was—that was annoying and embarrassing [ph] [inaudible] earlier. And I was limited service [inaudible] vocation [ph]. And they said they didn't have any openings within the service [inaudible], and I should go home. I said [ph] [inaudible]. Well, before you're called up you have to take a venereal [ph] disease examination. You know, [inaudible]. So that must've been earlier in the summer [inaudible]. So later I was called up. Yeah, and I showed up [inaudible], and it was annoying [ph]. And that venereal [ph] business had expired. They said you had [00:18:00] to have your venereal inspection. And I said, "Sure, [inaudible]." They put me in a barracks [inaudible] venereal diseases [inaudible] think [ph], until I had a test, [inaudible] 24 hours. I had to stay at the barracks [inaudible] barracks. [They laugh.] [Inaudible.]

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Nobody wants to see that [ph]. I think [inaudible] venereal disease [inaudible] only thing that's [inaudible]. [He laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: So you said, "I want to get in that Army as soon as possible." [He laughs.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

[END 3 OF 7 SIDE B.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [00:00:00] [Inaudible.]

ROBERT BROWN: That's right, or I didn't have it. [Inaudible.] Yeah. [Inaudible.] See how this sounds. This is—we're resuming our interview, this is the last day of June, June 30, 1992, and interview with Bill McCloy at his home in Uncasville, Connecticut. I thought we could maybe talk yet a bit more about your time at the University of Wisconsin. Does that make some sense?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, since you didn't get much of it, I think we've got to do it over.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] Okay.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Now, what's that noise I'm picking up? It sounds like, I can hear it echoing back there.

ROBERT BROWN: Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin, you went there in 1939, as an instructor of art education. This was after you had got done teaching in Iowa. And had some of your education by that point. Did you go on your own? Or how did you happen to go to Wisconsin?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, as you know, I'd been at Drake University for a couple of years. And I couldn't see any great future there. So, I just registered with a teacher's agency, and decided to leave. And somewhat to my surprise, I got this offer to come up and be interviewed at the University of Wisconsin, and I was hired. So, it was strictly on my own. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: How much did you know about Wisconsin? Was it quite a renowned place?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, as a matter of fact, I knew very little about it. It didn't [00:02:00] have a great reputation for its art department at that time. But practically no school did have at that time, in the Big 10. About all I knew about it was John Curry was artist in residence there.

ROBERT BROWN: You knew about him?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I knew about him partly through Grant Wood, whom I had known at Iowa. He had been partly responsible for getting Curry to Wisconsin.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you respect Wood? Grant Wood?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, well, I've come on this before. Yes and no. I mean, I liked him personally. Socially we got along fine. We didn't have much in common professionally. And the same thing was true of Curry. In retrospect, when I look back at the work at that time, it comes closer to a regionalist kind of thing, and the subject matter's somewhat the same. But I was unsympathetic to that program as Wood articulated it, I thought Wood was a bad teacher, the kind of thing that he taught. So—

ROBERT BROWN: —what kind of things did he emphasize as a teacher?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, he had a, he did teach a painting course, and his, what he did is he spent the first semester making a drawing, so his students didn't do any painting in the first semester, and they used a system of dividing each side of the rectangle into thirds, and making all these connecting lines, you know, a pseudo-dynamic [inaudible] system. And then the second semester, they did the painting. And they did it in his technique. And while people were able to do pretty good imitation Grant Wood's, you know, I didn't think that was any kind of way to teach painting. Particularly for people who had never painted before. So, but I never argued with him about it, you know? We just met, as I mentioned earlier, he had the studio [00:04:00] next to where I worked, and he would ask me to come in, he wouldn't come into my studio very often, but he'd ask me to come in, and chit-chat. And he invited us to his openings. And I think he must have mentioned that Curry had gone to Wisconsin, but that wasn't particularly the reason I went, I was a little bit ambitious, I wanted to go to a bigger school, a better school. So, we went. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —who were you interviewed by? Who did you work with?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, you know, as far as I could remember, I was interviewed only by the chairman of the department, a man named William Farnum.

ROBERT BROWN: Farnum?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. And an old New England family, had a home in Mohegan Island, Mohegan

Island, off the coast of Maine. And I wasn't quite sure why I'd been hired. After I'd been there a little while, I began to catch on. They had lost their young star in the art department—a man named Watrous, James Watrous, who taught a course in history of techniques, mainly of graphic arts. But at the same time, he was taking his PhD in the art history department, which is the arts and science department, and the art education department was part of the education department. So it took two totally different administrations. Well, when he got his PhD, he was asked by the art history department to transfer his course up there, and to teach some art history courses, which he did. So, the art edu—ed. department was pretty upset about that, and they were looking for somebody to repossess that technical course. [00:06:00] And I had all this interest in Old Master techniques at that time. And I'm sure that was a reason I was invited to take the job. They also, now this may not be accurate, but they were a little bit disturbed in the school, at the dominance of watercolor painting. And that was true in the state. And they were looking for somebody to develop oil painting. Yeah, kind of go against the fashion of, at the time.

ROBERT BROWN: Which, which at least in Wisconsin, was more watercolor.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, water—they were very strong in watercolor all through the state. And in the art department, or the art education department, that's about all that people did well. And of course, I didn't do watercolors, and it wasn't that I was unsympathetic to them, but you know, I just didn't do watercolors. So, I stepped into that, a little political problem there, because the man who taught painting for many, many years, was you know, a kindly old fellow, and a real gentleman, you know, he never objected, but they took him out of all the painting courses, and turned them over to me, you know. And here I was a real young, I wouldn't say a smart young punk, but I was—

ROBERT BROWN: —much younger.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —very, very young, yeah, I think he must have been about 60, his name was Steven, Roland Stevens. And he actually paints a lot like the painters of the Old Lyme school around here.

ROBERT BROWN: Sort of a neo-Impressionist [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Kind of academic, but sort of charming kind of fellow. And he was shifted off into doing drawing courses. So, I stepped into that, and I must say, everybody was very pleasant to me. I wasn't aware of that situation for a long time. [00:08:00] I didn't teach the art history, the technical course as well as I—I was doing things that worked for me pretty well. But, I think from this perspective now, it must have been wrong, that's not the way Old Masters did it. But I did, you know, I taught the procedures, and things like that. And Watrous actually became very good, but he concentrated on the graphic part. And he had stronger students than I did, you know? Partly because he had a built-in loyalty, you know, following before I came.

ROBERT BROWN: But you did comment to me earlier that at Iowa, you had—I mean at Wisconsin, you had students who wanted, who were rather pushy in things. They wanted more flexibility than they had at Drake, or [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, yeah, they were much more mature students, yeah. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —they weren't simply older students. They were just simply, they were actually more intellectually mature.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. In terms of actual chronological age, they weren't that much older. Because I had freshmen and sophomores. But the ones that were, the ambitious ones were juniors and seniors, mainly, and they had had other art contacts around with other individuals, Marshall Glasier [ph], I spoke of before, had been a big influence in that, with that particular group. So they were looking for a source of stimulation and information from all kinds of places. But they didn't use Curry, as I mentioned before. I was surprised that he wasn't associated with the art education department, I hadn't known that. He was with the agricultural college. And he wasn't on good terms, it wasn't his fault, he wasn't on good terms with either the art history people or the art education people. [00:10:00] And I think he was a little bit bewildered by that situation. But, I think within a week or 10 days after we'd gotten up there, I made an appointment to see him. And once I found out that he wasn't in the art education department, so I made the appointment with the secretary in the ag school, and went to see him at four o'clock, which was his usual routine. Nobody could disturb him. But he didn't teach any courses, unlike Grant Wood. He was available for consultation with anybody who wanted to ask about things. We struck it off quite well, and because we talked the same technical language, more than anything else. We never discussed the ideology of anything. Yeah, he never said, why' do you do this, or why don't you do that, or anything of that nature. But as I say, from this perspective, now what I was doing wasn't that much different from—except I was focusing on figural problems, and he was, at that time, working mainly with landscape.

ROBERT BROWN: What was that? Could you, in a nutshell, say what was that common technical language that you shared?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Enthusiasm for Max Doerner's book. Yeah, that's the materials and methods of the Old Masters, or something like that. Materials of the artist, and the methods of the Old Masters. I think it came out in 1934. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —it was a new and very much talked about book.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Right, it influenced artists all over the country, as a matter of fact. If you're familiar with the New York scene at that particular time, you've got kind of Pace [ph] Miller, and Reginald Marsh, and a whole lot of other people that were looking at old masters, partly for stimulation towards design improvements, and for techniques. Partly because nobody had any money, so you might as well, if you prepared your own canvas, [00:12:00] you ground your own paints, and that way you could afford a lot more.

ROBERT BROWN: So you might as well learn and profit from what Doerner says the Old Masters did. [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, so as a matter of fact, most of our kind of ground formula, of things of that kind, were gotten from Max Doerner. Now there were some other books available at the time, Vetochio [ph], who taught at the Art Students League, had a little technical book that was widely used. And the—there was a couple British names that, at the moment, a couple British specialists on Old Master techniques, and we all read all of them. But when I first met Curry, he was working on something in the studio, and I commented on that, you know, so we talked shop. So, you know, I think it was at that first meeting, I said if you ever need any help on any murals, you know, I'll be glad to help you. And he was, he had a big cartoon of one of the Kansas panels on the wall in the studio at that time. And he said well, at that time he said, "I don't think this'll ever, ever be necessary," but um, I don't know how many times I saw him, but Patty and I invited the Curries out to our house—our apartment, it wasn't much of a house, and it wasn't a house, it was a kind of attic apartment—for a dinner, and that's where Patty met Kathleen.

ROBERT BROWN: You'd already met her?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No. I hadn't met them. And at least I don't recall having met them. And they hit it off beautifully. And so, we began to have a lot of contact, we were invited up to the Curry's quite often [00:14:00] for dinner, and I saw Curry quite often. But it was from, it was mainly because Kathleen and Patty got along so well that Kathleen got the idea of converting a milk house they had into a studio apartment, and they asked if we would—if they did this, would we come and rent it, and the rent was extremely modest, and we were not very happy with where we were.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, I take it they lived in a fairly good style—was it outside of Madison?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, they, yeah, they lived outside the town limits, actually, but—which I tried to use as a way to break my lease, because I couldn't break the lease unless I left Madison. So, I tried. [inaudible] asked me where I lived, I'd say, I said, "Just outside of Madison." But it didn't work, and it cost us some money to break the lease. But, it was worth it. Now they lived right across the road from the arboretum, there was a huge expansive acreage where there were CCC camps going on at the time, in an old farmhouse. The farmhouse had this milk house. And it turned out to be a very pleasant experience, a very functional place for me, because I did all my work there, before I'd been working in a room in the art education department, which was fortunately not being used.

ROBERT BROWN: But still, you were—you could never get away from your students, [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I kind of like, I didn't mind that, but I had one student who used to sit and watch me by the hour, and he used to claim he learned everything he knew from that. He's been reasonably successful. Kind of a quasi—he's really very academic, a very detailed person, his stuff looks like it's done from photographs. He denies that it is, but that's what it does look like. [00:16:00]

ROBERT BROWN: What's his name, do you recall?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Robert Grilley [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: Really?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, he just retired, he got a job at the University of Wisconsin after he graduated. He'd been a star in the Madison school system as a high school kid, a very talented person. And obviously very ambitious, and when he got a job there, yeah, I had felt a little paternal relationship with him, I advised him not to stay very long, and to get out of there. Because I said if you stay here, you're going to be doing the same stuff, you know, 50 years from now. And, but when he had a chance to get tenure there, he hung on. And I was right, I mean he hasn't changed a bit. I mean, he's, he does it slicker than he did before. But that's something that I've been aware of, because John Wilde [ph] was one of the star students around there.

ROBERT BROWN: John Wilde?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. And he was a big success, and he had some Bingham gallery in New York. I just saw another show of his just a couple weeks ago. He's still doing the same things he was doing when he was a student. Because he never really left Madison. And so in a sense, if I'd stayed in Madison, in fact I already was changing, but the, if I'd stayed in Madison, I'm sure I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing today.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible] wasn't Madison, therefore, a fairly conservative place, or a place in which you could fall easily into a rut?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I—the state was divided into two schools, more or less. The Milwaukee school, and the Madison school. And Milwaukee was a little bit more in what you might call, towards the modern. But it was modern, I can't think of the names of [00:18:00] artists now, there was a fellow who used to do kind of big eyed tigers in the Romantic landscape. [Laughs.] The—

ROBERT BROWN: —you don't mean Ari Russo, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh no, no, no, this is an American painter.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: He was quite prominent there for a while. And so, there are a lot of painters who did rather intimate things, I don't mean intimate showing sexual activity or anything like that, but they were kind of small in scale, very Romantic, and a little bit abstract, and that was the Milwaukee group. And the Madison group, well, there wasn't any dominant style at that time. I don't know if there is now. But when we hired people in the department, and they all tended to be representational painters, some of them were very good, as a matter of fact. But they stayed there, they didn't change. So, one reason I left was I decided I'd been there long enough.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, Curry, as you said earlier, was not that much in touch with the others. So therefore, he didn't have much impact.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, he didn't have any impact. It was funny, the art historians were particularly hostile to him. Oskar Hagen was the chairman of the art history department at the time, and he later on became an enthusiastic booster, after Curry asked him if he would pose for his portrait. And that converted Oskar Hagen to—it isn't one of Curry's best works, but I guess they have it in Madison now, in the, whatever they call that museum, I don't know how to pronounce it, El—

ROBERT BROWN: —Elvehjem, something.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Something like that, yeah. The major obnoxious person was a young art historian [00:20:00] named Jack Kienitz, who taught a kind of 20th-century art course, and felt that he was the only person who could speak, or pronounce any value judgments on anything to do with the 20th century. And he was very hostile to the whole Middle West development.

ROBERT BROWN: Was he not from the Middle West, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I don't know where he—

ROBERT BROWN: —what was, how do you spell his name?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: K-I-E-N-I-T-Z. John Kienitz. And he would run Curry down in his classes, and things of that kind. So that didn't help. And meanwhile, Curry in his own quiet way did just what he was paid to do. You know, which was be available to people who lived on farms. This was part of this rural art project, which involved literature and you know, a number of other arts, not just painting. And then he'd run around the state and, he didn't do, give demonstrations, and he'd give technical hints, and give criticism, and just help people. He was very good at that.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: He was very accessible, I mean no, no pretensions about him.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, he was—actually he wasn't the world's most flamboyant speaker, you know, he wasn't one of these extroverted kind of people, because he was really rather quiet. And, but he talked the language of the farmers, and he sympathetic, he knew inexpensive ways to provide prepare grounds, and things

of that kind. And, you know, I actually, after he died and I came back, after I attended the service, I continued to do some of the things that he did. I went out, I gave demonstrations, and talked to people. Because Jim Schwalbach was the coordinator for the program, you know, latched onto everybody he could get his hands on to continue the program.

ROBERT BROWN: Even after World War II?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, after World War II, [00:22:00] after Curry died. Yeah, they were looking for another artist-in-residence after that time. And I just learned from something Kathleen said, that, not too long ago, that my presence there prevented them from hiring Frederic Taubes, do you know that name?

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: He applied for the job of artist-in-residence after Curry died, and they apparently looked at his work, and they decided that they wouldn't offer it to him, because there was somebody else who was doing very much the same kind of thing—that was referring to me. Taubes, he wrote technical books on, you know, how to do it. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —yeah. Even though you weren't in the department, the agricultural—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No.

ROBERT BROWN: They felt still it would be encumbering, in effect?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. I heard that one time, they had been vaguely interested in having me continue. But by that time, I was doing things totally differently, so.

ROBERT BROWN: To what degree did you get to know Oskar Hagen?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, I hardly knew him at all. Yeah, I saw him a couple of times. Yeah. And, but the Curry's, of course, after we lived out in the country, we got to know very well. And he did ask me—as a matter of fact, I found a photograph today showing the first mural I helped him on. And it helped me date that, as a matter of fact, [inaudible] the, I went there in 1939, so it was the summer of 1940, my first summer there, and the only reason I really remember that is we did the mural in the Coliseum, or whatever they call it, where they used to show the horses and things like that. And one of the students who came to look at the mural, at the process, was a student who had come from Drake University, where I'd been specifically because she wanted [00:24:00] to continue working with me. And she was much taken aback, because I'd changed enormously how I presented my classes. And, but I remember her being there, and being asked to leave, because they were going to bring in a couple of horses to breed them, and they didn't think young ladies should see that. So that helped me date that specifically, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: I see. Had she come thinking, because you told me a lot of times that you were, you were something of a taskmaster, right? But you weren't, you had learned at Wisconsin not to be quite so.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I wouldn't let them drop a penny, as long as I felt they could do it better. And I didn't work at all well in the, with the kind of student I had at Wisconsin. So, yeah, it took me two or three years before I could find a sensible kind of direction. And even then, I think I was, I was more useful when, because I organized public crit—critiques, as I mentioned. Open to anybody in the university, whether taking art courses or not. And that attracted a lot of people who were doing work on their own, or working with other people, and they proved to be—

ROBERT BROWN: Did they bring things to your studio, is that the way it was done, or—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —no, we had a—

ROBERT BROWN: —to your classroom?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —we took a classroom in the art, art education department, and we just used that as long as we needed it, a couple of hours usually, and everybody chimed in, and uh, so it was kind of an informal bull session that stuck directly to the problem of, of the paintings we were looking at. And I learned a lot from that, and yeah, I think I was a better teacher when I got through. Of course, I had to teach other classes too, and freshman—I taught a freshman class, and I had to learn how to do watercolors, because that was one part of the freshman class.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you come to enjoy doing watercolors?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Not particularly. [00:26:00] No, I came to the conclusion that was probably the easiest

medium of all. But, and I still think that's true. But, I did more than I had realized, because recently I was going through my files, and I said, I'm going through whole portfolios, and I did put a few watercolors. But not so many then, I started doing watercolors when I was in the Army. Because I could go on weekends, I could go out and paint a couple watercolors, and do some sketching. And then when I came back from the Army, I really didn't know what to do for a while. I'd go out and do some watercolors. So I did do quite a few at that time. And then since that time, off and on, I—

ROBERT BROWN: —it's never been a medium that particularly appealed to you?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No. So I admire this, the skill, but I'm, I realize that it is skill. You learn it by practice, the way you can learn how to be an acrobat, or a skater, or something like that. Because it's an art on that level, up to a point. More than in oil painting, I think, for example. Because I, you can let the medium help you a great deal in watercolor. What won't help you is oil painting, you've got to fight the medium.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you then developed this matter of having, holding crits for people who wanted to bring their work in.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. I don't know if other people did it in town or not, I just—

ROBERT BROWN: —would you say, you've got a bit of a public spirit streak in you.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well—

ROBERT BROWN: —from way early on.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, I don't know if you can call it public spirit, you know, I thought it was part of my job, in a way. Because, you know, I was not a particularly social type of person, I didn't make a lot of very close friendships. I suppose the Curries really were our closest friends. Of course, once we lived out there, we saw them all the time, every party they had, [00:28:00] we were included, when we had little parties, they were included. And I did help Curry on other murals, too.

ROBERT BROWN: You mentioned one you helped, along with another young artist, a mural for the law library at the university.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, that was, the other artist was, had been a high school student in Topeka [ph], and John had picked him up there to help on the Kansas murals in Topeka when was in, working on there. And he came to Wisconsin, I think, because Curry was there. And so he did a lot of assisting on other murals as well. Yeah, he came closer to painting in the, thinking like Curry. Well, you know, I had to shift gears—if I was going to paint like Curry, I had to do things quite different from the way I normally would work or think.

ROBERT BROWN: When you helped him, did you customarily do one aspect of it, and Curry another, or was there any particular pattern?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, we actually, we took sections. Except for the bank mural, which I did, we did a whole thing.

ROBERT BROWN: This was a bank in Madison?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. But the one for the state fair we did, I did the left side, Curry did the middle, Hodgell did the right side.

ROBERT BROWN: The other artist's name was Hodgell?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Hodgell.

ROBERT BROWN: What was his first?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Robert.

ROBERT BROWN: Robert Hodgell.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Robert O. Hodgell, down in St. Petersburg now. And then the Lowell [ph] library it was the same way. I did the left side, Curry did the center, and Hodgell did the right side. And I think you can see the—I say this and it may not be true—I think you see more difference in the style between Hodgell's painting and Curry's than you can between mine, in part because it was natural for Hodgell to paint that way, so he painted more his natural way. It wasn't natural for me to paint that way, so I paid more attention to the way Curry did it. [00:30:00] So.

ROBERT BROWN: How did that system work out? I mean, were you happy with it, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I found it informative. And as a matter of fact, I used Curry's basic procedure when I did murals on my own. You know, he started with big working drawings, but he also started from slides sometimes. I mean, he'd take slides of the working drawings, and then project them onto the canvas. And as a matter of fact, I used slides and projected them on canvas [inaudible] he used an underpainting method, which he varied, depending on the nature of the job. The one he did for the state fair had to be done very rapidly. So—

ROBERT BROWN: Which underpainting did he use then, [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, he used a charcoal procedure, which I noticed Hodgell did subsequently quite a bit. But, another painter who did a charcoal underpainting was Picasso, believe it or not.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: But, he had a tone canvas, it was half chalk ground, which you prepare a tone canvas with, and then the forms are developed with rather heavy application of charcoal. So it's a full representational black and white thing on the—well, black and tan, he used a kind of orange tan. And, but I guess that was fixed with some kind of fixative, and it was built up then with some whites in the lighter areas, a tempera white. And then he used oil paints over that. You know, when he had more time, and wasn't under this deadline of when the state fair began, he didn't use the charcoal to that extent. I mean, he established the drawing in charcoal, but then it was built up with dark tempera, light tempera, and then the oil on top of that. [00:32:00] So, it's a good way to keep working all over. Yeah, you don't end up with a bunch of little fragments around him, and desperately try to tie them together. It's an easy way to work with assistants. So, but he did ask me, you know, one time he was working on the biochemistry murals. You know, for the biochemistry department. I wasn't helping him with those. And he was asked by the bank, a bank, I've forgotten what bank it was. Oh, I had a slight grudge against them, because they turned, turned me down for a loan when I first came to Madison. Said I had no collateral, had nothing to uh, back up a customer loan, except that I was a teacher at the university, and they said, they're some of our worst people. So they wouldn't give me the money. But he might, he wanted, he was asked to do this job, two panels about double the size of that penny you see over there, must have been about—

ROBERT BROWN: —eight by 10 feet, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, they were bigger than that, maybe about 12 feet, and two smaller over the door panels. And he wanted to know if I could take the job over, he had small oil sketches he'd done, and if I knew anybody else who could help. So I said, "Well I've got this student, Bob Grilley [ph], who might be able to do it." So he sent me down to the bank, I made a—a quick study of the color, of the architecture on the inside of the bank. And then I took it over, and Grilley did one big panel, I did the other big, big panel, and I did one small panel, Grilley did one small panel. And we worked from his drawing, Curry's drawing, made full-scale [00:34:00] drawings, which Curry had to check on, and then have, finished them up. I gather that from what Kathleen says, that John had a lot of problems with Grilley. Because Grilley, he didn't adapt very well to Curry's style, and you can—if you see the reproductions, you can see that a totally different hand did those. And I had some problems with, more problems with small ones, and one problem, which proved to be more amusing than anything else, was a larger one. I mentioned—he asked me to make a drawing of an oak tree, because he had an oak tree. I went and made a drawing of an oak tree. And I—well, I did it on this big cartoon. And he came to check it, and he said, "You know, I don't do that kind of oak tree." Which is true, I hadn't noticed it particularly, but I didn't know one oak tree from another. And he thought about it for a while, he said, "Well, let's go ahead with it." So I painted that kind of oak tree. And he has one painting that he did, which is a variation of that mural, which uses that kind of oak tree. So, he put his auth—stamp of authenticity on it.

ROBERT BROWN: You must have respected him and admired his work then.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, actually his best stuff I thought was very good.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: His worst stuff, you know, everybody does mediocre paintings. Because he had certain mannerisms that at that time, disturbed me. They don't disturb me as much now.

ROBERT BROWN: Shortcuts, or what?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, he just, he had just drawing mannerisms, and painting mannerisms. And he had funny ways of drawing thighs of people. You see it particularly in the mural at the law school. And the way he did it, and the way, and I think he was trying to get a sense of foreshortening, because the thing's up in the air quite a bit. And they're very short thighs, and very long [00:36:00] from the knee down to the foot. And he did ask me, you know, while we were doing that, if the paintings had, he asked me to go over and correct the anatomy on it.

Because I was a professor. And I wouldn't do it, you know, I didn't say, you know, I'm not going to fool with your particular mannerisms. I just said, I mean he was perfectly competent to do that himself, he didn't need my help. Because that, the way he'd drawn that, it was certainly not the way I would have drawn it, but it's not that he didn't know his anatomy, he did know his anatomy. Yeah. In fact, he had done a lot more direct drawings from figures, and so on, than I had ever done. But you can tell whether, we didn't work much alike, because I mentioned it, he wanted to paint from a model for a while, but he was a little bit nervous it would be seen as not quite the proper thing to do if he had a model, a nude model in his studio by himself, so he asked me if I would mind painting on Saturdays, [inaudible] Saturday, yeah Saturday at noon, I think it was. And I'd pay half the money, and we'd hire a model, and I would serve as the chaperone, I guess, or he would serve as a chaperone. And so, if you compare the things we did, you know, we were totally different. And he was, by that time, you know, very much involved in a kind of a Rubens-style, partly because he was working with this [inaudible] which is a pseudo-Rubens medium that Reggie Marsh had tipped him off on.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, yeah, [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible] about that.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. And well, I tended never to finish. You know, I tended to be much more concerned with being [00:38:00] very precise in details, and matching colors very, very precisely, even when I used various and sundry underpainting methods. I also experimented with techniques a lot more, because the two I think are the most successful I did, one is in a wax oil Venice turpentine solution, and the other is, I used, developed a technique in which the white was never mixed with a, with a color, it was put on, and the color was glazed over it. So I used a fast drying tempera white, and oil for the color. And I thought for a while that'd probably be the easiest way for anybody to paint, you know, separate the problem of form from the problem of color. I tried it on some students, and they couldn't handle it at all. It was hopeless.

ROBERT BROWN: You tried it then when you were in Wisconsin?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, yeah. I tried it. I was trying it, trying it, and I did three or four paintings that way, and they held up very well. And I found it, you know, really a very interesting way to work. One painting I did, it ended up a disaster. And I'm not quite sure why, I let somebody borrow it. They had it in the sun, and over some radiators or something for a long time.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: And I saw it, they asked me if they could buy it, so I went to look at it, and the thin, glazed areas had separated and pulled apart, in a way I'd never seen in a painting. And you know, I was horrified. I was sure it was partly because they hadn't really treated the painting the way it should have been treated. But they wanted it anyway, so yeah, I was, in a way, I was sorry to see that happen, [00:40:00] because I thought it was a very successful painting. Not a profound painting. I mean, it was a still life. But, probably as good a still life as I ever painted, with the possible exception of this tempera painting up here. Which I painted about the same time.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible] that painting of the detail, the wildflowers, or I'm sure [inaudible] got a more specific name.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, it's called *Spring Still Life*, that's all.

ROBERT BROWN: *Spring Still Life*?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, that's—that's a tempera painting, yeah. [Inaudible] mixture.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And it's got a sort of a Dürer-esque quality, too. Is it, possibly Dürer someone who interested you?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I never thought about it specifically, but you know, the other day I was going through some of my racks downstairs, and I came across a painting I had started, it must have been about the same time, a self-portrait, and I—the title was *The Artist as Dürer*, you know, Dürer's self-portrait, his long curls down there, and kind of fastidious things. And I started that, and the background was just blocked in, but tempera. You know, this putrido [ph] kind of tempera use. And I decided I didn't really like it very well, and then I got in the Army, and so on, so I packed, I carried, I carried it around all these years, partly because it was

wrapped up, I never looked at it. And I got it out this time. I'd just seen the Mantegna show in New York, and so I looked at this with different eyes. I'd say, you know, that's really not so bad after all. So, I decided I would finish it up. You know, paint the background in. I didn't touch the part that I'd done before. So I just finished it the other day, and you can tell it's done in two different periods, because there's more [00:42:00] paint on the part that I just did, and the fastidious detail, [inaudible] work, that way. It's enormous exaggeration of detail in drapery, and details of hands. And Curry would never do something like that, you know, he was a big stroke, he was, somebody wrote a critique about artists as Picasso was a wrist painter, and Matisse was an arm painter, and [inaudible] people who are finger painters. Yeah. Not like children, but I mean it's a different focus on equality of design, and equality of surface. And Curry was an arm painter. He wasn't very comfortable with detail. You want to see if it's working? [Laughs.]

[END OF 4 OF 7 SIDE A.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [00:00:00] In general, I think, you know, aside from various poor health, you know—

ROBERT BROWN: —he had what, some condition for quite a while?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, kind of a hypertension of some kind, he had a lot of problems. And he did have an operation, I [inaudible] something to do with sympathetic nervous system, and slicing down his back, and a way to reduce his blood pressure. He didn't want to do that in the first place, and he didn't recover from that very well. So, you know, he was a young man, and he had a lot of problems. I mean, he was a vigorous young man, I think I mentioned before, you know, we went hunting together, and I played golf with him once. And well, we saw a lot of them socially. We didn't really share the same friends though.

ROBERT BROWN: No.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I knew all of their friends, and they invited us out, but they weren't people we invited —

ROBERT BROWN: —he was in a position to be known to the local newspaper publisher, and people like that, right?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, you know—

ROBERT BROWN: —these were people that were—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —one of his best friends, and the one that was not one of these fair weather friends, was Don Anderson, who was the—I'm sure Kathleen has talked about that now and then.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh I know, he was the editor of the *Madison*—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —of the *Free Press*, I think.

ROBERT BROWN: *Free Press*.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. No, the *Wisconsin State Journal*, I think that's what it was called.

ROBERT BROWN: That's right, right.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Yeah. And no, he was—he helped John get out, I think they went out in the Rockies someplace on a dude ranch kind of thing, and I think it was mostly John Anderson. And there were some others that were very good friends. The Tenneys [ph] were good friends.

ROBERT BROWN: The Tenneys were also prominent people in—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —yeah, I've forgotten what Clark Tenney did for a job, but—I don't think he was big, powerful money, but he was, [00:02:00] he moved in different circles from, certainly the circles I moved in. I won't name the friends I considered fair weather friends. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: Who were some of the particular people you got to know in Madison?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, most of them were people associated with the art department. I will say though, the closest friends we made were not in the art department. You know, in a big university like that, you actually had more contacts outside of your narrow backyard [inaudible] our closest friends, one was in the physical education department, one couple. Another couple was in agricultural economics, and they're probably the two closest couples. But we, we had a lot of bridge parties with people in all kinds of departments. And the extension division, we had close friends there. And well I saw quite a bit of some members of the art department, but not

as many as you'd expect. I never had any good relationships with the guy who was the chairman, Farnum, was a little bit of a phony, and he finally was voted out.

ROBERT BROWN: Voted out of the university, or out of the chairmanship?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Out of the chairmanship.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: It was supposed to be voted on by members of the department. Nobody in the department knew that for years, he continued as chairman under false pretenses for a long time. And once they found out, they got rid of him. And he stayed on, but he retired, and he was a very mediocre kind of painter, and he didn't do anything in the department. I met a lot of artists, at that time, they had a kind of a—well, they had a little bit of a visiting artist, for a week or so, but they invited a lot of [00:04:00] people to come up as jurors. The union there had sponsored an art show every year, which is one of the more important art shows in the state.

ROBERT BROWN: By union, you mean the student union?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Student union, yeah. It provided a lot of the leadership. The historical society at that time was not what it is today, you know, I think they're more involved with the big museum that's opened up. And people like Kuniyoshi. Albers was there for about a week, my job—I inherited the job, I had it foisted on me, of taking care of him. Because the chairman of the department at that time—this is after Farnum had been kicked out—there was a woman named Annen, and she was anti-Semitic, and she—

ROBERT BROWN: —what was her name?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Annen, A-N-N-E-N. And in fact, the two women we had in the department at that time were both very negative in racial relationships, they didn't like anybody except people like themselves, I guess. And for some reason or other, Annen got the idea that Albers was Jewish. Of course, his wife is Jewish, Albers wasn't Jewish. And he came up there to be a visiting, kind of a visiting critic for a week, and she didn't even want him to go anywhere near her, any of her classes, and she turned him over to me, because I was a painter. So I had to kind of shepherd him around for a while. And actually, he was a very broad-minded, sympathetic critic, and not nearly as tough as he was after he came here.

ROBERT BROWN: To Yale.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yale, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Was he formidable, or formal, or anything of the sort?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, he just was kind of a warm person, very interested in art, and he wasn't as rigid in the kind of instruction [00:06:00] that he, the kind of lecturing he did after he wrote his *Interaction of Color* book.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: You know, because after I came here to Connecticut, I had invited him up here one time as a lecturer, and he, he gave a lecture that well, hundreds of people wanted to get there, we didn't have enough space for them, and it was straight out of his *Interaction of Color* book. By that time, he'd discovered some things that he wanted to pass on.

ROBERT BROWN: Codified, pretty much, his thinking.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I think he must have been a difficult person at Yale in his last years, because I know he got to be quite bitter about, hostile to many of the people who were working around him. And he certainly was hostile to the people who followed him. But he was very pleasant up there, and I probably saw more of him than I did of any of the other artists. But we saw a lot of them, and a lot of Chicago artists that came up. That was all very useful, you know, it was, it was a good place to work. And—

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, there was quite a lot of ferment in Chicago at that time, so left-wing artists, other groups. There—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —yeah, but that had kind of calmed down a little bit.

ROBERT BROWN: That had calmed down?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, at the end, the big anxiety about that was when I first went to Madison, they,

some of the people who taught with us had been in Chicago, and they were suspected of being Communists, and at one time, they may have played with the idea, as so many artists did at that time. But there was nothing like that, you know, certainly not after the first couple of years.

ROBERT BROWN: On the other hand then, in Wisconsin itself, there's been a long tradition of socialism.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, it was considered kind of a left-wing environment, so.

ROBERT BROWN: European transplanted socialists, the German type of socialism.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I didn't run into any of that. So, I ran into some other kinds of things, but not that.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you run into Frank Lloyd Wright? Was he around [00:08:00] very much?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, we met, we met him—

ROBERT BROWN: —perhaps the best-known man in the area. [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Uh, in fact he—

ROBERT BROWN: —or was he rather obscure at that particular period?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I had an older student, what we called RTC, return to college student, who, who took a couple courses, who was one of his nieces. I've forgotten what her name was now, it was a Lloyd something, because all of the Lloyds keep that Lloyd in there. You know, like Lloyd Garrison, and any time there's a Lloyd connection, the Lloyd gets in there. And she invited us, or she asked the Wrights if it'd be all right if she brought Patty and me out there. So we went out there and had dinner with them. And Wright was very nice, he took us around, showed us [inaudible] in all its detail, and was very charming. We didn't see much of his, Olga, his wife at that time. But the real problem came when the dinner was served. Because, you know, since that time, I've been horrified by, certainly by Olga, and I was disappointed in Wright, because it was, you know, he had all these students who were people who worked the farm, you know, they're apprentices, they work the farm, and they're supposed to worship the master. And there was another guest there who apparently had come on some kind of professional basis to see Wright, and to interview him or something like that. And he sat up next to Wright, and Wright was talking to him, and Wright asked his opinion of something that he had written, and this man, in a rather gentle sort of way, offered his opinion with a mild suggestion on something, and Olga interrupted him, and she said, "You have absolutely no right to make any comment on anything of my husband's." [00:10:00] You know, and it was really rude. And if I'd been in his place, I would have gotten up and said I'm sorry, [inaudible]. And in fact, I was tempted to do it, [inaudible] I'll just get out of there. But, what disappointed me about Wright is he didn't say anything, he just sat there and he kind of smirked. I thought, you know, there's something wrong there.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: So, that's the only direct contact. I ever had with Wright. That, you know, I didn't really—I didn't really want to have any additional contact. I have a lot of respect for what he did, and Taliesin was very interesting. But I know that his poor niece was pretty embarrassed by the whole thing, too. The only other dignitary, I had met with William Ellery Leonard, who was an eccentric there, he wrote a book about fear of locomotives, or something like that. He was a guy who couldn't leave more than a block from his house. He taught in the English department, I think, and he had to have all his classes in his apartment, because he couldn't leave. Theoretically, somebody said, well that was a pose, because when Frank Lloyd Wright had given a speech one time in the union, Ellery Leonard appeared in the back very quietly, and listened to his speech, and then he disappeared. But I painted a very bad portrait of him, which is downstairs. And I was disappointed in him, because I had my own image of him, and he wanted to be painted as if he were a well-polished gentleman, all dressed up in a necktie and surrounded by little craft objects, and things like that. And I really made a bad portrait. But I've never thrown it away. I should, but it's down there.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you think, [00:12:00] why do you suppose it made, became, it was a bad portrait?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, actually, it, it isn't even drawn very well, I had to do it in his living room, it was bad, I couldn't control anything. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —you were in a measure uncomfortable about, or just [inaudible]—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —yeah, I—he seemed to like it all right.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: But.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you find conditions had to be just right, in retrospect, as you look back for things to go very well for you?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, when it comes to portraits, you know, I don't really like to do portraits. Partly because as you get to, there's too many constraints. You know, and you do portraits, and there's an element of compromise. But, you know, even though an [inaudible] interested in my work, [inaudible] he wants me to do his portrait, that's one thing he asked all the artists to do. "Do it any way you want." But he has his own way he wants it done. [Laughs.] And I'm putting him off.

ROBERT BROWN: This is who?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Huh?

ROBERT BROWN: This is who? Who is this?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: His name is Wayne Olin [ph], he's this collector up in West Hartford.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, the collector that you mentioned earlier. [Laughs.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. So, so I've done very few portraits. At that time, you know what? I was still going to be a portrait painter when I first went to Wisconsin. But I ended up like, really doing nothing but pictures of friends, and I began to abstract them more and more. Friends and relatives.

ROBERT BROWN: And you began doing things that were either bordering on the surreal, didn't you? Or was that really afterwards?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —well that was more when I came back from the Army.

ROBERT BROWN: Were you drafted? Did you have to go into the Army, or did—or what, '43?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I was, yeah, I was drafted. I was limited service, yeah, I have bad eyesight, but when my number came up, I went down to Iowa City, where I was registered, and [00:14:00] I was called up once, and then turned back, because they said we don't have any opening for limited service people. And then, the second time, there I was, in the United States Army. I knew I was going to go in, they said it would be a couple of months. So I didn't start teaching in the fall of 1943. I think I was called up in October. So I was in the Army for three years.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you have some choice? You went into the combat engineers, at least in the beginning?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I—I had no choice. No, but before I went in the Army though, you know, I did a mural for the Air Force base.

ROBERT BROWN: Right, Army Air Field, Truax?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Truax Field, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: That's, is that near Madison?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, it's on the outskirts of Madison. Yeah. In fact, I'm still upset about the fact that the—yeah, when they, they turned it back to me, when they closed after the war, and I gave it to, I think it's West High School in Madison, they use it in their auditorium. They redecorated the auditorium and took it down, they didn't get in touch with me. It apparently was bought by somebody by the name of John Curry [ph]. I've lost track of it. I was told he was going to open a kind of a museum gallery in a barn outside of the city, 20 or 30 miles from Madison. So, you know, I'd like to find out if it's there, because if West High School had let me know, I would have gotten a U-Haul or something, go out and pick it up, and bring it back, because I'm sure I could find a suitable place for it in this area, which is so full of casinos and Indians.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, now this was one of the first ones you'd done on your own, large murals?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, it's the first one. I've done a number of murals since then. [00:16:00]

ROBERT BROWN: And would you say, were you, looking back, what style was it, what—well what was the subject?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, the subject matter, it was a problem, you know, what was I going to do for a

military base? So actually, I dealt with local Indian legends, and I did my research, I read up on all the Indian legends, and it follows orthodox kind of creation scene in the center—a Cain and Abel kind of scene, which means the Cain and Abel things, the way mountains were formed, that's the way vines [ph] were formed. And the other one was a parallel to the great flood, so the themes are in other cultures. I filled it with detail which I thought might interest soldiers who had no interest in the arts at all—most of them are outdoors people. You know, I had a lot of ducks and things like that, and creation scenes, [inaudible] a turtle had Earth put on its back by a muskrat, I guess it was. It went down to the bottom of the ocean to bring some dirt up there, and there were all kinds of water birds that held a deity coming down. It's a very interesting kind of legend. But I made all the ducks very precise. I learned how to do ducks by contacting Byron Jorner, who was a wildlife illustrator for the state of Wisconsin—he's a friend of mine. I said, "How many feathers does a duck have? And, you know, what are the proportions," and so, you know, very identifiable. It was kind of fun, but—and I'm sure the condition is pretty good. They wanted me to do it using some members of the Air Force there, trainees, as assistants. But they didn't have the time, and they came one day, [00:18:00] half a dozen of them worked on it, I had to redo everything they did. And Bob Hodgell helped me on the docks, but I was having a little time, trouble getting it done in time, which is why I disappeared myself. But it was done. But when I went in the Army, combat engineers, you know, I didn't have any opportunity to do anything then.

ROBERT BROWN: What did you do, did Patty stay on in Madison, or did you have to—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —no, no, I was sent down to Fort Leonard Wood.

ROBERT BROWN: You were at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and did she stay on in Wisconsin, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Patty stayed, and she worked with the, I guess the extension division for a while, because the money I had as a private trainee obviously wasn't very much. And she remained in that house near the Currys, until I was permanently stationed at Fort Leonard Wood, permanently in quotations [ph], because I was attached to the headquarters company as a psychologist when I got through the basic training.

ROBERT BROWN: This at least was related to some of your education, which had been, right?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, but that had nothing to do with art. I did paint a few portraits of, at [inaudible] because they would provide canvas board, and brushes, and paint, and uh, some kind of little club they had. But I didn't do any drawing. No, it was a pretty busy program.

ROBERT BROWN: What was your job, in general, as a psychologist?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, as a psychologist, I worked in what they called the personnel consultation service, which—my function as a psychologist, I didn't do therapy, I did testing. And they, and I did a, I got the biographical data that, I did the interview, and then the testing then, I think they referred to the psychiatrist for final judgment. I went through two phases, we had a very good psychiatrist [00:20:00] there, again, it was a guy named, now the name is slipping. Reader [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: Reader?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, who liked to do things himself. And he didn't really pay much attention, I'd work hard on these interviews, and he'd never even look at them. Yeah, I did work hard on the tests, and he wouldn't look at them. But yeah, he was a nice person to work for. But he was transferred, or go out of the Army, or something, and he was replaced by somebody else who—a man named Davidoff—whose idea was, let's prevent things by educating people before they have their problems. So he put all of his energy on activities outside of the office. And he turned over a lot of the psychiatric business to me. He said, "Now you interview them, and you come up with your diagnosis." And he says, "And you make your recommendation." He said, "I'll look at it, put your"—here, I had really no experience in that kind of thing, and he put a big burden on my shoulders with that one. But of course, I was sympathetic to his idea of stopping it before it happened.

ROBERT BROWN: So you would consult and give him your—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —I'd give him, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —results, and then what would he do, develop a program of recreation, or therapy, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, he'd probably do everything beforehand by, by lecturing, and have things, various and sundry companies around post. And there's too big a turnover from about 40,000 troops on there, and we only had a small office, there was a nonfunctional head of service, Major Wickersham, who didn't do any psychological work, although he was a psychology—he had a master's, and was working on his doctorate, and we had this one psychiatrist, David Offer [ph]. We had two psychologists, [00:22:00] a lot of the time there was only one, I was the one. And then we had a couple of, I don't know if you'd call them social workers or not. They

didn't do therapy, but they tried to get in as psychologists; that didn't work. But the real testing was done just by the two of them.

ROBERT BROWN: What was the aim of this, to weed out anybody who would be unstable, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, you know, basically—yeah, in a basic training camp, you're going to have a lot of people who cannot adjust to the service. Yeah. And people that have never been away from home—they stay up all night, and cry on the trains, and then people would break down under the gunfire practice, you know, how they send you through the obstacle courses or shoot over your heads. [Laughs.] But, I feel like an awful lot of breakdowns. Then we had a certain percentage of drug cases, and we had homosexual cases, of people who were being harassed by, when they—one person I remember in particular, who had been a female impersonator. And he was in the black—the blacks were separated, it was a segregated place—and he was in a black company, and some of the people knew him, and boy they wouldn't leave him alone, you know, he'd get in the shower, and life was just absolutely miserable. But, he convinced me that he really wanted to be a good soldier, but it was just making it impossible for him to function. So, [inaudible] all kinds of recommendations, sometimes we'd discharge them, sometimes transfer them. Yeah, some of them had to be sent to mental hospitals of various and sundry kinds. And we had suicide attempts. My biggest problem was, I had diagnosed a person as suicidal, and I'd sent [00:24:00] a recommendation to the company commander that this man should be watched, I mean he was an open, friendly kind of person, the patient, but he just informed me, he said, "I'm going to kill myself." And I believed him. The company commander wouldn't believe him, refused to send him off, and he killed himself the night I, he was sent back to the company. I don't know if my stock went up or down, you know, I was pretty depressed by that. Because that should have been prevented.

ROBERT BROWN: There was some, to some degree, chaos. I mean you had to do everything, you had so much, so many thousands coming through, right?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: You had to work very quickly, and—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —yeah, we weren't that busy, we were busy all the time.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: It was constant interviewing. I also had a job as a truck driver for the major.

ROBERT BROWN: Ah, the non-functioning—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Davidoff. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I had, I had to take a test to drive, get a permit to drive a truck. And I drove him all over the camp. He was lecturing, and things like that. And I did do some illustrations for him, he had a little handbook, which I have downstairs, of things that soldiers had to keep in mind to keep on the straight, to keep their senses around them, that was—I did all the drawings for that, and then it was finally published, and somebody else, they wanted to have all the heads uniform, so somebody else did—they'd pick up, they put mannered [ph] heads, so they superimposed. So, you know, I don't think anybody claims to have [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: And not, and not every soldier came through the psychological tests.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, no, it's only when they were referred by their company commander.

ROBERT BROWN: I see.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Well, we did have one, one other, actually it was a civilian, who did a lot of interviews, a very sophisticated guy from Chicago, who had a very negative attitude about the soldiers, and [00:26:00] [inaudible]. Yeah, he had a kind of perverse interest in their sex lives, and things like that. I've forgotten his name, fortunately.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] Perhaps just as well.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: So this, was this work at all satisfying to you, or?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and as a matter of fact, I made some good friendships out of it there, I think I

mentioned this once before. You know, I became quite friendly with the chief of service there, who had no other friends. But since we were from Iowa, and he was taking work at Iowa, he decided we should be friendly. You know—

ROBERT BROWN: This was Wickersham, the major?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Wicker, Wickersham, yeah. Although majors weren't supposed to associate with PFCs, which is what I was at that time. I became a T-5, I think was the technical—

ROBERT BROWN: A T-4 even.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: T-4, yeah, T-4, that's it.

ROBERT BROWN: Clinical psychologist.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Oh, you've got this down.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you noted these things.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. And now he was the one who kind of engineered my getting a direct commission on the expectation that I would be assigned there for the duration of the war. Of course, they, they transferred me immediately, as soon as I got that commission. And so I spent, I spent the—the bulk of the time at Fort Leonard, at Fort Sam Houston. Brooke General Hospital.

ROBERT BROWN: San Antonio.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: In San Antonio, yeah. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —was that mainly after people had broken down in service? This was not purely screening.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, this—yeah. No, it was the um, at the convalescent part. Most of them were still undergoing therapy. And they were referred, if they weren't too bad, if they weren't overtly psychotic, they'd be put in a convalescent ward. And it was, it had a lot of people, and a lot of psychiatrists, and a lot of [inaudible] psychologists, [00:28:00] psychiatrists, social workers, and it was a very professional operation. So that was really a very satisfying experience. It broke down after the war ended, and they began to transfer the really good psychiatrists, because they'd been there for so long, you know, they got enough points, they could be discharged. The regular Army started to take over, so my last year in the Army was—or half year, or three quarters of a year, whatever it was, it seemed forever—was not very pleasant for me, because I volunteered to go to a closed ward, which ended up like being the—that's the psychotics. Yeah, and I was also in charge of the prison ward, which is a ward for psychotic general prisoners. And I ended up also as a property officer, you know, they gave me all kinds of responsibilities without any office, and so I was supposed to do all the psychological work for that.

ROBERT BROWN: You were dealing with clearly tough cases too. Prisoners [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and they weren't, there was no real treatment. You know, the war was over, and they were in a big hurry to get them out. And get them diagnosed, and if they were really bad, they'd send them off to a mental hospital someplace. And otherwise, they weren't being returned to service particularly. They'd go to a veterans' hospital, where, you know, on that order, and yeah, I didn't really get much support. The chief of service there didn't have much interest in any psychological information. So, I'd do the testing and then he'd dismiss the testing, you know, that type of thing. So—

ROBERT BROWN: —and they'd put them in a closed ward or whatever until they could be transferred [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, really, they were only a couple weeks. But some of them had been there a lot longer, yeah, one very disturbed woman, [00:30:00] nobody could do anything with her, she hated officers, and just wanted to hear vile language, and aggressive language—just come near her if you were an officer. And she was kind of frightening. Yeah. It was a frightening experience, I mean she was a very attractive woman, about 30, I suppose. And obviously never was going to make any adjustment to—I don't have any idea what happened to her, she's about my age, she may be still alive for all I know. So, I was glad to get out of the service.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Although we made a lot of very good friendships with that, that group. Most of the psychologists, when we'd be [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: You were mustered out then in the fall of 1946?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Forty-six, yeah. Went back to teach, the job was open for me. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —that was fairly common then, wasn't it, to leave a job open until a man got back from the service?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Yeah, the big crush on trying to find a job in colleges and universities wasn't on yet, it wasn't that difficult to move around. So I went back, and I think I have commented on this before, one of the—there are a number of things that had been changed, that were quite negative. First of all, Curry had died, we didn't have the place we'd lived in, [inaudible] to just go back there. That house has been, been available, because you know, Curry had written to me saying do you want to buy it? And I'd written back saying, "Yes," but then he sold the farmhouse and that to somebody else who wanted to own the package, they didn't want somebody else 100 yards from the house. So, we didn't have any place to go back to, and Madison became very crowded, housing was difficult, [00:32:00] and for a while I didn't have any decent place to work. I worked in a very small bedroom in a summer cottage. And I did a number of things there, you know, it took me a while to kind of get straightened out with what kind of thing I wanted to do. But—

ROBERT BROWN: —you didn't have too much psychological readjustment to do? Or did you leave the ser—the armed forces extremely eager to get out [laughs] and to get back to your teaching?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, you know, it was time for me to get out, because I thought I wasn't being very useful. And besides, I really wanted to get back to my art. I did a lot of watercolors in the Army, in the San Antonio area on weekends. So I did get involved a little bit more on that.

ROBERT BROWN: You would do it from a landscape, or from—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —yeah, I'd get in the car and drive around, didn't go very far, because gasoline was still rationed, you know, but—and I'd do some of the same thing when I got to Madison, you know, I was at loose ends, I'd lost any continuity that I'd had before. So, I'd go out in the car and drive around the Wisconsin valleys and, you know, paint a couple watercolors, and come back. I never did anything with them, you know, they weren't studies. But yeah, finally I began to get into the groove a little bit. I didn't do any of the kind of quasi-academic things that I had done before. You know, I was doing a lot of imitation of Old Masters, the old Flemish portraits before, and I was showing some influence of El Greco more than anybody else. And the change came in two interests. One was a kind of a social protest interest, and that was sort of post-war development. I did a number of paintings that were a little aggressive that way. Antiwar, [00:34:00] antiracial discrimination. And then I began to do some experimenting, and attitude towards design. Yeah, breaking the picture, paint it a different way, and [inaudible] I was always very self-conscious in that, for that aspect of what I was doing. Never self-conscious particularly of saying I'm going to paint this kind of thing for so many paintings and, you know, [inaudible] as some people, you know, they have a kind of a program set up for themselves. [Inaudible.]

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. Now was the self, now was the social protest subject, was that self-conscious? Or was that just something you really felt sort of welling up in yourself?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, one of, you know, one of, in the sense, the conscious thing, that I'm going to paint protest paintings, it just seemed a natural thing to do. I was doing my doodle that way, you know, I did a lot of work at night. You know, I was still just teaching studio stuff, but I did a lot of drawing at night, and yeah, I had a lot of work, social comment kinds of things. But I was glad to get out of there, you know, I asked to be released at the end of two years, I said I'm going to leave, which was unheard of, you know, nobody goes to the University of Wisconsin and voluntarily leaves, I guess. That's—

ROBERT BROWN: —why did you feel, why did you want to leave?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, it was, there were several causes. You know, one of the things that kept me there as I was using Curry's old studio. If it was sitting empty, it had no artist in residence there, I asked the ag people, with whom I had a good relationship, as long as it wasn't being used, why couldn't I use it? And they said fine, as long as I had—if I had been able to keep that, I probably would have stayed. That was an ideal place to work. And when they finally appointed the new artist in residence, Aaron Bohrod—obviously he wanted [00:36:00] to take over, I had to leave, so I didn't have any place to work anymore.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you happen to know his work a bit?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, I knew his work, yeah. At that time, he was in his Chicago style, you know, pronounced suburbs kind of landscapes, urban landscape. And I was unhappy with things that were happening in the art department, so they wanted me to be chairman to settle feuds, and I didn't want to have anything to do with that. Then I'd seen, back in Iowa City, my old hometown, I'd seen the developments in printmaking that

Lasansky had introduced.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, Mauricio.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I felt, well, gee, you know, I really would like to get into that. So I decided I'd take advantage of the GI Bill, resign from Wisconsin, and go back and take an MFA in the art department. So they asked me to, like why don't you just take a leave and come back? I said, "No, I want to make a break," so that's what happened. I never had any real regrets. The only regret I might have had was, after I'd been there about a year and a half, as a graduate student, I decided maybe I'd better go back and look for a job. I couldn't be a student forever. And I wouldn't want to, have wanted to go back to Wisconsin, but I didn't want to be an art chairman, the department chairman. And that's the only kind of job that was available. You know, all these GIs had come back, so there were a lot of people coming out with MFAs, and they're looking for jobs in institutions, so it was a little bit harder to find a job. Before the war, it was fairly easy to move from place to place if you had any kind of qualifications. But once I decided to come back on the job market, I had a number of job offers, [00:38:00] but they were always as department chairman, and I had, that's one reason I left Wisconsin, that's one reason I left Drake, I didn't want to be a department chairman. But I finally did take one. You know, when it was getting pretty late, and I was, I thought I was going to have to stay another year, they'd offer me a graduate assistantship to teach art history at Iowa. In fact, they offered me a job to teach art history and I didn't want to, didn't want to do that.

ROBERT BROWN: Did the MFA count for much in those days, if you were going to teach studio? Did people, did it matter to colleges and universities?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I don't think as the same extent as it did later on, when they kind of expected a kind of professionalism. Because I had a master's already, and the master's was more important than the fact that it might be an MFA kind of master's. So, you know, I had—

ROBERT BROWN: —you had a master's in psychology?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Psychology, yeah. So as long as I had a master's.

ROBERT BROWN: So at that point, when did you take your MFA from Iowa? Did it come a little bit later, the actual degree?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, that, no in the—I got the MFA at the end of the first year when I went back. Because I had accumulated a lot of credits, I used to go back and take summer school courses anyway, because my father and mother lived in town, and we'd come back and stay with them, and—

ROBERT BROWN: —had your father continued as an academic?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh yeah, he was still teaching there.

ROBERT BROWN: He was teaching, what was he teaching then?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: He was in physical education and anthropology. And you know, he'd been a professor there since 1930. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —were they very pleased with your course? Were they very tolerant parents? Of course, you were well beyond the age.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, my father was never reconciled to the fact that I didn't become a research person. He really wanted me to be involved in research. My mother was pleased in a way, [00:40:00] but not pleased at the direction my work was taking. She liked the earlier, more academic stuff better than stuff that she called my weird paintings. You know, my weird paintings. So they had things of mine in their house, but they preferred to have the earlier things. You know, they were supportive. They made a financial sacrifice, I'm sure, to send me to Europe the first time in 1935. In 1935, who had money?

ROBERT BROWN: And they did that.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And you were married by then too.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, not—not the first time.

ROBERT BROWN: Not the first time.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I married the following year. But, I think my mother scrounged the money, it didn't have to be very much, you know, because when I went over, it cost \$120 roundtrip on the freighter. And I maybe had a couple hundred dollars to spend after I got there. Everything was third class rail. But, no they did the best they could, so she certainly, I think, was more sympathetic of the fact that I was in the arts than he was.

ROBERT BROWN: You said that your father put a lot of pressure on you and your siblings.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I mean, he obviously was a very major influence on all of us, by his own, you know, intensity, [inaudible] involved with his profession. So I think there's, whatever has happened to any of us, to a large extent, because of his attitude.

ROBERT BROWN: Now as a professor of physical education, what was his specialty, or emphasis, or outlook? In a university system, what would his role have been? I mean I think a professor of physical education, you're teaching developing skills and gifted— [00:42:00]

[END OF 4 OF 7 SIDE B.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [00:00:00] Well, it was like most people when he started out, he had to do some coaching. But his interest really was more scientific, and as a matter of fact, more mathematical. He was a compulsive research person. Among the courses he taught were, for example, physics of physical education, or the mechanics of physical education. That's one of the first uses of analysis from the physics to improve athletic skills. But he was in a public health aspect of it, he was in comparative anatomy aspects of it. He did a study one time where he went up to Western Reserve in Cleveland, measured the spines, spines of a whole bunch of gorillas. And the reason he did that was he was making studies of comparison between gorillas and human beings to see what impact the shape of the vertebrae had on the way people stood. You know, whether it was natural for all of us to stand up and throw our shoulders back. He did the research on what body weights should be. You know, now your body weight, your ideal body weight is—you accept the fact that it's based on a certain kind of build that you have. You know, the size of your bones and things of that kind. Up to that time, that was not true. They'd say if you're five-feet-eight, you should weigh such and such. Now you say, there are all kinds of variables. So, I think of all the things that he accomplished, he was the proudest of the many publications he had. They were in the hundreds, on all kinds of subjects. I also think he was a very creative mathematician, particularly in the field of statistics. [00:02:00] He was using—he developed his own variation of factor analysis while he was teaching in China, and was the first person, so far as I know, to have been able to find a practical application for factor analysis, which had been developed theoretically by Thurstone, who was a leading statistician at the University of Chicago. You know, when he got back to the United States, he went up to see Thurstone, I think this was happening when he was at Iowa. Yeah, in the 1930s. And they worked together for some time on, you know, what to do with that kind of thing. [Inaudible] in many ways, a very remarkable kind of person.

ROBERT BROWN: Okay.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: With an abnormal drive. So, he wanted us all to be that way. Yeah. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —what, to be constantly in motion, puzzling out things, active?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, he tried to analyze everything, one of his weaknesses was, he often felt he was an expert on things that he wasn't very expert about. You know, so we'd have arguments about art, but I finally ended up, by getting my PhD—I think I mentioned this—partly because that meant so much to him, by that time, I got it in 1958, and yeah, he had had heart attacks and things like that, and I was so close, you know, I didn't need a PhD, not in my field. But it wasn't that much of a hassle to get it, so I finished up the dissertation.

ROBERT BROWN: And now the man you would have done that with, I guess, was William Heckscher, primarily.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I did the basic research with him, but he left Iowa, I went to Utrecht, and so he was out of the country, and the man, theoretically the director of the thesis was Lester Longman, who was the chairman of the art department at Iowa, who really had nothing to do with it. [00:04:00] So.

ROBERT BROWN: What was his role, Lester Longman?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Actually, he's the one who, in a technical sense, was responsible for my getting the degree. Yeah, I'd done a rough draft of my dissertation before Long—before Heckscher left. And that's when I, back there in graduate school. And when he left, well, I continued to do research on it while I was teaching in Canada, it was only kind of half-hearted. And I'd kind of given up any idea of going on. Longman called me up in the winter of 1957, he said, "I'm going to leave Iowa" and he said, "the number of you people who've been working on degrees, if you want them, now's the time to get it." To come back and finish up degrees, because at the end of the summer, he was going to be gone. So, I said, "Well, I'll do that, if I can do it in the single summer."

I wasn't going to go back to be an art historian. And although I was teaching art history at the time, I was teaching at Connecticut at the time.

ROBERT BROWN: And you were in part teaching art history?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. And so I sent the manuscript off to their Netherlandish expert, Charles Cutler.

ROBERT BROWN: Where, is it Iowa?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: At Iowa, yeah. And he didn't even look at it until about two days before the deadline. I had to register by such and such a date. I call him, I said, "I haven't heard from you, what about it?" And he said, "Oh I'm just looking at it now." He said, "I don't see any reason why you can't do that." So, I [inaudible] came back, and I cut the thesis in about a third, rewrote it, the whole thing, and finished it up in the summer. And you know, I've never really had any satisfaction out of that degree. My father got a great deal of satisfaction out of it. [00:06:00] But I don't think anybody ever read it. I got through, there was no real critical evaluation of it. Cutler, I think, read it. I don't think anybody else did. I had a committee for the orals, I'm sure that two thirds of them had never even read the—the little one-page summary you're supposed to.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: So, it was kind of a joke. It was good for me in a way. You know, I ended up being a lot more self-assured when it came to art history, but—

ROBERT BROWN: —oh, you mean having done the writing and the intense research?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, I've done the research, I think that was useful for me. But—

ROBERT BROWN: —it was on Hugo van der Goes. Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. And I was put onto that partly by Heckscher, because I had the psychology background, and van der Goes [inaudible] psychotic breakdown, and you know, a very elementary attempt at therapy back in the 15th century, so he thought that might be sort of natural for my interests. It wouldn't have been an area that I normally would have written in. Yeah, I would have written 20th century, I suppose. Or late 19th century, or something of that kind.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, Heckscher, did he believe that you should, once you go through your graduate work fairly quickly, just do an intensive study?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I think he was a little bit like NYU people; if he had his way, you'd be doing the research on it forever. But I never knew what happened, you know. He gave me a very detailed analysis of what I wrote. He was a compulsive kind of person, he wrote all kinds of comments, and I expected a little bit more enthusiastic response to what I'd done.

ROBERT BROWN: You're talking now about your dissertation?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, when he read my rough draft. [00:08:00] The rough draft [inaudible] I think, and [inaudible] pretty negative. And by that time, I had gotten this job up in Canada, so I put it aside. And he apparently took some kind of offense at that, or something like that. Because I had heard that subsequently, he'd commented to somebody, "I wonder whatever happened to McCloy?" You know, and the, I don't know if I mollified him—I invited him up there as a speaker on a kind of arts weekend that we had at the university. And you know, he was lionized and feted, and really treated right, and got enormous satisfaction out of that. But then disappeared, you know, he went off overseas, and that was the end of it.

ROBERT BROWN: What was he like as a person to work under, as a teacher?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh, he was a marvelous teacher. Yeah, yeah. And he could get the least academically interested artists interested in doing creative writing, even. The term papers the artists would do were taken seriously. If you want to get an artist upset, ask him to write something, most of the time. But they had a policy at the University of Iowa at that time, when you wrote your—when you painted a thesis, you know, for an MFA, you had to have a written parallel dissertation also. You know, that could be carried a little bit too far. But they were very fussy about the quality of the writing, the quality of the bibliography entries, and footnote entries, and things of that kind. And, but he could get people to take that kind of seriously. Think very seriously, and want to do well, but he was really a great lecturer. Very compulsive person. [00:10:00] Totally organized, some [inaudible] every, every word that he uttered was written down. You know, but no, he was a real pleasure to work with. His limitations, I suppose, were that he was strictly an iconography person. So, I mean if you're not very sympathetic to that approach, tough, that's the approach you got.

ROBERT BROWN: Had you met him this, in 1948 or so, for the first time? Or had you known him earlier?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I—

ROBERT BROWN: —he hadn't come to Iowa until—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —well he'd been there for a while. But I, that's not why I went. I took art history classes because I was interested in art history.

ROBERT BROWN: But it was Lasansky, the printmaker, that—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —I'd gone there, yeah. I did take painting with Eugene Ludins, and I didn't take a painting class, I took his thesis painting course. Which was, the thesis course was in painting, encaustic. And Ludins was very nice, okay? And he wasn't an instructor, he was just a, you know, he never told me anything. Never made any kind of criticism. He just assumed, I suppose, that since I was in the school, or teaching for a long time, I knew what I was doing. [Laughs.] And uh, so I didn't get any help there. I didn't get much help from Lasansky, or mostly the examples of things going on around. Lasansky didn't speak English very well. But he pushed things that, in a sense, could be negative. I mean he wanted people to draw in a somewhat academic manner. If you couldn't draw according to his particular standards, he wasn't very sympathetic. But even so, he was a great teacher because he got great work from his students. And that's ultimately your measure. And—

ROBERT BROWN: How do you suppose he achieved that?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Mainly [00:12:00] by the example of his own work. And he could be very friendly with some people, but if you didn't speak Spanish, you had some problems. You know, one of the people I hired when I went to Canada was Dick Bowman, he spoke Mexican, you know, like a native. So he and Lasansky—

ROBERT BROWN: —got along.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, got along fine.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: And they were very friendly, and he spent a lot of time in his home, and could talk to his wife, who hardly spoke any English at all. So, I don't suppose, I mean he was always friendly, but there's no way we could carry on any kind of sensible conversation, because his English wasn't good enough.

ROBERT BROWN: Why did you leave? You left in 1950, the beginnings of your graduate work at Iowa. And went to take this job in Manitoba, as professor and director of a school of art, at the University of Manitoba.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, well—

ROBERT BROWN: —how'd that come about?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, you know, I'd just about given up any idea of getting any kind of job I'd had at Wisconsin. I just wanted to teach studio. But I'd been interviewed for a chairmanship [inaudible]—

ROBERT BROWN: —mostly chairmanships?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Always for chairmanships.

ROBERT BROWN: And you didn't want that kind of administrative—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, I'd looked at them almost sympathetically, because I, just in the sense I was going to have to take a job, but I—I kept turning them down, because they wanted me to, in one case, to be a dean of men and chairman of the art department. And another was, they had a, the president had some kind of ax to grind, that had the art department very upset, and it just didn't seem to be very sensible. And I didn't want any part of that, because that was worse than the Wisconsin situation. And finally, it was in the summer I guess, early part of the summer, yeah, I think like early part of the summer, because school was out, I was back in summer school, I got this [00:14:00] request from the University of Manitoba, to see if I was interested in starting a school of art at the University of Manitoba. So, gosh—

ROBERT BROWN: —that was much more than a chairmanship.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, so I thought well, if I have to do something, I went up to talk about it anyway, and they had a new president up there, a man named Albert Gillson, who'd been dean of arts and science at McGill University prior to that. And he'd started an art department at McGill University while he was there, and

now he wanted to start one at the University of Manitoba, now that he was the president. And they had had an old art school in Canada that had just closed, I mean in Winnipeg. They had just closed it, lack of funds or something, it was eventually supported. And he thought well, we can take over those quarters, and that staff had dispersed, there was one man, he thought, oh, we should at least, maybe he could stay on, he taught lettering. Otherwise, I was to hire my own staff, I had to come up with a curriculum, and fight it through arts and science faculty, and the various and sundry committees that, yeah, and have it ready for the fall. So, I went back —

ROBERT BROWN: —and this was early summer?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, already summer. I went back to the place, and I was the most popular person you ever saw, because jobs were scarce, and I had some jobs to offer. So, everybody wanted to get a job. And I hired, I did hire—

ROBERT BROWN: —but you took this job then as the director readily?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —oh yeah, I—I decided, yeah, if I was going to be chairman, I'd rather be in that boat than—

ROBERT BROWN: —sure, starting something brand new.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: And so, I hired two people who were taking classes then, Johnny Casiri [ph], who [00:16:00] has made quite a name for himself as a kind of quasi-Pop artist who paints girls' bottoms and panties. And somebody to teach a commercial art course, because that was the foundation of that school that had been there before, the provincial thing, but I had to have both a university course, a BFA program, and a certificate course for people who didn't have high school diplomas. Yeah, so it was a provincial program and a university program. And I hired a painter, this fellow who speaks Mexican, he had left school, he was out in California, and I'd asked Lasansky if he knew anybody who was a really good painter who might fit into this, and he suggested Bowman, and I knew Bowman.

ROBERT BROWN: Richard Bowman?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, Richard Bowman, yeah. So we showed up—oh, I went up there earlier, and these other people were to follow, and we got things more or less stabilized. And I ran into something that was, that's probably, it's more complicated than I had anticipated, more complicated than I realized. Gillson had gone off, after he made this appointment, he hadn't put it in writing. He'd gone off to England for a vacation, and he ended up in a hospital with an undiagnosed illness. Actually, it was terminal cancer of the bowel of some kind. And was out of contact, so I showed up saying, I was bringing these teachers up there, and I was ready to go, and there was no evidence on paper that I had any authorization to do anything. The only person who knew anything about it really was the assistant to the president, who had been privy to Gillson's thinking, and the, he knew that what I said was correct. And I also got the backing of the business manager, a man named Crawford. But we had a pretty hectic period, [00:18:00] we had to clean out the old school, there was an old law court building, kind of a Romanesque Revival, very tall, high ceilings, must have been 20, 30 feet in the place.

ROBERT BROWN: Built originally as a law court, you say?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, and all dark wood, so it was much too dark to work in. And but, Crawford was very helpful, he got painters, they got [inaudible] things and he painted it all white. But when my staff showed up one at a time, we got together and we tore out all the old library stalls, and all the book cases and things like that. And so it was ready to go. But I had to fight the curriculum through, I had to have meetings with the provincial, with the old art school advisory board, and then I had meetings with the people in the arts and science department who were not happy at all about an art department. But when we got started, we had a program, and it proved to be a very successful program. It was also a very difficult one on the staff. Because we had, we were, you know, I don't know where the mandate came, but we had to have children's classes, and we had to have adult education classes at night, and I had a very small staff, we had to carry on two kinds of programs in the day, the diploma course and the degree course. And an adult education and children's classes, you know, how, with only these few staff members that we were going to do this? Because I didn't want them to work more than say, 18 hours a week on studio instruction. That's pretty standard in those days. So everybody taught a Saturday class, everybody taught an evening class, and I think I taught two, two classes a day. So we, we worked hard. And then on top of that, we had to carry the torch for modern art, because we came in there [00:20:00] in a very conservative environment, and we were seen as radicals. And I was put in a totally new role. You know, all of the sudden I was the leader of the pro-modern art developing in central Canada. Now I never

particularly thought of myself in that position, but that's what I am. But it was a very interesting kind of thing, you know, I had to meet everybody practically in the whole country. You know, I met all the major artists in the country, and I went across country under Gillson's sponsorship to see other art schools. I met all the Old Masters of Canadian painting. You know, and fortunately I had heard of, I'd seen their work before I'd come there.

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

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: But I met Lorne Harris, and got to know him quite well. A. White Jack, I don't know if these names mean anything to you.

ROBERT BROWN: Harris does, yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, Arthur Lismer [ph]. LeMoine Fitzgerald had been the major teacher in the school in Winnipeg, and he was a second generation of the Group of Seven, they called them. And I guess that was all the living ones. And I also got to know most of the major painters in Canada. This big British Columbian group, and I didn't know the Montreal/Toronto group as well, but you know, it was a close—

ROBERT BROWN: —were you given ample time to travel and meet people then?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I took trips. Took, well, one in each of the first two years, I went east the first year, I went west the second year. And then we had uh, a kind of an art circuit. I guess they call it a western art circuit, or something like that. And I was a representative on that, so I went to Calgary, and places like that. I went up to Victoria at a conference. Usually that was after the school [00:22:00] was over in early summer.

ROBERT BROWN: These were what, conferences of, or groups of people who were also teaching art, studio art?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No, actually it was mostly museum people organizing, what they were trying to do was organize little art centers.

ROBERT BROWN: And they were in their infancy then, weren't they?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Well, it was very interesting, I was responsible in part for trying to organize certain kinds of shows to circulate through western Canada. You know, I started organizing, had to organize a modern art in western Canada show.

ROBERT BROWN: You mean things you could find in Canada itself?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, yeah, being done by artists at that time. And we had, came out with little catalogues with them and you know, I wrote the preamble essays, and I wrote columns in the newspaper, I was on the CBC all the time with commentary, and sometimes panel discussions, sometimes.

ROBERT BROWN: So you were starting things, much of this you were kind of starting more or less from scratch, is that right?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Because there couldn't have been too much depth in visual arts in western Canada by that point. [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, it depends, there was a—

ROBERT BROWN: —in British Columbia, I think [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: British Columbia, yeah, they, they had—

ROBERT BROWN: —[inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —they had a good art school out there. And the University of Saskatchewan had an art program, but there were very few universities that had art programs. There, the idea in Canadian universities is keep music and art out of the university, put them in conservatories. In that sense, Gillson was a radical, you know, he wanted to bring the art department into the universities. And God, I—we worked awfully hard. And it was hard in other ways, the weather was hard to contend with, you know, 20 to 30 below zero routinely all winter long. And the worst part of it, in a way—I was so busy I didn't think about complaining—[00:24:00] since Gillson didn't get back, you know, for months after school started, the relationship between the university and the province never really got straightened out. And nobody knew who was to be the, taking care of the janitorial service in this building. We had the whole top two floors. And the province said that it's the university's job, the university said it's the province's job. It ended up, Patty and I did it, you know, about nine or 10 o'clock at night,

I'd mop the floors, Patty would clean the sinks, and you know, it was pretty tiresome. It wasn't until about the middle of the year, we finally got a janitor. You know, I didn't organize the students very well, I finally, you know, said you've got to take a bigger hand in keeping this thing clear, you know, you girls, you take care of the girl's room, get it clean. But we still had to do a lot of the sink washing, and things of that kind. You know, I was really grateful when we finally got a janitor.

ROBERT BROWN: And Gillson continued from afar to keep up with this, and support your—or was he just too ill [inaudible]?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —well no, he—we had no contact with him until he got back. And when he got back, he was so supportive, I mean, so pleased. He was partly pleased because we made a fuss, and he liked all the scandalous headlines in the papers, and things of that kind.

ROBERT BROWN: As what, as Modernists, or—?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, he just liked the—the ruckus we—

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —yeah. Because well, we had a staff exhibition that had attacking headlines, and letters to the editor that wanted to throw us out of the country, and all kinds of things like that. I thought he'd be upset, he thought it was great.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you get to know him a bit?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, he was a hard man to know, in many ways. His field actually was mathematics. But I saw a lot of him; we were at his house a lot. And in many ways, we didn't see eye to eye, because [00:26:00] you know, his interest was not really our interest. He is partly responsible for our getting prominent people to come. You know, for—we'd have a weekend conference every year, you know, one weekend, and I invited people to come and participate. Sometimes a Canadian artist, and sometimes American art historians, like Heckscher came, Viktor Lowenfeld, the art educator from Penn State, came. And something that I feel was very informative to me, now I was very naïve about how to handle these things, you know, that was not my experience. And yeah, I expected when you had a panel, that people would be prepared. You know, I didn't learn until actually after I had retired here—I chaired a panel at a conference we had at Connecticut College, that John Cage, among others—people don't prepare for those things. They expect you to serve as a McLeal [ph] Laird [ph], you know, you have all the questions, you ask the questions. And Gillson would show up to these things, and he'd throw the questions in, if, you know, I expected people to be able to handle it. The only one who would really handle it well was Heckscher.

ROBERT BROWN: William Heckscher.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Because he wasn't interested in panels. He, he wanted to give extra lectures, he gave three or four lectures, and he made an enormous impact. Art Hayes, he used to be up at [inaudible], he came, another one, [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: Was he [inaudible] presentations he could give?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, he did, yeah, he was very popular.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: He was three—three sheets to the wind, I never saw anybody who could drink so much and not show it, except in the increased redness, because he'd give his speeches flawlessly. No, and he was very useful. [00:28:00] And we tried to get different kinds of people—

ROBERT BROWN: —and he would have, what was, his impact would have been in, because he was a secondary art education, secondary level art education man, wasn't he? And that had impact, because you were—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —well this was not just for the students, it was for the community, for the community.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, so I probably had, in my own way, more impact in a positive way, on Canadian culture, than I did, anything I've done in this country. Now the big problem is, you know, I was terribly busy. I was in the office every night until 10:00 or 11:00, if not later. I wasn't teaching art history, I finally started a kind of a half criticism, half art history course for art students. The art history was taught in the department of architecture in the university, and they were not art historians. You know, I was a better trained art historian

than any of them—any of them were. But, I had to do most of my painting in the summers. Now, we had a summer program after a while, but yeah, I was able to do work in the summers. And that's when I shifted to lacquers, because the lacquers would dry faster. And it affected my whole style. You know, I changed, in many ways, completely. But partly it was the impact of the kind of message I had to carry in public, and [inaudible] pushing a different attitude towards design, away from the focus of kind of romanticized subject matter, which would characterize a lot of Canadian painting.

ROBERT BROWN: Did that offend people up there very much? This change that you represented?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: All depends. We had more loyal supporters, and I think more disturbed opponents, than you'll find any place. Part of it is because most of us were Americans. You know, the people I brought in were all Americans.

ROBERT BROWN: And they were resentful of that?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: They were sensitive about American dominance of cultural things. [00:30:00] And the—the university academic people were only partially supportive. Now it's a good thing I had done all that art history business, because they asked me to give a lecture for the philosophy club. And I gave them a well-organized, one with all kinds of references to different periods, mostly historically-based kind of thing, and I heard afterwards that it's, "Well McCloy's crazy like the rest of them, but at least he's educated." That was a comment that was made. [Laughs.] So I was the public spokesman. The fellow Bowman was very, very useful, as he was a jazz musician enthusiast, and he organized a local jazz band, and there were quite a few rather talented people around there that didn't have any opportunity to play jazz [inaudible] genuine jazz. He played the drums—this fellow would put on the jazz concerts at the art school. And they were a packed house, they were nothing, you know? And then we started doing music programs by records, you know, bringing in different kinds of music. But the town itself, Canada is much ahead of the United States in general cultural interest. And Winnipeg had a ballet company, had a symphony, you know, and that's a good ballet company, it was a good symphony. It had a fair museum, because I worked with the museum. I also worked with the gallery in the university. So, you know, they had me in on everything.

ROBERT BROWN: What, it's a big question, but what about, what do you think accounts for that in Canada, the generally high cultural level? Is there, has there always been some directive from above, and the people follow that? Whereas in this country we have much greater variety?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: I don't know, as part of—the Canadian government has always been much more sympathetic [00:32:00] to the arts and supportive financially, in a way that's totally unknown in this country. And artists in general were very generously supported with scholarships, and they go abroad for extended periods of time, and they backed their interests with their finances, and that makes a big difference. But, I can't account for it otherwise, there's a great respect for learning in Canada, I think more than in this country. Otherwise, why sponsor a ballet out, you'd think, in the middle of no place? But, you know, it was a first-class ballet company. And of course, now has this worldwide reputation, but there's still, it's the Winnipeg Royal Ballet now. Now they finally got the seal of approval from the Queen of England. So, I don't know where it came from. The town, its taste in the visual arts, tended to still remain very conservative. They um, the Group of Seven, they thought of as their great masters. And at the time they broke in, in the '20s, they were thought of as scandalous radicals. Now we see the work is, actually it's pretty good work, in retrospect you look at it, there's some good, solid painters in there. If you can break away from the prejudices one way or the other towards kinds of representation. But, it was a strain. Patty was getting increasingly uneasy, especially with the winters. Yeah, she felt more the anti-Americanism than I did. I was so busy.

ROBERT BROWN: Did she help, have a job in the city, in Winnipeg?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Oh no, she didn't work.

ROBERT BROWN: No?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No.

ROBERT BROWN: But she was more prone to meet people casually, and feel these—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —well we uh, we entertained a lot. You know, we were very public figures out there. And [00:34:00] so, she had to work harder at that end of it. She fought her part of the battle, did it very well. We made a lot of good friendships, made a lot of good friendships with the contemporary Canadian painters, particularly those Saskatchewan and British Columbian. And I had a long letter not so long ago from one of the British Columbian boys, [inaudible] Jack Shadbolt, if the name means anything to you.

ROBERT BROWN: Vaguely.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Fabulous success.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, they were also somewhat linked to the Seattle area in America too, I think.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, their—

ROBERT BROWN: —Callahan and [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —their association was the Northwest, [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: [inaudible] in Oregon, and [inaudible].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: But a former student lives out in the Vancouver area, and she used to send me clippings about this Jack Shadbolt. Finally I wrote to him. Oh, I got a really long, you know, pretty arrogant letter in a way, but full of his philosophy and things like that. But, he really is an extremely talented person, and very bright. Because I went up there with a message. There's a certain advantage to that, to have a message.

ROBERT BROWN: Which was?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I was a big proponent of the kind of program for artists that gave an artist a lot of liberal arts background. I thought, you know, that the rationale behind that is, we don't have the enlightened clientele, the patrons, that we had say in the Renaissance, when the big boy told the artist pretty much what he wanted.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: So, you have a collaborative kind of a thing going on then. Now the artist is on his own, I mean, who tells him? Nobody. [00:36:00] So, if he's going to be a meaningful figure in, in the society, he's got to have a knowledge of various outside [inaudible] philosophy, or a contact with ideas, that the most efficient place to get them probably is the university. The university community. At least that was the kind of message I was carrying. And in fact, I had a little friction with some of the Canadian artists who felt that I was saying they weren't well educated because they didn't have degrees. I said, that has nothing to do with it, you know, these people were extremely well read, and very sophisticated, didn't matter whether they had a degree or not. So they would agree with me in principle, they didn't like the idea of saying well, we've got to have a BFA, or an MFA attached to this.

ROBERT BROWN: And were you pushing for a degree, or you—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —no.

ROBERT BROWN: No.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: No. No, I was happy—

ROBERT BROWN: —so you actually were very much in sympathy, and you and they were very much in accord, that is.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah, like we were all finding the, the battle for the, well, the anti-academic battle, which I'm still fighting in a way, you know, trying to deal with the realities of the present, not the nostalgia for the past. And they, they solved it in different ways. Hans Hofmann was a major influence out on the West Coast, a number of them had studied with him, and they carried his message there. And had a guy named Bert Binning, who was kind of a Paul Klee departure, and Jack Shadbolt's kind of an Expressionist painter—they were very strong painters. And they're pretty sophisticated painters, that most of them have contact with the university environment. Yeah, because Binning was UBC, Shadbolt was with Vancouver School of Art, but they were very closely affiliated with the university group.

ROBERT BROWN: [00:38:00] So your message that you came to Canada with, you think was accomplished? I mean, you got it across. And then the same time, you also found that you didn't need to deliver, because it was already there in the form of these well-read—

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —well, you just had to—

ROBERT BROWN: —painters.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —yeah, you had to just form a link among them. And get some kind of exchange from one part of the country to the other.

ROBERT BROWN: How about your own work? Did it serve to, at least certainly introduce you, but also to link you within Canada? Because you showed fairly actively while you were, those four years you were in Winnipeg.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, I didn't show that, that much, not as much as other members of the department. But, in fact I had to carry this [inaudible] obviously influenced my work. You know, I look at things from a somewhat different point of view. And some of my colleagues influenced my work. To some extent, Bowman did. He bothered me in some respects, so he, his philosophy was based largely on acceptance of clichés about art, which I found very useful as a matter of communicating to the public, and he'd come out with these outlandish clichés that everybody thought it was a great revelation, and while, yeah, I was trying to be more subtle about it. But yeah, I mean it took a long time for my work to evolve. You know? I was struggling with a new medium, I was struggling with the time factor. And you know, I didn't have that much time to be involved in the arts. But, yeah, it got through, I was beginning to work in a more personal direction. The influences were, I look for art historical influences, and I had influences of people like Chagall and Picasso probably were the two, not best, well, [inaudible] of course Chagall went through a Cubist kind of period, too. I did some abstract painting also for the first time in [00:40:00] 1952, I think. And—

ROBERT BROWN: —how did that feel?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Well, it didn't feel any different from anything else. The only thing is that I think the first two I did were bought immediately. I never was particularly influenced by an interest in sales, because I don't really like to sell paintings. And those two were bought, one by the chairman of an architecture department, the other one for the—the architecture school. So, I have a photograph of one of them, And I don't know whatever happened to the other one. But one is in the school of architecture, I photographed when I went up there in 1962, as a juror for a big show. And the other one, Jack Russell, who is the head of the architecture department, died. I don't know what he did with his paintings. I know what it looked like. You know, it would look different if I saw it. But, you know, after that kind of battle for a while, I mean the members of the department that I brought up started to get restless and wanted to leave, get back to the States. Bowman wanted to go back to California. And Johnny Casiri, Gad [ph] Boyle, who was my commercial artist, left at the end of the first year.

ROBERT BROWN: What was his name?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Gad Boyle.

ROBERT BROWN: Gad Boyle.

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah. Partly because he felt that he wasn't able to do the job. He'd been a, quite a good commercial artist—actually was kind of a mural painter in this country, commercial, but not in the sense of doing [inaudible] ads and things like that. And what he found was the pressure of the commercial industry up there to draw in a very academic way, and he couldn't do that. He, he felt that he couldn't draw hands. [00:42:00] If you wanted to get a job with, with F.W. Brigden [ph] Company, which is a big commercial art company up there, and Brigden was on our advisory board. They asked you to make a drawing of a hand. They said, "If you can draw a hand well, we can teach you anything you want to know." And he couldn't do that. So, he got out at the end of the year. I had to hire somebody else. I hired a bright young boy from New York, sight unseen, didn't have a degree, just had a little record of, he'd been a professional commercial artist on his own, and he had some courses that were art student-related. And he proved to be a staggering success.

ROBERT BROWN: What was his name?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Roland Wise.

ROBERT BROWN: Roland Wise?

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: Yeah.

[END OF 5 OF 7 SIDE A.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [00:00:00] Which sounds more like past practice, to paint a mural for it. Now that reminds me of when I was talking about my Wisconsin experience, I painted two murals there, not just the one at Truax Field. In fact, the one I failed to mention is the one I suppose is the most nearly major mural that I ever painted. Wisconsin was about to celebrate its centennial celebration, and Harry Lictor, who had formerly been with the art education department, and a friend of mine, was now working for the State Historical Society. And he mentioned that they were looking for some way to make a big splash at the Wisconsin State Fair. And I said that if they would pay all of the expenses, I'd be glad to paint a mural for them on that occasion. I suppose this suggested itself to me because of the mural that Curry had painted for the State Fair a few years earlier. In any case, they took me up. Now, it was a big job as I recall, the all-over dimensions were 14 feet high, by 24 feet wide, with the 24 feet being made up of three eight-foot panels. So, they had no money, and I didn't want to put

any money into it. So we used the cheapest kind of material, the canvas was cotton duck, you know, a heavy kind of sail cloth. [00:02:00] And all the paints were hand-ground paints, because we bought the dry pigment from a local paint supply place. I painted the mural very much in the same technical way that Curry had used. And that is half chalk ground, kind of orange, ochre-ish imprimatura, then a heavier, a heavy tempera of just white on that ground. And then oil, bronze and oil on top of it. So, it was a big job, I thoroughly enjoyed doing it, and I got it done in plenty of time before the state fair, and then it was installed in a permanent place on the stairwell of the State Historical Society building in Madison, where it still is. And of course, the fact that we used cotton duck did cause some problems, I was afraid that the glue size wouldn't penetrate adequately, which is a common problem with cotton. And in general, the painting has stayed in excellent condition. Glue worms have developed, and of course I guess that nothing can be done about that. The one I did for University of Manitoba was in lacquer and sand. The studies are a lot better than the final, final painting. And from this point, you know, this time perspective, I'm sorry I used that medium. But that's the medium I was using at the time. And well, on a big scale, it tended to be a little bit stiff. [00:04:00] The studies actually are much better than the final work.

Well, Patty and I had decided sometime during our fourth year there that we really wanted to return back to the United States. I'd discussed this with Bill Heckscher when he came up there as part of our, our, kind of, arts weekend, or arts concentration. He gave a series of lectures that I talked about before, and since he'd had some somewhat negative experiences in Canada, he was a little bit sympathetic to the kind of negative experiences that we were having. I don't think he ever had the satisfying, positive experiences that we did have. In fact, I still look back at the four years I had in Winnipeg as probably the most useful years I ever spent in the field of education. In any case, during that last year, I received a letter from Rosemary Park, who was president of Connecticut College—at that time Connecticut College of Women—saying that she had talked to Bill Heckscher at a conference at Winterthur, as I recall, and he had told her that I was thinking, or planning to leave Canada, and she was looking for a new head of the department in New London, and asked if I would be interested. At that time, I had an application in for the job of chairman of the department at Sophie Newcomb, in New Orleans. Which was, it wasn't a school that was very well known to me, but when I looked it up I saw that it was, had [00:06:00] quite an advanced art department. And after I visited New London, I realized that Sophie Newcomb, from a professional point of view, was probably a more challenging job situation.

In any case, after I visited New London, I was offered the job by Ms. Park, and I kept stalling, because I was hoping that Sophie Newcomb would come through with a, an offer. And finally, I received the letter saying, you know, it's either accept this job, or withdraw, we can't be kept hanging, dangling in the air like this any longer. I called Sophie Newcomb up, and they couldn't make up their minds at that time, so I had to withdraw from that situation, and I did decide to come to New London. It was a kind of a tough decision. We decided to come here, despite a lot of reservations. First of all, I knew, and this was confirmed from later experience, that the New London environment was about as conservative and reactionary as Winnipeg was, and didn't have quite the same degree of sophistication and interest in the arts that existed on a widespread basis in Canada. I was a little bit reluctant to deal only with a girls' school. Yes, I was—all my educational experience had been in a coeducational situation. But the real attractions were the location of the city, halfway between Boston and New York. I realized that New York, of course, [00:08:00] was kind of the world center of art activity. And one reason we're still here, as a matter of fact, it really is. We don't go to Boston very often, but it's there also, as a major cultural attraction to this part of the country. Another reason was that Susanne Langer was on the faculty at Connecticut College. The last couple of years that I'd been in Winnipeg, I read her works, particularly philosophy, and I knew Key [ph], and I used it, not as a text, but as a reference in a course I taught in principles of criticism, which was a required course for the students, the BFA students at the university.

And so, I hoped that I would have a kind of a close and challenging relationship with Susanne Langer. Well, the relationship with Susanne Langer never was that close. You know, I got to know her reasonably well, but by the time that we got to New London, she already was thinking in terms of outside the field of art—that's more or less, kind of universal biological studies. And I don't think I ever had a head-to-head talk with her over some of the things that, well, which I—I didn't really quite agree. But she was a—a stimulating presence on the campus. And members of the department, and associated departments, received quite a challenge from her. In any case, when I came here, I found a very small art department consisting of one woman in studio, Margery Hanson, and one art historian, Edgar Mayhew. And there had been [00:10:00] one part-time studio person who functioned as a departmental librarian as well. And of course, the position that, that I was to hold as the chairman of all kinds of activities related to the arts. And the number of art majors was rather small. The positive thing, of course, was that Connecticut College had had an active interest in the studio art program right from its inception, from when it was founded in 1911, the idea was to have a studio course on the somewhat erroneous assumption that a studio was a practical course, because the basic philosophy behind establishing Connecticut College was to provide a practical education.

So the graduates, the women, would have a vocation when they graduated, not just a liberal arts kind of a background. I hired a part-time person named Richard Lecoshias [ph], and we started out more or less at the same numbers that we had before. Well, the educational aspect of my experience at Connecticut College was an extremely interesting one. As always, there's a certain amount of hostility to the arts in a liberal arts program. I

guess I offset some of the hostility by pushing hard for the development of art history. The art history had really been a kind of a joke. Despite the fact that Henry Russell Hitchcock had taught art history way back in the early years of the college, and it never had enough courses, enough resources to have a major. And [00:12:00] it was fairly easy to persuade the faculty, and the administration, to increase the offerings in that field. Of course, our library was not very good. This had to be built up as well. I was able to build it up in part by teaching art history courses myself. And you know, with Edgar Mayhew and I, we began to be able to offer enough courses so that it was an interest at least, on the part of students, in having a serious major. So over the years, we built up a fairly decent-sized department, a good library, and at one time, the art department, which included both studio and art history students, was the biggest department in the college. Because we had more majors, and more senior majors, and we had more students, more student graduates, who went on to graduate school. All this time, it was a single department, because art and art history were under a single rubric. In addition to the job of running the art department, Miss Park had pointed out that it would be nice if I would also work at the Lyman Allyn Museum, which the college had taken over, because it was about ready to go under, collapse physically as well as financially. So, I became a, my technical title was the curator of painting and sculpture, Edgar Mayhew was curator of everything else, drawing, furniture, uh, whatever. And we put on, I would say, a pretty professional program. [00:14:00] But we did it in addition to all of the other duties that we had, because we had a full-time job at the college, and essentially a full-time job at the museum.

So I remained chairman until 1972. And yeah, they were terribly busy years, expanding years. In 1972, when they changed the—the way the chairmanships were established, from an appointed one—that's when I was hired as chairman—to one that was more or less an elected one, I decided to step down, as I had at Wisconsin. You know, I found that that was not a very useful way to operate departments, at least from my point of view. It turned it into a quasi-political position, and it rendered the chairman, to a large extent, powerless. So that he became a little more than an office boy, or an office girl, as the case may be. And I decided I had, I wanted to have no part of it. So despite the urging of President Shane, who was the president at the time, I stepped out and stayed out. We had a hard time for a while getting anyone who wanted to be the chairman. The departments actually, by that time, for all practical purposes, had split into two. That's the art department and it's the studio department. And it was an art history group, and they were about the same in numbers, but there was four or five members in each, each group. And I was holding two faculty meetings. There was one just for the art history people, and one just for the studio people. As soon as I stepped down, co-chairmen first were appointed, and within a year, two departments were established, [00:16:00] and while the two departments remain amicable today, there is a department of art history, and a department of—a studio art, still called the art department. And the collaboration and the cooperation is not quite as, as intimate as it used to be. Now needless to say, I was—I was pretty busy as an administrator, yeah, I was in the office until one or two o'clock really, almost every night for the first year in particular. And I never had the course remission that is commonplace. In fact, one of the worst years I had, I was functioning as chairman for both departments, and was teaching five courses, because the college didn't have enough money to replace somebody who was on leave, and I didn't feel that the courses should be discontinued for that reason.

But for the most part, I didn't teach in summer school. You know, back in the Madison days, I had to teach in summer school, otherwise I'd have to go home or I'd have no money to go home to my parents, or we wouldn't have enough money to eat. Gradually, under Miss Park, especially in her last years, the salaries became a little bit more respectable, and there never was really a functional or a viable summer school program at Connecticut College. So, I had the summers to do most of my painting, and I was able to get quite a bit done. In fact, some of the most productive years I had were in the '50s, which was a time of major organization and politicking. But otherwise, [00:18:00] my most productive years were years when I had leaves, that's 1961, '62, which is the first year that Connecticut College had a sabbatical. And 1976 was a particularly productive year. And you know, these are years in which I could concentrate on my painting, and give me a chance to do a little bit of experimenting, and working more consistently as well. Otherwise, you know, it was kind of a spot activity. I had a studio in the first years in the department of art, in a very small room, hardly larger than a closet. I moved to a slightly larger space up there, but it was unheated, so in the, in the winters it was pretty cold. Then I got a—a studio downtown on State Street, and that proved to be a very good place to work. And I stayed there until I went on leave. And then I worked in a couple of the other buildings that were temporarily unoccupied, or only partially occupied. Until a new art department was built, this Cummings Art Center. Then I worked in my office there. As, as I was approaching the fact of retirement, I realized that I really had to set up a place where I could work without being moved all the time. And I anticipated problems of reorientation after retirement.

So, Patty and I looked, started to look around [00:20:00] for a place to buy, so we can be, so the transition to retirement would be very simple. For a while, I thought we would retire in, in Maine. We had bought, in the early 1960s, an old farmhouse in Maine. And it had a big barn, a sawmill, a smaller shed, there was a kind of a stable. And one year, I was on leave, we spent the winter up there. And this was 1970, that was a very productive year, because I got a great deal done, and we had very interesting travels to India, to Paris, and to London. And you know, I thought this really might work out quite well. The problem with the town, with Farmington, in the winter, was from a cultural activity point of view, a pretty hopeless situation. The college there, the Farmington State

College, as it was at that time, was very good to me. I mean they made me an honorary faculty member, gave me a library card, and a pass to all their activities. But their library was, so far as the art books were concerned, was only a— a fraction as large as my own personal holdings. And they had no lectures, they had one piano concert, this is their sum total of all their activities. So, you know, if we stayed there, it obviously could have been a problem, because I wasn't one to work in total isolation in that, in that way. Because I needed to get to New York once in a while, and to see the works of other artists, while I met a number of them [00:22:00] in Maine, the part of Maine we were in was not the part that attracted big name artists that you hear about. Skowhegan was fairly close. I went there a few, a few times, but I never got to know anybody there, partly because of my own temperament, I wasn't very aggressive. But partly that was a geographic situation that made it somewhat difficult. So, we bought a place in the small town of Uncasville, it's about seven miles from the college, and after we got that, that house reconstructed, I built a small studio about 100 yards from the house, yeah, in the woods, and I've been working there ever since.

Now, the work has developed here, I think perhaps a little bit more erratically. Although, you know, I jumped around from one approach to another throughout my entire career, this is in part because I've been influenced by my art history studies, I've been influenced by the kind of courses that I had to teach, and I've always been interested in what, in what other people do. And yeah, I'm not worried about accusations of jumping on bandwagons, and things of that kind. Because whether a style is popular or not really has no relevance. You know, and my point of view is that an artist really only has one painting in his system anyway, so you can jump around and do one manner after another, [00:24:00] but ultimately his range of sensitivities is limited. And if there's any personality in the artist at all, this is going to come through. And in any case, I haven't worried about it. I've done what interested me, and I haven't paid any attention to what other people have said or thought of whatever it was. I had to give up working with lacquers. I continued to work with lacquers after we went to Maine, I guess, in the 1960s, but I'd had problems with lacquer one year. When I was working downtown on State Street in New London, I began to notice the effects of lacquer, as I would be quite lightheaded; in hot weather I'd have a glass of beer and it would practically knock me out. And so, I decided that I really had to find a substitute for that. But I was very comfortable with the medium I was using. You know, after I worked with lacquer and sand, I started working with a lacquer collage combination, and it was a very natural way for me to work. And you know, I gave it up with some reluctance. It wasn't until acrylic came along that I began to find a substitute that I could use somewhat in the same manner. But by that time, my manner had also altered to a large extent. And while I have gone back once in a while to a kind of collage and sand, in this case, with acrylic, you know, it no longer seems a natural, or the only thing to do, [00:26:00] I've been more inclined to shift to combinations of oil and acrylic, or just acrylic. Very rarely, just oil. And I spend a great deal more time on printmaking. I had one interlude that interrupted painting pretty seriously.

Not too long ago, I was going through slides I've taken of my work. And I noticed big gaps in time sequence, it's in the '60s, and some parts of '70. And you know, I know my production has slowed down for a variety of reasons, as you think I'd have more continuity now than I did before, actually I had more continuity when my time was more limited. But, in the early '60s, I started to do a great deal more sculpture, and now this is the, in part, an accident, in part a direct consequence of the fact that I was teaching sculpture. As every place I went where I had to start a department, or build up a department, I found there was no sculpture being offered. And in Canada, when we started a program, I thought a three-dimensional work was an important part of art activity. And since I'd had some sculpture, although I'd done very little of it, I started the program, and taught it until we built up the department enough so that the administration was sympathetic to the idea of hiring a sculptor to handle that aspect of our program. And much the same thing happened at the Connecticut College, because I started sculpture immediately, [00:28:00] and I must have taught it for oh, four or five years anyway, before I was able to persuade the administration to add a part-time sculptor. Now we had to fill an awkward position, I needed somebody who could teach some art history, who could also teach some sculpture. And to find somebody who was able in studio, and in art history, isn't as easy as you might think. You know, especially today, where there isn't that kind of emphasis in graduate studies on the balance between the two fields. The first one we hired was a young woman, Nancy Myers, who taught Italian Renaissance painting, and sculpture, and drawing.

Well, she stayed with us only a year, although she was very successful, and she's gone on to be a very successful sculptor out in the Michigan area, at the present time. We had another one the following year who also stayed only a year, that particular one was also a skilled potter, we had a kiln, bought a secondhand kiln, and she was able to introduce a little bit of ceramics into the sculpture class. When she left, I taught sculpture again, as I recall, before we hired a young man, David Smalley, who came, and he's been here ever since. And the other aspect of this was, when I was on leave out in California in '61, Rosemary Park had announced that she was retiring at the end of the year. And she was asked by [00:30:00] some kind of committee at the college if she would accept some kind of money, and I don't know for what purpose specifically, but in honor of her long years of service here. And she said, well, she'd accept it only on condition, that is, if McCloy would agree to do a sculpture for the campus. And the money was a grand total of, of \$1,000. Well, you know, I hadn't thought in those terms, I hadn't taught sculpture for, for a couple of years at that time. And I thought, well, I really would

like to weld, and do something in steel. So, I said I would think about it. But I took a class in the high school adult education course in welding, designed obviously not for art purposes, but to develop automotive mechanics or something of that kind. And I only went to that class four or five times, but it gave me enough of a basis that, so at least I knew how to operate a torch, and I could run a modest quality bead. And so when I came back, I said okay, I'll see what I can do.

And I, so I started working in welded steel, and a high percentage of my time in the '60s was spent making sculpture. This has proved to be one of the most frustrating aspects of what I've done over the years. In fact, I've had two, two technical things that makes preservation of [00:32:00] my work, if you want to put it that way, a little bit of a problem. The lacquer collage combination I used for so many years proved to be somewhat unstable. The lacquer and sand alone has stood up very well. Lacquer and collage has tended, in many instances, to lose the coolness of the color. And it becomes somewhat opaque and darker. This is in part because I used a lot of very thin sheeting, worn bedsheets, for example, as a kind of a glaze, as I mixed it with clear lacquer, put it over other colors, and at that time, when I completed a painting, it was a nice, smooth, subtle passage—has turned often to a kind of a brownish, dirty looking passage. Fortunately, that hasn't happened to all of them, depending a little bit on the color I use as the base color, a little bit on my how much I rely on these thin glazes of sheeting. So, now some of the best works I think I ever did have proved to be somewhat unstable. When it came to sculpture, when I'd been in Canada, I'd been told about the relatively permanent qualities and suitability of Corten steel as a medium for sculptures. And I'd been shown one on one of my visits up in Saskatchewan. And I thought well, that's really the medium I want to use, so all of the major pieces I did were in Corten steel. I did public statues, two of them for Connecticut College. One of them for Norwich Free Academy, [00:34:00] where they have a big art school. And these are things that took a long time. And I have one that I kept for myself, and fortunately that has remained in fairly decent condition. What's happened with the others is, you know, and Corten is a medium that's supposed to have some kind of rust inhibiting properties. And on the exterior, that has proved to be the case.

But I was working in 16-gauge steel, that was rather thin steel, about like the copper plate for etching, and apparently without sufficient ventilation, because the weep holes I put in there were often quite small, I tried to keep them unobtrusive, what has happened is that the deterioration has been on the inside, as the steel from the inside tends to kind of split, almost like sheets of paper, and just crumble. I repaired one of them, for example, and then I cut it open. And I took shovels, shovel loads of this kind of crumble up sheet steel from the interior of that particular piece. So, now I'm faced with a prospect of having no surviving larger sculptures. About the time of my retirement, after I decided I wasn't going to do any more sculpting, largely because of that, I was approached by a woman who wanted to have a piece of sculpture made for the public library in New London. And she wanted a fountain. And I was asked if I'd be interested in doing this. Well, I thought about it for a while, and my first impulse was to say no way, [00:36:00] you know, it's too frustrating. But finally I said, if I can do it in bronze, I would do that. Now of course, bronze is much more expensive, and the woman was not planning any extensive budget. But I wasn't particularly worried about the money, you know, it was the same thing, all these sculptures I did for nothing, for the expenses. And that's what I said, you pay for the expenses and I'll do this. So, this was done in a, in—not by modeling and making a finished model, and turning it over to the foundry to do the normal sand casting, it was done in Styrofoam, which is the least expensive way of preparing a form for transformation into bronze.

So I did it rather rapidly, I thought there was kind of a time limit of, I did the Styrofoam form, the thing must be about 14 to 15 feet high, up on a pedestal that's on a fountain base. I did the model in one summer. It took about three years to get the thing done in final bronze form. The foundry I used was one in a local town, Mystic, that really had never worked in anything large-scale before. And they couldn't cast this all in one piece, so I think it was done in 16 or 17 pieces, each of which warped in the passage from the Styrofoam to bronze. And so, it became a kind of cutting and fitting. You know, I assembled it in my backyard, [00:38:00] ground down with a normal disc grinder. And we finally got it up in place after I'd retired. It became a much worse job than I'd ever anticipated, because I couldn't get any plumber or plumbing company in the area interested in doing anything about the fountain part of it, and while I could do a little bit of plumbing, you know, I'd never planned on anything like that. So, I ended up doing all of the plumbing as well. And I had had an agreement from a monument maker around here—actually a place that makes tombstones primarily—to do the installation. And this company backed out at the last moment, denied that it had ever agreed to do this. So I was stuck with that problem too.

Well, that proved to be quite an interesting challenge, as a matter of fact. And it was put together largely by two people, with the help of one or two others. David Fenton, a chairman of the physics department, put in a hard day's manual labor on probably the hottest and muggiest day of the year. I was helped also by my brother Edward, and by David Fenton's wife, Torrie Fenton. And the four of us got the thing up. Well, I won't describe the details of the problems, but it was a tough problem. But, then I had the problem of the fountain, and it got all hooked up and turned on, and you know, it's still functioning. It still remains a problem, [00:40:00] as a matter of fact. The history of public fountains is that they last maybe a year, and they work fine for a year, they have to be taken care of, you know, and in cold weather they have to be shut down, they have to be cleaned from time

to time.

So in general, fountains break down in a year or so, and after a while those who own the fountains get tired of the expense and the trouble that comes from trying to keep something going. And they give up. In this case, it's still going, because I'm still doing the cleaning and the putting to bed, and starting up in the spring. And I'm doing the, any repairs that need to be done. So, if anybody asks me to do a fountain again, obviously I would be very reluctant to take a look in that direction. Well, now since my retirement, you know, I spend most of my time in the studio. I do a lot of prints. And I taught printmaking at, at the college for a number of years. The only department that had any decent equipment in the studio when I came here was the print department, because Robert Logan, Robert Fulton Logan, the chairman before I came, was a very skilled etcher in a somewhat orthodox, Joseph Pennell [ph] Whistler way. Even closer to John Taylor Arms actually, he did cathedrals and public, Boston Public Library, and buildings of that nature. And while he preferred to be known as a painter, he did teach print seriously all the time he was here. And [00:42:00] he had a decent etching press that's a small, it's a small one. And he had a lithographic press, which apparently he had never used, except for one demonstration by somebody. And so I was able to start at least with respectable equipment in that area. Well, it probably, now, in the new art building, the best equipped department, and there's always been support for that activity. Although to support a big print department can be expensive, it's hard on the budget. But in part because I had a general interest in printmaking anyway, I continue to do prints, and since my retirement, I've done a lot of them. Although I've been restricted in the techniques that I've employed, because I have no water in the studio. And I don't have the money, quite frankly, to put in a septic system, and put in a system that makes it possible to use acids, can be even more difficult and more expensive. So I worked with RG and calligraph. Now that really cut me back, because before I used to work primarily in etching, and I did a large number of lithographs. An occasional woodcut or two. I never thought of that calligraph as a terribly exciting medium. But it was very close, of course, to the way I was painting, the collage aspect of my lacquer paintings in the '60s, early '70s, was very similar to the technique that I was employing in the calligraphs.

So in my studio now, I spend about half the time on print, half the time on painting. [00:44:00] And I don't do any sculpture at all, unless you call an occasional capstone plaque, which I do more for fun, or you know, when people retire, I have done a plaque to be given to them, just a gesture of friendship. But, I find I'm kind of slowing down now. I've had to spend a lot more time worrying about exhibitions. In the last few years I've had four retrospectives, and although one of them was reasonably small, they've all taken quite a bit of time. And this last one in November of 1991 took a great deal of time, partly because it was a little bit larger, about 100 different items, very few prints, mostly paintings, there were a few pieces of sculpture. But I had to organize a catalogue, and I had to make decisions about presentation, and—

[Audio break.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: —decisions about presentation that, you know, really are very time consuming. As a matter of fact, since November of last year, I've had a hard time working consistently in the studio [inaudible] I've done a number of watercolors. I've done mostly fairly large stain paintings, which I started earlier last year. One of the changes to the stain, stain—stain painting came in part because for a long time, I've been interested in [00:46:00] the stain canvas, I had nothing to do with the Nolands [ph] and the Morris Lewises, and so on. It's just there's a color quality to them that I've always found interesting. But, yeah, I wasn't experimenting with the detergents and additives to them that some painters use. And I noticed one day in a catalog an ad for Flow Master, or Flow Release, it's called. Which is an additive, you know, kind of a medium you add to acrylic paint stains. So I got it, and I started experimenting. Well, the reason was in part, I suppose it's because I've been a little bit introspective about some of the qualities of my work. I've always been a rather tidy, somewhat compulsive painter, I suppose. And I decided I really would like to do something a little bit freer, and so my first use of Flow Release stain was to open up, work much freer in color, without worrying about very precise edges and things of that kind. Well, it's difficult to keep your normal proclivities under, or opened up like that, because you can't work against your own nature, I suppose.

[END OF 6 OF 7 SIDE A.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [00:00:00] —has never been that different. Because my accident some years ago, when I was going through some paintings in the studio, I put a painting from the 1930s along the wall, and then I took a painting, I think it was from the '70s, I put alongside of it, you know, not trying to juxtapose them, but I was just getting them out of the way—I was getting something else out. I looked at these paintings, and they tied into, into each other in a kind of continuity, as if they'd been planned together. So, you know, that really struck me, that the way I divide space, the way I use diagonals, the selection of accents, the choice of colors, things of that kind. I have not really altered very much, despite the superficial changes in manner. And from a logical point of view, I don't really see any reason why anyone should expect them to change that much, unless I've had a brain injury, or something of that kind, to alter personality. But, so my attempt to change radically the direction of my painting, I would say I was only partially successful. But, you know, if I'm uneasy with what I do, after all, I can paint in a great number of manners, as I think any painter can, we can do things contrary to our

nature, up to a point. Beyond that, I think there's no way we can go be contrary to our nature. You know, except to rely totally on accident, throw things over our heads, and work with left hand not looking, you know, that kind of thing. But that might make it possible.

But in any case, stain paintings have, I think, proved to be reasonably satisfactory. [00:02:00] Now they're uneven. I do make preliminary studies for them, I've been making watercolor studies for them, because the watercolor works a little bit in the same way. But the more studies I make, obviously the more disciplined they're going to be. In a sense, that backfires on you. So at the moment, I'm just groping around trying to get things into focus, and now that I'm in my quote, 80th year, as one of my friends describes my present age, I suppose I'm thinking a little bit more about getting things tidied up in some kind of order. One of the problems is that I've been reluctant over the years to sell paintings. I didn't want to give them away, I was happy to lend them, I'd rather give them away to friends if I felt they were genuinely appreciative, than to sell them to people who wanted them for totally the wrong reasons. And as a consequence, I have almost all the paintings I ever did in my house, or in my possession, on the walls of friends' houses. So now I have the problem of what in God's name to do with all of them. And it'll be a terrible burden on my wife if she survives me, which I fully expect her to do. And you know, that inhibits me a little bit, you know, suddenly I don't want to work on a large scale, because big scale things are harder both to store, they're harder for people to put in their homes, and yeah, I don't have any particular overpowering need to affirm my ego by painting large, but I'm in many cases more comfortable, comfortable working on a large scale [00:04:00] today than on a smaller scale. This may have something to do with the fact that I think my eyesight is starting to deteriorate to some extent, you know, I can't work as closely as I could a few years ago. So, that's the problem. Well, I think I've probably talked enough about myself, about my work. So Bob, if you have any questions, I'll be glad to add them on, or I'll do this whole thing over again if you wish. Meanwhile, I haven't the slightest idea why anyone would want this detailed a discussion of my professional background. But here it is, do with it what you will.

[END OF 6 OF 7 SIDE B.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [00:00:00] You wanted to ask me to elaborate on a few things. The, my relationship to the Lyman Allyn Museum, in particular, my contact with other artists, and things about my teaching that I thought might be memorable, or innovative. I'm not really the one to give you the story of the Lyman Allyn Museum, I suppose. You should have caught Edgar Mayhew before he died, because he was very intensely involved in the museum; he thought of it as his own, as a matter of fact. And he certainly was involved with it from the beginning of the college's association with it. I can tell you a few things. Ultimately maybe Rosemary Park, the former president, could tell you a great deal more. As I recall, the museum was founded in 1938, as a result of a bequest from Harriet Allyn, the widow of Lyman Allyn, whose money I guess came from the wedding industry, and seems to be the way every wealthy person in this area is described. She left it not particularly for an art museum, but a museum of, that could be involved with natural history, other kinds of displays as well. I ran into this shortly after I had joined up with the museum, when one of the governing board, or whatever we used to call it in those days, kept trying to get us to put on a show of birds, or something of that kind. [00:02:00] But by and large, it had been cited, by that time, that it was primarily an art museum, and it's remained that ever since. The building was designed by the same person who designed the Addison Gallery in Madison—in Andover. And has very many of the same qualities, arrangements of the rooms, and so on. It's been modified a couple of times since that time. The roof leaked very—

[END OF 7 OF 7 SIDE A.]

WILLIAM ASHBY MCCLOY: [00:00:00] A new wing was added, the Palmer Wing, from a bequest from a Mrs. Palmer—which Mrs. Palmer, I don't know—who also gave money towards this end in 1938. And since that time, several other additions have been made, this last year or so, finally that it was air conditioned, and kind of brought up to date with storage rooms, with controlled humidity and things of that kind. Now, when the museum opened, Winslow Ames was the curator. And again, the association—the museum board had an association with Chairman Lee, who was traveling in China. It had been decided early that the museum would not try to compete with the Wadsworth Athenaeum or the Yale Art Gallery in trying to collect American furniture and early American works of that kind. Because the museum obviously never had the resources. So, the original goals were rather modest. But it was in—the focus was on drawings and on small sculpture. Chairman Lee was able to send a number of things directly from China that fell into the small object category, in any case, so the Oriental collection has always been among the better collections in the museum. And Winslow Ames, of course, had a great deal of interest in drawing, and he started the drawing collection with the [00:02:00] purchase of a number of very good items. And Edgar Mayhew, when he got involved, because he was an art historian at Connecticut College, also preferred to focus on drawing, and added a great number, particularly of architectural renderings, and works by minor artists, but the drawing collection really is quite a good collection. It's true, without drawings by the great masters. But we do have a good and very interesting range of [inaudible]. And we don't have to be apologetic for the quality of that aspect of the collection.

Well, Winslow Ames resigned with the outbreak of World War II, in part because he was a conscientious objector,

and he felt that the public would be too hostile towards him, and as a consequence, would be hostile to the museum. And when he resigned, he offered to the college for, as I recall, \$25,000, one of Gaston Lachaise's large standing nudes. The one I think is currently in the collection of the Whitney Museum in New York. Now this had been behind his home, the home which, the DeShon-Allyn House, which is an early 19th-century house. And it's next to the museum, and it's always been part of the museum complex, and the property. [00:04:00] Well, it had been vandalized a few times, and pushed over a few times. It was, I guess, a little bit too sophisticated for the general New London public, and those in charge of the museum, or of the college, as the case may be—I think it was the college that made the decision, decided not to take up that offer. Of course, there have been many requests ever since, not just because of the increase of the monetary value of that piece of sculpture, but Charles Shain, when he became president of Connecticut College, tried to build up a sculpture collection for the college. There is a sculpture court, for example. And one of his favorite artists was Gaston Lachaise, and Lachaise had a summer place in Maine that was, you know, they were near neighbors of Lachaise, and they—Lachaise, the widow of Gaston Lachaise. And for, of course, by that time, the college couldn't afford to purchase anything from the estate. If I'm correct, the finances of the museum were always, certainly at that time, handled through a bank, and after Winslow Ames retired, resigned, the bank realized by that time that the monies that came from, [00:06:00] and this is, yeah, Allyn, really wasn't enough to maintain a respectable program, hire a well-qualified curator.

Finally, to run the museum, a man named Douglas, William Douglas, if I remember correctly, hired him to serve as a director. Douglas was an architect, and the deal that he made was that he would use part of the museum for his architectural work, and he would run the museum more or less on kind of a half-time basis. Well, unfortunately, not only did the museum not have enough money, but Douglas also drank a great deal, and proved to be quite incompetent as a consequence during those years, the war years, and shortly thereafter, the museum got in very bad physical condition. Eventually, I think it was Rosemary Park who was president of Connecticut College at the time, suggested to the bank—now I'm not sure whether Douglas had stepped down or had been discharged, or had left, but in any case, it was suggested to the bank that Connecticut College would be willing to run the museum, use members of its staff as curators if the bank would make the transfer of responsibility to it. And that arrangement was, was made. Rosemary Park became officially the director of the museum, and Edgar Mayhew, the art historian, and Robert Fulton-Logan, chairman of the art department, [00:08:00] a painter and a printmaker, were the curators. They had a very modest staff; the museum was in bad shape. And there wasn't enough money to hire a lot of guards. So everything was operated on a shoestring. One of the early people hired was the, a man who is now quite a distinguished painter, associated with the Old Lyme school of Impressionism, Roger Dennis. He was hired as a janitor, and a sign painter. Dennis at that time, while he had had some art training, was essentially a commercial artist, he made his living by painting signs for the local movie theaters, and doing their lettering. And I guess he volunteered for the job, from what I was told. And was paid a modest amount of money.

And so the staff essentially consisted of Logan, Mayhew, and Roger Dennis as the general handyman. And when I came, Rosemary Park asked if I would take over from, from—take over the duties that Logan had had. And she decided to divide up the responsibilities as, if Mayhew would be the curator of furniture, and drawings, and sculpture. I would be the curator of paintings, primarily. I'll have to correct that—I think I was called the curator of painting and sculpture, Mayhew was curator of pretty much everything else. And so Roger Dennis was still the general handyman, and a matter of—the [00:10:00] program exhibition schedule was decided primarily among the three of us. Rosemary Park had a very active interest in the museum, and Mayhew and I alternated the exhibitions. Now I was a lot more ambitious coming in than Mayhew was. His interest was primarily in cleaning up the museum, fixing it physically, and he also wanted to fix up the Deshon-Allyn House, which had also fallen into disrepair. It had been used as rental quarters, largely for people who taught at the Coast Guard Academy—it joins the property of the Lyman Allyn Museum. And the roof leaked, and you know, the—there were a lot, there was a lot of physical damage in the building. And Mayhew's idea was that we should fix it up, he would live in the upper floors, and the lower floors would be turned into period rooms. Now this suggests, of course, that the museum had accumulated some furniture, and that of course, was the case. Well, when Mrs. Palmer left her money, I think the money was intended to build a wing which would house furniture, which was also coming from a great number of sources. Now it's true, we couldn't compete with Hartford, which had the Wadsworth Athenaeum. But when I joined the staff in 1954, the most valuable single item in the museum was a Nehole [ph] desk, designed in Newport, and it's already by then a first class collection of British and American furniture. [00:12:00] So a wing was added, and this was added before I came here. It was used by Mary to display mostly American furniture. But it might have been three rooms, and one of the rooms was used primarily for British furniture. And some French. And miscellany. And when I showed up to be interviewed, to be interviewed by Rosemary Park and other members of her hiring committee, Ms. Park took me to the museum, and when I went in there, I met Roger Dennis, who was in the process of stapling monk's cloth to the walls. And that was the stage of its rehabilitation that [inaudible] a modest purchase of monk's cloth had been made, and Roger Dennis did most of the physical labor in putting it up. And the building was painted, and while every time it rained heavily, water would pour down the walls in the library, by and large the appearance of the museum was quite good. And the, despite that, the facilities were excellent, because there was good daylight illumination for the

galleries, and the galleries were quite large, and we were able to mount some good exhibitions.

Now I had had some experience with museums. I'd been on the governing board of the Winnipeg Art Gallery when I was up there, and I arranged several exhibitions. Largely for them of a didactic nature, a little bit like the ones Bart Hayes used to do for Andover. And [00:14:00] I pretty much ran the museum, or the galleries, that were built as part of the library complex at the University of Manitoba. Now my interest in Canada was primarily to bring more modern developments, contemporary art developments, into the, our environment there, partly as a teaching aid, but partly because I felt the—the better artists in the areas were not being adequately recognized, because of the very conservative bias of the Winnipeg public. I had organized several traveling shows that went from Ontario to British Columbia, that underscored the existence of a great number of first-class artists in the so-called further [ph] provinces, and the West Coast provinces. And I went and catalogued copies, and things of that kind. Well, when I came to the program of the Lyman Allyn, I was extremely, extremely ambitious. And I enlisted the aid of the man who'd previously been the director of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, a graduate of the—the Fogg Museum at Harvard. That's the Fogg Museum program, Alvin Eastman, who was very knowledgeable. He didn't have a personality that was, that made for a really successful museum director, or curator, and he only lasted four years in Winnipeg before they let him go. But he was very cooperative with me. [00:16:00] His major field was Oriental art, and with my modest background, with being brought up in China, I was interested in bringing exhibitions of Oriental art into the environment. So, you know, I had a big exhibition the first year—I think it was Persian art. The second year was a big exhibition of Chinese art. The third year was a big exhibition of Japanese art. A lot of this, I was able—so Chinese and Japanese in particular—a lot of it I was able to get from the immediate environment, in terms of the Naval bases, you know, there were many people who had been in the Orient, and when they were in the Orient, they collected things. They stole things, as the case may be. And the museum itself had a number of good items. Well, they proved to be too ambitious for the membership of the museum. And in general, had these big shows which were, I thought were quite impressive. And very few people cared. Well, Mayhew's interest was not in getting people to come to the museum. I wanted to have contemporary art shows too, as I gave Mimi Shapiro, Miriam Shapiro, a big show, and de Kooning had a big show.

Now I'd had contact with some of these artists, because I asked them to come to the college as visiting critics. It was a women's college at the time, and I thought the students should have an opportunity to, to meet and talk with successful women artists. So, oh, when I had one come to [00:18:00] the college, I also tried to make an arrangement for a large exhibition at the museum. Well they were excellent shows, and again, it was sometimes a little bit embarrassing, practically nobody would come. I also made a, I had a good exhibition, we were working with John Curry, partly because of my association with him, and my continuing association with Kathleen Curry. I think at that time, nobody in this area had, had ever heard of him. But we had a, probably the biggest show of, of his work to date in the museum, in the first year when I was associated with it. Well, I finally got a little bit tired of working with the museum, because I had a full-time job at the college as chairman of what consisted really of two departments, the art history and studio art, and what turned out to be almost a full-time job at the museum. I'd be at the museum until two, and three, and four o'clock in the morning, hanging the show, and I spent all my summers trying to organize exhibitions, carrying on correspondence, and dealing with the directors and curators of other museums, and it proved to be too time-consuming and difficult for me to do the job I wanted to do at the college. But the major reason I stepped down from the museum job was there began to be too much interference from a governing board. In the past, it had been totally powerless. Ms. Park dominated the people who served as advisors—I guess it was called an [00:20:00] advisory board. And some of them started to quit in disgust, because their advice was pretty much ignored. And finally, they reorganized a bit, and started to get a little bit aggressive.

My relationship with many of them was really quite good. A major figure on the board was Nelson White, who was a resident of Waterford, has now become quite known as, quite well known as a member of the family of Whites, rather nostalgic painters associated in the style with the Barbizon school, primarily. And to a lesser degree with the Lyme school of American Impressionists. But Nelson White was a very knowledgeable person about that kind of thing, about certain aspects of American art, he'd written a book about Abbott Thayer, for example. Also about Frank Currier, and he and I worked together to organize a number of exhibitions. I think the best one we had was around Frank Currier and the Munich school, which was a very large, and I thought, a rather impressive exhibition dealing with that particular group of painters. But finally, when I received my sabbatical, I told Ms. Park when I came back, I didn't really want to be that involved with the museum. But I would serve on the advisory board if that's what she wanted. And after my leave of absence, I only served as an, on the advisory board for a couple of years. And by that time, things had considerably altered. [00:22:00] Now, what, as a matter of fact, by the time we came back, once we had a new president, [inaudible] Charles Shain, who also had a great deal of interest in the, in American art in particular, but in the arts, he was the one that was responsible for having a—a new art building built on campus, the Cummings Art Center. And he continued as the director for a number of years. Finally, he stepped down as director, largely at my suggestion. And Edgar Mayhew was then appointed director.

And in some ways, from my point of view, the interest in the museum, that was mostly good and a bad thing. He

was promoted to director instead of being promoted to full professor. Because at that time, I had rather rigorous principles behind promotions, that they weren't automatic, the way they are now. You live so many years, you're automatically promoted. In those days, you had to demonstrate scholarship by publication of some quality. And while Mayhew was a very gifted teacher, he was no scholar in that sense. And he never quite satisfied the criteria that the college had set up. But he obviously was a very valuable member of the faculty and deserved some kind of recognition. And I suggested as an alternative that we make him director of the museum, [00:24:00] and the president then would be kind of a supervisor of the director, and no longer that closely tied to the decisions of the museum. In any case, Mayhew became the director of the museum, and became more and more directly involved, and spent a higher and higher percentage of his time with the museum. And finally, he received the course relations [ph], and his response was [inaudible]. In many ways, Mayhew was an excellent museum director. He was responsible for the total refurbishing of the museum, everything was cleaned up, a new roof was put on, leaking was stopped, adequate storage was, space was supplied. And things of that kind. He totally redecorated the Deshon-Allyn House into a house of the period, the approximate date about 1819, as I recall. We recovered a great, a high percentage of the furniture that had originally been in the building when it was open. He increased the membership dramatically. He got a lot of cooperation from people who were interested in doll collections and miniature furniture.

And a lot of the popularity of the museum came through the popularity of the miniature houses that were constructed and opened in the lower floor. At the moment, I've forgotten the name of the woman who was largely responsible for that. I mean, she arranged them, rearranged them, cleaned them, kept them [00:26:00] up to date until her death a few years ago. One of the problems that we were, that Mayhew had, was a negative—was he really wasn't interested in setting up interesting or stimulating exhibitions. Like the increase in membership, he didn't really like the increase in the number of people who came. And when I was working with the museum, we had an occasional quarrel over exhibition policies. Because once galleries were set up, he hated to have them dismantled to put a temporary exhibition on the walls. So, I suppose every director has a kind of a mixed record. He also was very good in soliciting gifts. We didn't get a great number of, of paintings, or drawings, or pieces of furniture of really high quality. But the collection was considerably improved during his tenure as director. Now, he actually retired from teaching at the college, he continued as director of the museum. One of the reasons for the popularity of the museum was he always was a very popular lecturer, and he was very generous with his time in providing lectures. And the other lecturer, Edith Gibson, otherwise known as Fuzzy, also was extremely popular. So both of them tended to be a little bit on the gossipy side, good humored, entertaining, you know, no tremendous intellectual demand. But the lectures were not scholarly; they were not inaccurate, but they were not scholarly. A great focus on anecdotes, [00:28:00] and a general good humor. They built up a travel program. For a while Mayhew lead, lead these, ultimately Mrs. Gibson lead them. And they were well organized, and geared towards the more affluent, as museum tours tend to be. And it was something that obviously contributed to the growing popularity of the Lyman Allyn Museum in the New London area.

Well, a couple of years after Mayhew retired—and this is just a couple of years ago, so I retired in 1978 at the age of 65, Mayhew was a couple of months younger than I, and his birth date was past the mandatory date established by law. At the time I was retired, if I had been born in July 2, 1913, I could have stayed on until age 70. But I was born in January, so mandatory that I retire at 65. But Mayhew stayed until age 70, in other words, he retired in '83. And he stayed on as an active director, although he began to, had begun to have a number of health problems, but he was still so possessive of the museum, he was very reluctant to consider any replacement. Finally, a couple of years before his recent death, [00:30:00] somebody persuaded him, or his health persuaded him, that it would be in the best interests of the museum if he stepped down. So, a search was made, and a young woman from the West Coast—whose background, as I understand, was largely in the educational aspect of museum functioning—Mrs. Penny Knowles, was hired as the director. Well, for a while, she obviously had to operate rather cautiously, because Mayhew had an enormous personal following. But she gradually began to institute her own ideas, and since Mayhew's death about a year ago, the museum has been considerably transformed, both in the nature of its functioning, and its physical appearance. While Mayhew was still alive, funds were being raised for an extension, largely in administration offices, and another auditorium. And once Mrs. Knowles took over, these were pretty well abandoned. It always struck me as being a somewhat foolish focus, so far as the functioning of the museum was concerned. And what she concentrated on was getting the building air conditioned, and having adequate humidity controls, so it could function at a more scientific, museum-level throughout its functioning. And she's also recently changed the nature of the, of the galleries so that if Mayhew should come in [00:32:00] today, he obviously would have a fit. Because the Palmer Wing, which focused on American and British furniture, while it still displays furniture, now it's set up in a somewhat modified Bauhaus tradition. Plus the generous use of computer labels, and it focuses on the American collection, you know—whether this is intended to be a permanent presentation, I don't know.

The rather cozy quasi-period room quality that existed before is now a totally, has been totally altered. She—Penny Knowles was also sympathetic, I think, with Mayhew's reluctance to change shows frequently. And she informed me yesterday that the museum staff has decided now on only two exhibitions per semester. And

keeping them up a longer period of time, the one I was inquiring about will be up about nine weeks, which of course is very long for a presentation of, of shows. If, if the museum intends to have a steady influx of interested museum viewers, the membership continues to go up under Penny Knowles. She is, is quite professional. And I think is devoting a much higher percentage of her time and energy in trying to upgrade the quality of the exhibitions, and the [00:34:00] physical appearance of the structure. The museum still suffers, obviously, from not having an absolutely first-rate collection; it can't compete with Yale, or with Hartford, or even with Rhode Island School of Design—many of the museums in New England. But it's an attractive museum, and it's a credit to the town of New London. And totally different in the way it functions. The Slater Museum, for example, in Norwich, which has another thing that Penny Knowles has done, has been to increase the number of public lectures, many of them on a very informal basis, as she has 15-minute, 15 to 20-minute discussions by artists of individual works, she has regular weekly programs, she has programs for teatime, and for lunchtime, and has a series of lectures, and a series in nature, by well-qualified people to discuss complex problems, when she has an exhibition as say, a special historical or local interest. So in this respect, she continues to professionalize the museum, while in many ways, it seems to me it's a much less friendly environment than it used to be back in the days of Rosemary Park and their early college supervision.

I was also asked to make comments about artists that I have known. Well, you know, I haven't [00:36:00] really known that many prominent artists, internationally-known artists, extremely well. But I have, as I think anybody in the arts, certainly who has been in the administration end of the arts, I have bumped into a large number of them. And have had good conversations with them. Unfortunately, the correspondence that I had with many of them, I threw away. When I retired from the college, my files, which were very personal, since I hadn't had a secretary for most of the time I was, I was chairman, were put aside, put in boxes, and put into storage. And I was asked one time to take them from the art building, because they needed the space, or they were going to do something else with the space, and I looked at the box, after box, after box, of files. I had no interest in going through them; I finally pulled out a handful of the files, and I took the rest, put in the back of the car, and took them out to the local landfill. So, letters with Panofsky, and people like that, are I hope now being readily recycled, and will contribute to the richness of the soil of Uncasville, if nothing else. But I did, you know, as my comments about the career already have indicated, a number of artists who were well known in the American scene, at least, and even my most casual contacts, which referred largely, I would say, in Madison, [00:38:00] and to a lesser degree in Canada, were often very informative, so far as I was concerned, and very friendly, and I —I thought very helpful to the educational programs. I've already mentioned my contact with Grant Wood, so no further comment about him is necessary. The staff at the University of Iowa, which was then the State University of Iowa, was comprised of a number of very able artists who had, I suppose, at least national reputations, as Eugene Ludens and Stewart Edie, and James Lachey [ph]. Now these are people I knew, not as a student—technically I was a student of Gene Ludens, but yeah, I was an older student when I returned to the university, and I was treated in general in a somewhat different way from the average graduate student, or certainly, even the average undergraduate student. But I never got to know Stewart Edie very well, I never had a very personal discussion with him. I've seen Jim Lachey off and on since we moved out to the East, I see him primarily in his, his gallery in New York, at the Craft Show [ph] Gallery. And our exchanges are always very friendly, and full of reminiscences of the good old days, or the bad old days, as he might call them, at the University of Iowa. I've never talked with him about his, his, oh, labor protest days, when he and his wife were jailed. And yeah, it's mostly, I don't know, we talk as if we're friends, [00:40:00] but I suppose all we are really is, you know, are acquaintances. I never knew Lasansky that well, he was a hard man to know, unless you spoke Spanish. I have friends who knew him extremely well, because their control of Spanish was, you know, almost like on the level of a native. But, and his English was never very good when I knew him, and my Spanish is absolutely awful, because there's just a little bit of language I picked up from travels to Mexico. And people like Emil Ganso, who was at Iowa very, at Iowa very briefly, I just met, you know, I never talked with him. In the studios where I was working, I did talk to some of these academic painters who came by during the Depression years; I saw quite a bit of Sydney Dickinson. A portrait painter whose last name was Adams, it's not Wayne Adams, it's something like that. But, and he was there, I think, about three times while I was there, giving demonstrations, and when they had portrait commissions, they did them in the studio that I was using, so, well, I got to know them to some extent. But I obviously wasn't going to interfere with what they were doing. Other artists who came to Iowa when I was an undergraduate included John F. Carlson, as he went by, but I never got to talk to him personally. [00:42:00] I did meet a—a great number of, of artists when I was at the University of Wisconsin, in part because we instituted—

[END OF INTERVIEW.]