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Oral history interview with Bob Winston,  
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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Bob Winston on July 31, August 7 and 15, September 18, and October 10, 2002. The interview took place in Concord, California, and was conducted by Suzanne Baizerman for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

Bob Winston's wife, Janedare Winston, stepdaughter Kerry Kilmer, and Suzanne Baizerman have reviewed the transcript and have made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

## Interview

SUZANNE BAIZERMAN: This is Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Bob Winston at his studio in Concord, California, on July 31, 2002, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [Bob's stepdaughter Kerry Kilmer is also present during the interview sessions].

Well, as we've been kind of chatting up to this moment, I thought maybe we could start with a little bit of background on where you came from, where you were born, and what your early years were like. Can you fill me in on that?

BOB WINSTON: I could fill you in for years on that. I was born in Long Beach, and then I was moved down to Huntington Beach, along the coast, and at the age of 19 months I ran away from home, and they found me two and a half blocks away from the house playing in a garage. That would be in 1917.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Wow.

MR. WINSTON: All cars had toolboxes because cars did not run very far in those days. So they got me out of there, and from there on I have built things and made things ever since.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Now, tell me a little bit about who discovered you. Who's the "they" that discovered you in the garage?

MR. WINSTON: About 10 or 15 people hunting for me, because I was in the garage two and a half blocks away and only 19 months old.

MS. BAIZERMAN: From the house, from home.

MR. WINSTON: You don't have children running around town.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. What about your folks? Were they part of that group that was the search party?

MR. WINSTON: They were as panicky as anybody. Of course, that was in 1917.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's a while ago.

MR. WINSTON: So Huntington Beach was not very populated. It was right on the coast line there, probably a block and a half off of the ocean, and a steep cliff clear down to the ocean from there on. So there was plenty of things that people could be panicky about.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Were you their only child?

MR. WINSTON: No. Soon after that, my sister was born. And that was a very important thing, because I apparently was born with dyslexia and I did not learn to speak well. And my little sister, who was a little over a year old-or three years old, when we were driving up the coast-down the coast or back the coast to Long Beach from Huntington Beach-she ran out in front of a car and was killed. But what is important about her is that she knew how to talk to me, and nobody could talk to me with my "dyslectic." So that when she was killed, then I had a very long time. I was 70 years-70 days-excuse me one second. [The tape is paused briefly.] I was in the seventh-I was seven years old when they let me get into kindergarten.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So would you call it a late bloomer?

MR. WINSTON: I was all of that. But I always made things. I've always put things together.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Was somebody else in your family oriented to making things?

MR. WINSTON: Way back. My favorite man was my grandfather, who was an inventor. And my father couldn't drive a nail straight. If I could skip about 10 words there, when I was building in Arizona, I gave my son, who was very much like his grandfather, a nail to nail some boards, and I looked up and there were all the nails, right straight through. My family was that way. And my son turned out to be about 190 IQ.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, very, very bright.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But in a different way than you, it sounds like.

MR. WINSTON: In every way, he is bright. Yeah. He is a psychiatrist. He handles four different hospitals in Louisiana. My mother was a very bright lady but very, very, very antisocial, you might say. Everything was wrong. The only thing that was right was the flowers we grew in the yard. And I spent my life at home moving one rosebush eight times before it arrived at the right spot.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Would you say she was kind of hard to please?

MR. WINSTON: Yes. No, she wasn't, as long as-as long as I treated her as a princess, I guess you would say, and did just as she wished, we never had any trouble. And that's what I grew up under. My father was a very soft southerner, left from the yellow fever boom in Louisiana and the southern states, where everybody was under quarantine. We never knew how old my father was. He never would tell. But I did find out that the quarantine was ended in 1878, so my father must have been at least 25 to 30 years older than my mother, but a very soft, wonderful southerner.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Kind of a gentleman?

MR. WINSTON: Oh. So I went down to his home. He thought that a son should see where his parentage had come from. So we went to Natchez, Mississippi, and that was great. Two of the mansions left from the slaveholders, which was my family, are on the tour in Natchez that you go to. And this home I went to where my grandmother or something lived, and it was a typical house left from the slavery days. There were the little houses outside and so forth. And my grandmother said-on my father's side-that I could have that 600 as soon as I came down to the South to live, that that 600 acres was my land. And I said to her, "Auntie, you couldn't pay me to live in this." [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you were just a kid, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, 12 years old. So that I had a father who couldn't drive a nail, and I have a son who couldn't drive a nail either. Isn't that funny?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Skipping a generation, sounds like.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You became an only child, it sounds like, after your sister passed away. Tell me about what happened then?

MR. WINSTON: Well, the first 16 years of my life I had nothing but hospitals, injuries, and so forth. I was saved by a very interesting way. At the time of the great flu epidemic in 1917, I was dying, and the nurse said to my mother, "In Europe, we cure that by putting a drop of sherry and a drop of cream on the person's tongue every hour until he's well." And I was well. Our block in Santa Ana-we lived in Santa Ana at that time-there were only nine people left on our block, our block square.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, my gosh. Yeah. People forget about that, don't they?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Amazing.

MR. WINSTON: Before that, I had also had problems of a mastoid, but they went through my mouth and cleared that up. I just had about 16 years of being sick, but all the time making things, all the time building things. I never got along with the city kids. [Laughs.]

Many years later my folks moved into Los Angeles from near Long Beach, thinking that maybe playing with the kids would do something. The day I was sailing my little boat down the street where the rain had piled, and this

kid came along and kicked it and I beat him up and they had to take me off of him, my folks decided I better go back to the farm, which was very near Long Beach, and raise me in the country. And that they did.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So that's what they did?

MR. WINSTON: But I always made little boats. The greatest part of my life, after we got down in the Long Beach area where I had peace and quiet, was to wait for the five pound of Kraft cheese that came to the butcher, and that was such beautiful pine wood and I could make wheels for my little carts. And so I always built. Always.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Can I ask you, how did you think of yourself when you were doing those projects? Did you think of yourself as an artist? As a builder? As a-

MR. WINSTON: I just had fun making things.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You didn't think of it as something-I guess I'm kind of getting at, did you see a career ahead of you in doing something like this?

MR. WINSTON: No.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Or it was purely for the moment?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Down on the-it doesn't make any difference here unless you're from Long Beach or Los Angeles. There's a main highway that runs from Los Angeles down to the harbor. It's called Shrimp [ph] Boulevard or Alameda. Now that was interesting. It gave me an experience that a lot of people don't have. That was built by hand, a mule team and only one steamroller to roll the decomposed granite. Decomposed granite was made 18 inches deep. And they housed all those mules on our property. So I grew up in that kind of an atmosphere. And it was so wonderful to see the cement poured with a steam-operated piece of equipment.

MS. BAIZERMAN: In your lifetime.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So I have a wonderful background that few people have, because I had city life until I beat up the kid-[laughs]-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, right, and then back to the farm.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I'm going to just stop-

[Audio break.]

Okay.

Well, I guess I'm finding myself wondering how you might have fit in with the school system, what your education was like and that sort of thing.

MR. WINSTON: Apparently, after kindergarten at seven years of age, I went down to Wilmington. They tried cities and they tried to get me to read. They could never get me to read properly. So they got onto phonics a little bit, and that was great to help when I got into college, because I knew the word "phonics."

But I just always had trouble. The only thing I wanted to do was build and make things. And so even in the lower levels of grammar school, I always was making something. And what I learned at a very early age-because I knew how to handle my mother-was to be very polite. And I learned from my father, women are precious.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you were a young gentleman.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. At the age of 12, I could serve a full hot turkey dinner to a group of people.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So did your family really value all these-you know, you couldn't read, but you had all these other talents and you were creative, obviously. Did your family-were they able to appreciate that, or not?

MR. WINSTON: No. Yes and no. Because I could do anything, I was always asked to do things, and so the family was always happy because I got things done and so forth.

We had a big water tank right on our little farm place, and it had kind of rotten wood from many, many years of use. My father was a-one of the many places crossing from the yellow fever, he had picked up-he was a very bright man, a very bright man-being a telephone operator. So he had the belt and the thing that they used to wrap around the pole to come down, and I learned how to put that thing way up underneath the tank and swing

out on my belt and caulk all the leaks in the tank. So I always had things to do.

MS. BAIZERMANN: So did you at some point learn how to read a little bit? I mean, enough to get along in high school or junior high?

MR. WINSTON: Basically, I learned at the very early age of 10 that by standing in front of a mirror, a picture or a mirror, and explaining life and the things I wanted to do, I always had vocabulary, which most people, the kids my age, didn't have a vocabulary. But I had no reading ability.

MS. BAIZERMANN: So the teachers must have recognized that you had intelligence but you didn't have reading ability.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. That's why I got through high school with straight As in shop and straight Cs, because they gave me a C because they couldn't flunk me, really, consciously, because I made such wonderful projects. I did all kinds-

MS. BAIZERMANN: So you compensated?

MR. WINSTON: I compensated all the way through. And then, as I say, I learned to read people, and so I could get along with anybody anywhere, and I got through. All the way through I picked up little sentences that people would say, and I would keep those filed away up in there, and that came out when I got into college.

MS. BAIZERMANN: So how did you get into college if you were kind of a shaky high school student? How did that work?

MR. WINSTON: I wasn't a shaky high school student, because I graduated as president of the class. I was president of the student body. I formed more clubs, which had the better students running the clubs, and I was always very smart to appoint one of them as secretary.

And when I got into Berkeley High later from my-we moved. I moved. I have to do that a little later. But I graduated from Cal [University of California, Berkeley, B.A. 1940; M.A. 1944], and I got the job down at Berkeley High of having shop and drafting, and one of the shops was radio, which I had played in radio along, experimented along. And then I just could out-talk anybody, would never let anybody get ahead of me.

When I was at Cal-and this is jumping around, but when I was at Cal, I had no grades, I had nothing to go by, but I knew that one thing you needed was friends. And one thing was always to appoint people. And in high school, I did the same thing. I appointed people. I got to be the best speaker and had the best person who could read what the teachers were trying to say, and I got through just by plain being able to out-think people.

MS. BAIZERMANN: Yeah. You must have been able to absorb a lot through listening.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, everything, everything. Everywhere I've always gone, people are always amazed at what's in my head.

MS. BAIZERMANN: A sponge. So high school was in Southern California?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. That was in Wilmington.

MS. BAIZERMANN: And then how did you get up to Berkeley, then? What happened there?

MR. WINSTON: Well, when my father passed away-well, I was, as I said, a sick kid. I had everything you-I had five mastoid operations. That's where they go back in, they chop-I had it twice on this side and three on that side.

MS. BAIZERMANN: And your hearing seems very good.

MR. WINSTON: Well, I would have to say yes. When they were picking everybody up who was warm in the Second World War, of course, I was asked to get in line, and they put the little thing in my ear here and they were talking away. And the doctor said, [speaking softly] "Can you hear me?" He had my medical report of five mastoid operations and all kinds of scarification. He said, "You can hear me?" "Oh yeah, I can hear you, doc, what do you want?" [Speaking more softly] "Can you hear me?" And he got way down to practically nothing, and he continued.

Then he said, "Hey, George," to the other doctor, "come over here, look at this ear." Well, a little metal funnel was sticking in my ear, and they kept blowing on my ear to make it vibrate to see why, it was so scarified in both ears, that how could I hear. And they kept doing this, with other doctors coming over and blowing on my ear.

MS. BAIZERMANN: You were a phenomenon.

MR. WINSTON: I was so dizzy I couldn't see.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You're kidding?

MR. WINSTON: It throws you out of focus, you know.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Your equilibrium and all that.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So I've had all kinds of experiences that most people-but it's always a learning thing. I could learn anything.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So your mother moved to Northern California with you then, or how did that work?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I was going to say at one time, and this must have been way back-it was back when I was about 12; I discovered that you could make model airplanes. But nobody was making model airplanes, and we didn't have balsa. I went out and looked at the railroad ties, which was light, rotten cedar, and I would split the railroad tie up and use that to throw gliders. And what we didn't have-today, what you have-tubes and tubes of all kinds of glues which are acetone based.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Bad for you.

MR. WINSTON: Now, I have no idea why-I've done crazy things that I never knew why. I discovered that-that would be in 1920, '21 or '22, '23-I discovered that-automobiles didn't have glass on them; they had celluloid for windows, and I-now, I don't know how I discovered it-I discovered that acetone dissolved cellulose. So I devised a jar-I chopped up a little cellulose, like that, and I would put acetone on that, and it made a glue, airplane glue. I used to bottle that up and sell it to people long before the-I was always doing things!

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, you were a fertile mind.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, because I couldn't read and I couldn't spell, but I could always outthink.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Fast forward up to Berkeley, then. How did you ever get started there?

MR. WINSTON: Well, that's what I was going to say. Finally, one time they discovered when we went down to the desert and the dry climate, I got well. And when I'd go back, I would have the-runny. So on one trip down there, the last trip, my boyfriend said, "You know, I'm so happy my uncle is coming to town, and he's coming down to dry out." And I said, "Well, your family doesn't drink. What is your uncle drying out about?" "Oh," he says, "he's a cleaner and he uses acetone to clean."

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, I see. So you had some health problems.

MR. WINSTON: So then my father passed away down there, and so we moved back out to the little farm in California. And my mother really took over me.

From there on I didn't have-she didn't think I was a wonderful child. I was just doing all kinds of things that I had learned. The example I always use, she loved gardens, and I finally moved one rosebush eight times before that rosebush got in the right spot, and that's the way I appeased my mother. I would find something she needed, and then-I've done so many things. I have built things, so many. I'll jump back there a little ways because it will lead you into what-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay. I'm counting on you. You're going to get me to Berkeley, right? [Laughs.]

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I'll tell you how I got to Berkeley because it was a very unusual thing. But I was out with my dad doing some things, saw this fellow, and I said, "What is that?" And he said, "Oh, that's a lathe." I said, "A lathe? Yeah, I know what a lathe is, but it's all made of-?" "Yeah," he said, "I put in an old electric motor off of something and I bought that and I did this." And I said, "Daddy, will you buy that for me?" The guy said, "I'm not using it; it would be \$5.00."

So I took that back to my little shack on the farm, and I set up that and I learned-because I liked foreign woods. There was a wonderful place in Los Angeles with foreign woods, and I would-I have to slip this in. To get to Los Angeles-

MS. BAIZERMAN: No, we've got-

MR. WINSTON: No, no, it's all going to come right down to a point.

MS. BAIZERMAN: [Laughs.] Okay.

MR. WINSTON: To get to Los Angeles, I could run up to this big boulevard that I had watched them build, and cars had-trucks had solid rubber tires on them. And so I found that they could only go 25 miles an hour, so to go to Los Angeles, I would stand out there and look like I was doing something along there, and as soon as a truck went by, I ran out and jumped on the back end of it and rode all the way to Los Angeles. So that's when I got to building furniture and all that kind of thing. Okay.

We had to go down to the desert, and that's where my father died. So when I got back, from then on my mother develops a psychiatric --which the doctor told her she didn't have, but by being crippled, I had to drive her car. And I had to take care of my mother.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So she had some kind of psychological condition that resulted-

MR. WINSTON: Yes. My father died with me right at the bed, and I put my mouth on him and tried, but I couldn't save him. He was one of those many millions of men that were left from the Depression days that jumped out of hotels and died and all that sort of thing. Well, it had affected his heart, and so he died. So from there on, I was under my mother. And anything my mother had to do, needed to do, I did it. I was a very dutiful son.

But all the time I did something so I could say, "Mother, remember that piece of wood I was talking about? I really need that and it's in Los Angeles. Could I go out and jump on the trucks and go to Los Angeles?" And that's the way I got all the way through that. So that when I got into high school, then I got straight As in all the shops.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You must have been a phenomenon there.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I was really good at that. But at the same time, I was a dead piece of wood on the academic side. However --

MS. BAIZERMAN: You've convinced me of that. [Laughs.]

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I made projects. When we were in Roman, at Greenwood, I carved-and you will see some of the little things left-I carved people with bow and arrows, little six-inch people painted with-we used banana oil, they called it, and I put colors in them. And so I kept doing all of that. And all this time, I'm getting threes-I keep wanting to say ones-threes all the way through, everybody gave me a three. I flunked everything all the way through, but at the same time, I ran the school because I had the best mind at reading people.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right. Now, I'm going to stop you because I think I understand that part about high school and I'd like to move on to college.

MR. WINSTON: Well, I'm going to get you there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay. I'm counting on you. [Laughs.]

MR. WINSTON: All the way through, I got Cs and I passed every course. So the doctor finally came to my mother and said-because all that time, I was building furniture and all that in my little workshop-he said, "You have to get that boy away from you."

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. That was my dear old doctor. He saved my life several other times. And a grammar school graduate with my mother way back many years came down to visit, and that was at the same time-I'm always lucky-the doctor said, you've got to get rid of this. The lady said, "Well, in Berkeley, I went to what they call extension there, and I learned to take care of all of my bonds and everything, and I've saved all my money. Send him up and I'll take care of him."

So I wound up in 1936 in Berkeley, when Berkeley was Berkeley. And with nothing to do, the first thing I do, I went down to the ski hut and showed him what I could do to the skis that other people weren't doing, and then I just went over and did this little thing and that little thing, and pretty soon I walked into classes day in and day out. They had no computers. So I went from 8:00 in the morning to 5:00 at night for a year and a half. And during that time is when I learned about extensions, and that's when I signed up for public speaking, because I knew I could baloney my way through there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's right. I get the picture now.

MR. WINSTON: And in this psych class, I learned at 22 that I was dyslexic.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Then I went to two extension classes, and all of a sudden I was in university. I had a year

and a half of just going to classes from 8 to 5. And I would sit in the class and look like I was taking the-doing the test. I had my blue book like everybody else. I'd just do the blue books and it would get you in. "Hey, I'm going on up-out the door, Jock. Can I take your book with you?"

"Yeah." So I have two blue books, and I'd walk very nicely up to the doctor-the test lab-and hand a blue book in and walk out the door with my blue book-[laughing]. I did that for a year and a half. And I said, "You got an A in that"-

[End Tape 1, Side A.]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, you have more to tell me about college, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Then I got in with-with two registrations I got in. [Laughs.] So then I took public speaking.

[Note: The remainder of side B is garbled and cannot be transcribed. The missing material is covered again later, on October 10, 2002, recorded on tape five of this series, and appears at the end of this transcript although it covers the time in Mr. Winston's life being discussed at this point.]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Bob Winston at the artist's studio in Concord, California, on August 7, 2002, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

MR. WINSTON: [Already in progress]-is something I have no idea. What you have to understand is, from Southern California, the doctor said that my mother needed to let me on my own at 22. And with a great deal of sorrow and some fight, she loaded everything in the little car and we came up to Berkeley.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right.

MR. WINSTON: And with that, I landed right on Bancroft Way at a boarding house there, and I was there for nine years.

MS. BAIZERMAN: In Berkeley.

MR. WINSTON: In Berkeley I saw people come in as freshmen and leave with Ph.D.s and I'm still there. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: You must have enjoyed your college life to an extent, huh?

MR. WINSTON: I never had a college life as such. I had fun learning at the college and I made it work for me, which a lot of people don't do, make it work for them. So that coming up from Southern California, I, of course, as we spoke of, had nothing to get me into the university. Nothing. Just straight Cs in everything, and straight As in shop. But otherwise, I had nothing to offer, except I had a lot of time. And there were no computers. And so I just for a year and a half walked in classes, took notes, and went on that way. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: I guess what I'm wondering about is, what was it like leaving college, you know, when you graduated? Was it kind of hard for you to make that-

MR. WINSTON: Well, I never left, really, for years and years. After I graduated, and the army and so forth had decided that I wasn't a risk, so they would let me go down to the shipyards and I'd be a coppersmith, which was an exciting thing because I had always thought, "Oh, the world; be a coppersmith." When I got there, there were six old men left over from World War I, and had no idea what the hell-[laughs].

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's right. That's when you were in school and you'd race down on your bicycle, right?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, yeah. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Down to the docks and put in your time there.

MR. WINSTON: So it would be 19-at least '48 before I really left the university. Every year I was on-at first as an extension person, and then I got in, and then I went back and took everything all over again and got grades.

And by that time I had learned to-well, I actually had trained everybody to accept me as a feeble citizen of some sort. I just worked the library over, when I wasn't even in school, by bothering people for their card, and sometimes I even took books out of the very deepest deeps of vaults, with just my way of looking at things and having the guts to do it, and borrowing registered cards and getting into any place I wanted to. [Laughs.] So that



I never really had a college life as such, because I went from being an absolute dummy student in the extension department to then getting to be a completely registered student with only two registrations.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Tell me, it seems I remember reading that you started teaching at CCAC [California College of Arts and Crafts, 1942-56] in Oakland.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, was that soon after you graduated, or was that a while later?

MR. WINSTON: I went to Berkeley High as soon as I graduated.

MS. BAIZERMAN: To teach the high school.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And then I registered-that would be 1942-at College of Arts and Crafts, and I stayed there till 1959. That day, I wrote on a piece of paper at a faculty meeting, "I resign from this"-unspeakable word-and walked right out the door and never saw the school again for 25 years, I guess.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So that was 1952 [sic] to 1959?

MR. WINSTON: That was 1942 to 1956.

MS. BAIZERMAN: At CCAC?

MR. WINSTON: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you started teaching in college at CCAC then.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, right off the bat. I rewrote the college completely before I left.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay. Well, you know, despite the fact that you left there just fed up with them, what was-

MR. WINSTON: I wasn't fed up with them. I just thought the guy that was running the school wasn't even worth me spitting on him.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, I understand.

MR. WINSTON: The school was just fine. I remodeled the school till it was just fine.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Are you comfortable saying who that was? I'm afraid I don't know who that --

MR. WINSTON: I can't remember now. I wrote on my-somewhere. He was a busybody, commercial something or other that always wanted to be something. Besides, he was an alcoholic. That was his biggest problem. But when he got hired there, nobody knew he was alcoholic. And so that he did much damage there. But I had sealed off so many classes that he couldn't do anything about. So, not my own classes. He didn't dare do anything to me, because I was the school for so many years. I was the authority over everything.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, tell me about that. I'd like to know more about that.

MR. WINSTON: Well, in 1942 there were only 80 students and there were only six jewelry students, and I was hired to be the jewelry teacher. But then I was the only instructor that had a degree, so-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Gee, that's interesting.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So that was more fun. So the first thing I did was organize a few classes for myself; I had the degree and nobody-so I taught a class called "Science for the Artist," and I started with nebular space and wound up with Cro-Magnon man, because I figured that was the last real man on Earth, was Cro-Magnon man. After that, it's downhill.

So then I also established in all my classes to be able to take a day off and go down to the coast down by Carmel. And the painting classes, I was teaching sometimes beginning painting; sometimes I was teaching-I was the only person that could get the university-any acceptance as a school. They were trying to be-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, accredited, uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: -a college. And they asked to rewrite the whole thing into a report on the school and all of the things we had planned. And when it came back from the state, they said it was the best short college report that they had had up to that time. Well, it was just because I had remade the school completely by that time. The

teachers we had were painters, and they knew nothing about an academic background. So that's when I established "Science for the Artist," which started with nebular space and so forth and et cetera.

And then I had this holiday that we took all the students that I had, and any other ones, most of them were other people-went down to Carmel, on the coast, and they had to select a stone that said something to them, maybe an animal or a person, but it had to be something they saw in that stone. And then when they went back to school, they were given a chisel. And I had asked them also to select a rock that fit their hand that they could use for a hammer.

And so then they used a cold chisel and a hammer to create a piece of sculpture. And I gave them-we had a lot of debris left at the school, and I kept all that that was worthwhile. I had a lot of broken grindstones, and so then they were given a piece of grindstone to grind the surface of the piece of sculpture.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Very hands on, very basic.

MR. WINSTON: Well, I then created a course for, besides "Science for the Artist," craft study. I've forgotten exactly the title of that. I taught a night, for instance, where they did photographic-made lights and threw shadows on paper and then developed that, so they got that kind of thing.

And then, through a company in the Bay Area, I developed a-they developed a particular piece of cement that used, instead of water, a particular solution of salt to harden. You could break it off and you could stick it back together again. It remained a hard piece of-well, it wasn't any idea of mine. Many years before, they had used that to make drain boards, long before we had wooden boards and so forth.

So that I managed to do a lot of that, which I, of course, didn't mention it in my report, and backed it up by degrees and the background I had, with a minor in anthropology, paleontology and geology and forestry and things like that. So that I remodeled the whole school, except the painters. I left the painters alone. But I taught composition, and then I developed a class on making your own colors out of nature and all of these kinds of things that looked good. In 1945, that wasn't the kind of thing we taught in schools at that time, so I went really out on a limb. So that I was very comfortable teaching there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. It was like a good environment for you.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Tell me, do you think there is an advantage in having a degree, like you did, versus the people who are not trained in an academic background? I mean, how do you weigh that, just from your own personal perspective?

MR. WINSTON: Well, somewhere along the line you have to involve the student by the word "interest." Once you create interest and you create-of course, we're talking now before television and all those kinds of things. You created interest in why one animal looks like another, how it had transpired back and forth, and mixed things. And you talked about geology and all of those kinds of things. You make things interesting. You go over to Sausalito, on the coast there, when almost the whole school quits. The days I took my classes, the school nearly emptied. They all went.

We went out there and picked up a little particular orange stone that was washed up on the beach there, carnelian, which it only took a few years to disappear completely. And then we studied why it was there. And you taught fun out of learning. That was one of the things about my classes. My basic craft class was-they did all kinds of things. There's a thing that you can take film and, with a flashlight, a pen-type flashlight, draw pictures on film and develop it. Then they had the experience of developing. So people used to just-except those that were-painters and so forth, who could not see why they had to expand-

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you think maybe, with your higher education, you thought more broadly? Do you think that that-

MR. WINSTON: I always did. I always thought broadly. In high school, grammar school, I even got the teachers to teach pressing book covers in Chinese paper and so forth.

[Knock at the door.] [Audio break.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay. Now we're back in action.

MR. WINSTON: So that in creating that atmosphere, people who were not interested in things, you made things-interested in them. And this is the problem with education. So many of the things today are not allowed, as some religion's order says you can't teach that. I taught from the caveman of northern Spain and southern France and how everything evolved in there, and then I just cut it off when they killed off all those. And I told

them those were the last real people that inhabited the Earth. So I probably should have been poisoned somewhere along the line. [Laughs.] But I made it interesting. But then show me one of the teachers that was teaching painting who had an anthropology minor, anthropology, paleontology, geology, forestry, and a teacher credential and all that.

So that was the way I was always in school. In school I could not compete with the people that I liked, the students I liked. They were all winning contests and could write all the classical music and win all those contests. And I loved the music, but I just had to always back away. So my point was that if I made everything else interesting, I could get people to expand their knowledge and so forth.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It sounds very interesting.

MR. WINSTON: I just could not compete with anybody with any intelligence in that sort of a way.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you taught such a variety of courses. You taught jewelry and you taught composition and painting. Did you teach the painting too?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Was there anything else that we missed when you were teaching there?

MR. WINSTON: Well, then I taught "Science for the Artist."

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's right, "Science for the Artist." That's right. Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: Actually, in my workshop, I went into geology and the importance of knowing woods and knowing rocks and so forth.

MS. BAIZERMAN: The natural world.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And of course, actually the painters were really always upset with me. But they couldn't do anything. They didn't have a credential and I had the credentials. I made the most of it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, lucky.

Were there any faculty members that you felt particularly close to? Like, when you were a grad student, you were friendly with [Chiura] Obata and [John] Haley.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: What about at CCAC? Were there any luminaries that you admired, or was it all just at an early stage?

MR. WINSTON: Most of them should have been drowned early.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. Okay.

MR. WINSTON: [Laughs.] No.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You didn't do any drowning, did you? I want to get this on the record. [They laugh.]

MR. WINSTON: Well, I took them to Stinson Beach and they went swimming.

MS. BAIZERMAN: [Laughs.] Yeah, had to be a little careful there.

MR. WINSTON: [Inaudible.]-back early.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. So tell me a little bit more about that time when you just got fed up there.

MR. WINSTON: It was a series of things. Of course, my jewelry classes had graduated from six students up to four separate courses. And then I really wanted to take time off, and so that they went out and hired a very well-known jeweler. I was not a well-known jeweler. I was a well-hated jeweler, in many cases-[laughs]-because I was such a nosy soul, and I bumped into anything that looked like it was a challenge. That was-what's her name? De Patta? De Patta.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: Margaret De Patta. And she was trained in Chicago School of Design and so forth, which was a

very limited school. She was a good designer, but she had not had a lot of training in teaching.

So what they did when I said I was going to leave, they hired her to replace me. And that was not too good, as far as I was concerned. And the students resented the very-out of Chicago School of Design came a whole new vocabulary. What is it? They named a book at that time, I have on my shelf, on vocabulary and what. And so that she was-I liked De Patta, but she was not a-she was a designer and she made good-made beautiful jewelry, but it was all cold and limited. They expanded everything towards Chicago School of Design, which was maybe leftist, I don't know. It was kind of-not down-to-earth like I was teaching.

So when they hired her, the kids just wouldn't come to school. They said they would not. They didn't mind, but-she drew and designed beautiful designs in jewelry, but it wasn't very free. And by 1942, I was already teaching lost-wax casting.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I was going to ask you about that.

MR. WINSTON: And so that they found that they could-there's a certain number of people that will go for lost-wax casting, and there are certain people that don't. So I had quite a following in that field because I was a little loose around the corner, and so they liked that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It appealed to-

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: -some students, I bet, didn't it?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So they just completely refused to come to school. And so several of them said, "Well, why don't we come up to your studio and just learn, and continue?" So I did. And then I did tell the school that the students had chosen me to go up and that they were not coming back to class. And I said, "I've told them to come back to class," but they didn't like De Patta. She was of the Chicago School of Design, which was talking above their heads a lot of the time in that direction. But a damn good designer. But then she also decided that-and this is history, it's not necessarily my opinion-that one of the things that she needed to do is to reproduce more of things, patterned, molding.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Like multiples.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. She wanted me to teach her lost-wax casting, which I said I would. Well, the man that she later married, who was one of the worst things that ever happened to her, said that he knew more about that than I did.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Was that Gene? Gene Bielawski?

MR. WINSTON: Gene, yeah. He just pushed De Patta right and left. And so I gave them a couple of lessons in lost-wax casting and told the kids to come over and come on back. And they said no. Maybe 10 or 11 of them just wouldn't come back. So that as so happened, that she went into lost-wax casting and went down the slope on that because her jewelry was beautiful jewelry, but it was not made to cast.

MS. BAIZERMAN: The design of it.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, the design of it. It cost them more to finish, which I told them it would cost them more, to finish up one of those pieces than I did in my lost cast, because my castings were designed for wax work.

MS. BAIZERMAN: They have that sort of melted, uneven surface and-

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, like the-wherever this is.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, whatever we did with the piece that you made.

MR. WINSTON: Hey, I cast, by God.

KERRY KILMER: Was it this?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is his new piece. He was wearing it when I came today. And it's reversible. It's a long pendant. Is that turquoise in the middle?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, that's a water-washed one, too. It had a lot of crumbly spots, and that one spot was pretty

rotten, and so I cleaned-[tape is paused during this description]. [Resuming]-back to her sheet-and-wire work, at which she was very good. But that dumb-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, she did.

MR. WINSTON: -husband of hers, he thought he knew how to be a fortune maker, but he didn't know how to do it.

So I never came back to Arts and Crafts, legally. The kids, as soon as I took over after she didn't work out, then they were coming back to class. But this president was such a drunkard, basically. It proved out that was it. We had a faculty meeting and he was saying, you know, "I did this and I did that." I said, "I came back and everything was that way." "Oh, no, no, no." So I said to him, "May I have a piece of paper, Dan?" and he said, "Sure." And I wrote on it, "I resign from this goddamn school," and I walked out of the door and never went back for 30 years.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Is that right?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And then later, they got a lot of the young people in there who already had lost-wax casting and had training with me and many other people. So then it just built up into quite a casting school and quite a sheeting school.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I'm not sure I know what a sheeting school is.

MR. WINSTON: Well, that is, they buy a sheet of 16-gauge silver and so forth, and then they design something on a piece of paper, and they put a piece of carbon here and they cut it out. And they finish the edge, and then they can bend it this way and can bend it that, but they can't get the thick and thin. So then they do like some of the things later I did, soldering things all the way around.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Layers and-

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And I gave it space again. But that's what happened. So then that was it. I left.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You left. And then you kind of took up with a lot of independent teaching out of your studio?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, I did that. And then a little later than that, by the weather-my house was on a hill, Berkeley Hills, and the rains came down and the rains came down. It was almost as bad as something that somebody has completely forgotten since we had that last one that caused fires and so forth. But it came down and my house started to slide off the hill. And I couldn't see it, because I built that and I had studied the grounds geologically, and I knew that it could, but I couldn't do anything about it.

Seven years later-this is when I took off for Arizona. And seven years later-the person I rented to, they didn't mind living in a dilapidated, well-built house, so to speak. PG&E, the water company, admitted that their 10-inch water service pipe way down in the ground had broken and they had let it run for 10 days before they did any servicing of it. So what it did is, my house slid on that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: On mud.

MR. WINSTON: But seven years had gone by and I cannot sue after that. They were very smart like that. All that time, I was down in Arizona anyway. I'd become a complete worshipper of the wonderful weather and so forth. I love it. I'm the only one that rides their bicycle around here when it's 100 degrees in temperature. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: You like hot weather.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, I love hot weather.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh. Yeah, that's great. I was going to ask if you-had you married at that point or-

MR. WINSTON: Which time?

MS. BAIZERMAN: How many? Let's get the total, and then we'll work backwards. [Laughs.]

MR. WINSTON: Four. Four marriages.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Four, did you say?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, four. By the first one I had my son, had Bob. And then after that, different kinds of individuals attracted me, so that then finally I got a divorce in there.

[End Tape 2, Side A.]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Why not L.A. or-

MR. WINSTON: Well, see, the trouble with me, I just go wherever the winds look like they would be fun.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You just ended up there? You didn't set out for there?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. No, no. One of the Indians had come back up to Berkeley and studied with me privately, a very important member, and he went back down and was talking about it. And they decided that if they could get me down there, I could become president of the craft department, that is, Arizona Designer Craftsmen.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: And then so, you know, it looked like good.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So they kind of tried to recruit you to come down and-

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, well, they did.

MS. BAIZERMAN: -be active in their craft-

MR. WINSTON: They made me president of their craft group.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that was like a guild or a club or something?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: One of those craft organizations.

MR. WINSTON: But it didn't work well, because Tucson is family-oriented and Phoenix is industrially oriented. And the reason they got me down there, I had been such a success up here getting things together, they figured that I could do great things to get them together. I don't care what you did with those people, they just did not like-they liked to have parties together, and then when they get there, they're all off in the corner. Tucson is in the corner talking to-Phoenix is talking, and nothing ever happened.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So the social dynamics weren't right for setting up a strong craft organization?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Would that be fair to say?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, yeah. Well, it continued, I guess it continued even to this day, but it's never functioned like they wanted, a real organization. So then later when my wife passed away, that I-well, I almost-I kept on with Win-Ox, the thing that has always kept me good.

MS. BAIZERMAN: With Win-Ox?

MR. WINSTON: My oxidizer that all the jewelers use all over the world.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's a formula, liquid formula?

MR. WINSTON: Winston Oxidizer. And it spread all over the world, so that that's why I've never had to really be a down-to-earth maker of jewelry and selling it. I get my support out of that, and the rest of it is time for me to do things that other people don't have time to do.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So your invention here really helped your whole life, your whole career.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes. Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You had that to be a kind of steady, reliable-

MR. WINSTON: Income.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, is that right?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, about \$25,000 a year income.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, my goodness. That's great.

MR. WINSTON: And with my living alone like I did, I didn't spend much time on food and things.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You were selling jewelry at this time too, though, weren't you?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes. After a while, I was in so many different publications and so many different books and so forth; people would be coming through from Europe sometimes, and they'd phone me up and come over and pick out a piece of jewelry. And one particular professor-I can't remember his name. It starts with a P. I've forgotten it now. Anyway, I was such a smart-ass. I was doing everything that most people wished they could do, and I made a profession out of it. And by that time-it's Pardo. I think that his name is Pardo.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Professor Pardo.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, at one of the universities. I had a Jeep. I drove a Jeep station wagon everywhere, and I always parked it out in front of my studio and used it as an office, and not in the office. The hood was usually nice and warm. You'd lean against that and do your office work. And so I was out talking to one of the students, and this man and wife strolled in from the back street, up through, and looked around and said, "Where's Mr. Winston?" Not what I would call gracious. And I said-no, he asked where was the office.

And I said, "You go through that door and over there, and that's the office," and I didn't pay him any good attention like I thought he-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Expected, huh?

MR. WINSTON: I could read character so fast. He just didn't deserve a lot of politeness. So pretty soon he wandered back and said, "Where will I find Mr. Winston?" I'm sitting on the-standing, leaning on the hood, writing out papers for this student.

"Oh," I said, "in there. Up the stairs and in there." I got done 10 or 15 minutes, 20 minutes later. I come wandering in and I said, "Now, I'm Mr. Winston, what can I do for you?" [Laughs.] I didn't know him from Adam. I didn't realize he was one of the great, great eastern teachers.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And he taught jewelry, did he?

MR. WINSTON: Huh?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did he teach jewelry?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, yeah. He was very cold and very good, and he was one of these people that believed in having a tool for everything. And he made tools. And I learned all of this afterwards, because he didn't mean sour apples to me; I just didn't like his attitude and I thought he deserved a little dressing down. And so he introduced himself at that time, and being what I am, I never paid any attention to who-Pardo, yeah, I think that was it, Pardo. And so I don't pay a great deal of attention who's who. If they've got something to offer, then let's talk about it.

And my room there was about this big, and a bunch of benches this way, and then we had a little room in the back where teaching the lost-wax casting was done. And he looked around and there was nothing-those days I was teaching how to solder with an alcohol lamp and charcoal because we just didn't have the money to have gas and so forth in the sector. And he looked all around and he said, "And where do you"-

"Well, let's go out in the back" before he finished that. And then he walked out, and I said, "This is where we teach lost-wax casting." And there's nothing but a caster here and a couple of benches over there, and no tools.

And he said, "Where do you store your tools?" And I didn't know who he was. He was one of these guys that really believed in tools, and polished them. And when you left the class, they were clean and polished and so forth.

I said, "Well, if they just happen to think about them, I have them make their tools." And so later I found out that he was from the east, and they hired him to come out here to judge a jewelry show in San Francisco. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: No kidding.

MR. WINSTON: When he left, he said, "You certainly have an interesting way." But he said, "You know, I just had to come over here from San Francisco." By that time I began to pick up my ears a little bit; maybe this is something I really shouldn't-[inaudible]. [Laughs.] And he said, "I just came over here from"-and he had mentioned by that time he was from the east, which didn't mean anything because I don't read books about

people like that. And he said, "I came over here just to see what this Winston was that was making such a big step in jewelry." By that time, I figured I'd opened my mouth a little too much, I guess. [Laughs.]

And he went over to San Francisco, and the president of *Craft Horizons* [now *American Craft*]-can't think of the old lady's name there-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Aileen [Osborne] Webb?

MR. WINSTON: Webb. Webb was over there. And later on I found that-she had bought one of my pins.

MS. BAIZERMAN: No kidding!

MR. WINSTON: I never knew what it did to Pardo when he- [laughs]-she was wearing one of my pins, anyway. So I had a lot of little experiences like that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That was when you were teaching at CCAC, then, wasn't it?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's just before I vacated.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: So that I was always a kind of bad boy, in a way, because I really didn't believe-you had to show me that you could do things.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You didn't stand much on somebody who expected something that maybe they didn't quite deserve.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So anyway, later on I vacated. But by that time I had really penetrated just about everything that wasn't a painter with --

MS. BAIZERMAN: With your --

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I got run out of the pot shop because I had a potter's wheel in my workshop, which we called the experimental workshop, and I wanted people to have experiments.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that was another class you taught then?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, yeah. That was one that we really did just about everything you could think of to experiment. We did photographs. We did trips. First thing they got in it was they were handed a piece of unusual-a whole box full of very unusual foreign woods, and then they had to select a piece they liked out of that. And then they were given a carpenter's saw-no, what do they call it-shoemaker's saw-file, and they had to work something that felt good for their hand. Another one that hadn't been taught in that school before, which is what we call "feelies."

And so that was wonderful to teach that way. I had no boss and had outrun two presidents and so forth. But soon after that, I decided that I had to have a vacation, and that was when De Patta came over. And then I went down to the desert. And I had fun down there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you did some teaching down there, I remember.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah, I taught seven years, extension. That's what really got it --

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that was something you had a feeling for, having had that experience yourself.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. They had a rule in Arizona, which they have other places, that if you're going to do graduate work, you just automatically get some of the things deducted from what you earned as an undergraduate. So that I rented a dilapidated supermarket, which was pretty big. It was as big as the supermarket here. My wife and I started teaching lost-wax casting there, and we had 35 people a night, four nights a week.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Approximately what years was that, maybe in the '60s?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes. Yes. I got there '59. It was probably just about-I started writing my book in '70-I finished after '70, so it probably was middle '60s.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: I finished the book by '70, '71.



MS. BAIZERMAN: So your classes were really popular?

MR. WINSTON: Oh yes, very, very popular. And this went on for seven years. All that time, the metalsmithing class in the universities were getting smaller and smaller, and I was getting bigger and bigger.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And did your school have a name, or your classes? I mean, it was just your studio?

MR. WINSTON: Just the Bob Winston.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Bob Winston?

MR. WINSTON: Workshop, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Workshop, uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: And besides that, along in-must have been early '60s-I had invented Win-Ox at that time.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I was going to ask you. Early '60s, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay.

MR. WINSTON: And by the time I got done doing that was another wild trip. Investments were slow to-the materials needed in investment really weren't looked after. And I immediately started to contact the manufacturers over in Los Angeles and said that we needed this and we needed that. And they said, "Well, you want to work on it?" And I said, "Yeah." Alright. You send-I'll reformulate what we found doesn't work well in investment.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And this is when you invest the wax-

MR. WINSTON: Yes, like plaster of paris.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Plaster, uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: And so they worked for nine months with me. We got it down to a brand-new formula that was working real well.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So was it something similar to plaster, but it was more designed to qualities?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. There were just certain things that-time, time is very important. And we worked on the time. They'd send me 25 pounds and I'd mix it up, and then, well, I needed two seconds on this and two seconds on that and so forth. We got it down to real good. We called it Invest. And I used to buy-well, they first started out by making 30 100-pound barrels out of it, and I would drive from Phoenix or Scottsdale or wherever I was, anyhow, and I would drive on over to Los Angeles and pick up 30 barrels in my big, heavy Dodge truck.

And then I'd get started from there, and I'd drive all the way across up to Sacramento, dropping off barrels. Somebody had ordered a barrel here and ordered a barrel there and got a barrel. And then as soon as I got to Sacramento, I'd turn right around and drive back to Los Angeles and load up another 30 barrels. And it was all in the same four days. I drove up all the way to Sacramento and San Francisco and got rid of it there, and drove back and picked up 30 more and drove down to San Diego and would leave off at two different places, about maybe 20 barrels here, there, and there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So these were suppliers for people who made jewelry?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: And then after that, I would drive on back to Tempe, where my shop was, and that would be four days, 2,800 miles.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, gee, isn't that amazing!

MR. WINSTON: No sleep. I lived on coffee and orange juice.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And do you still make Invest? Is that something that is still marketed?

MR. WINSTON: No, no. They kept on making it for several years, but they made it in small batches, and they finally decided they couldn't do small-batch things. So then I went over to talk to them and they said, "No, nobody will be able to get your formula; it's locked up in the vault, because you have really established something in that. But that isn't what we're doing."

I said to them, "Why don't you take the things"-I don't know, because you never know what they do; it's a very hush-hush thing. And I said, "Why don't you take the best things in my Invest and put it in your investment?" and they did. And that's why that particular investment is really one of the best ones.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So they still market a product but not the same one.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. It was not my product. I didn't care about that. But people cried for years because mine was a little bit superior, was less commercial, I guess maybe, I don't know. But it was still a better investment. This young gentleman can tell about that investment.

And so that was it. But along the way, the earlier parts, there were things that we didn't have. We used to have to buy some things commercially. One was a water-resistant product that you paint the wax-see, wax and water won't work together, so you have a material, a liquid that you paint the wax with and then the water will adjust itself. So that I invented-no, I didn't invent that. I'd just hunt around till I found products that worked, and I redid it.

I used to drive over to San Pedro and pick up a 55-size drum, and I had maybe 30 one-gallon plastic bottles in the back of my truck, and I went and got a pump that they use on the farm for pumping gas and that sort of thing. And I went over to San Pedro to the harbor, where was the only place you could get that. It took a long time to find that. It was a simple thing. What it was, if they sell alcohol, drinking alcohol, there's such a high, fine, it's terrible; like \$25 a gallon or something like that, it tacks onto a gallon. And I don't know why I figured that out. I remembered way back in 1938 there was a product that worked similarly for something else; it smelt like that, and I never knew what it was, and I had everybody going around and smelling. And it finally turned out that it is made by the government, called Problem Formula 19. And what they do, they put in something that makes it slightly deterrent as far as the alcohol is concerned.

MS. BAIZERMAN: To keep people from drinking it.

MR. WINSTON: The fine-no, not for that. This was just for-like a gallon of alcohol is what, \$35 or \$36, and that's why this stuff that we painted the wax with was pretty expensive. So I thought, well, okay. And so I bought a 55-gallon drum, put it on the back of my car. By that time I knew how to do it. And I had filled the back of my truck with bottles, empty bottles, plastic bottles, size gallon. And I bought wholesale bottles, and I put in it a purple dye, obviously a purple dye. It was a big barrel on my truck, and I got one of those pumps that you can pump up stuff. So I'd pull up to one of the dealers, and they said, "How many you want?" And they'd put up three or two or one, and I would set up the bottles and pump it in. And dumping the alcohol in it made the purple dye come up, so I had a purple solution.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, purple solution.

MR. WINSTON: And so then later on-I don't know why it took so long. It took a long time for the companies to put it in. Now everything works that way, except water, wax in the water and so forth. So that's the way I did for years.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, so your inventiveness just continued to help you to thrive, it sounds like.

MR. WINSTON: It's funny. It has nothing to do with anything. Of course, when I still was in high school, I had chemistry as one of my things that I wasn't getting too many grades in it, so I made a little still. And this teacher was dumb; she had set me aside as the person to take care of the warehouse. And so I managed to take enough glass tubing home and bend me a still, so I could take wood from the wood shop, see, all these things; I always had something that kept me from getting my neck chopped somehow. [Laughs.] And I ran it through my still, and I never could really get a good glue out of it, but I was able to take sawdust and get a glue enough to get a C in science.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Nothing wrong with that. Nothing wrong with that.

MR. WINSTON: And so I've always done that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It seems to me I remember that you did workshops, too, around the country.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes. Yeah. Once I got into lost-wax casting, then I built the equipment for it, because the equipment was not being built properly. And I took a whole roomful of stuff down to Florida in my truck, my big truck, and delivered that and got paid for that. And I did all kinds of workshops. I'd go down to Texas. I did a lot in Texas. There's quite a nice organization down there on jewelry, and then nobody was teaching lost-wax casting, so I would go down from Arizona down to Texas and put on another demonstration or two.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And your work had been in books by then, and people were reading about you?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Is that how they learned about you?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Well, yeah. It wasn't from shows so much. Yeah, I guess because I was putting on lots of shows, contests, you know.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You entered a lot of competitions and that sort of thing?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, all over. And actually 1945 was the first time anybody had shown any lost-wax casting.

MS. BAIZERMAN: In '45?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. In San Francisco. And at that same time, I opened a shop right across from the under-town garage. What is that? Anyway, there in a store which had a lot of things that they sold, they asked me if I'd put in an exhibit of lost-wax casting.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Was that a jewelry store?

MR. WINSTON: No. Actually, they sold models, dummies and little models of things and so forth. That was 1945, and that was the first time anybody had exhibited at the present time lost-wax casting. So that I think it was from that that I got an invite to exhibit up in Minneapolis. What is it?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes. The Walker Art Center.

MR. WINSTON: I think it was after that, that that came on. And I did a lot of things. I was-where was it when I did that thing that's hanging on the wall there? Was it then? No, they chose me, one of 19 people in the United States who had contributed much to jewelry and so forth. And it was rather interesting because the-I've got in my book the important names. Anyway, everybody had to give an outline of what they had done. [Laughs.] And the thing is, it had happened before, later on it happened, not one of the people that were in jewelry or pottery-mostly it was jewelry-none of them were wearing any of their wares. Well, I was known all over the country. I think they probably put me up at the top of everything. I went everywhere in a brown towel and tennies.

MS. BAIZERMAN: A brown towel?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, with all my jewelry.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh. I thought you were wearing this brown towel! I'm sorry. You were carrying your examples.

MR. WINSTON: Thousands of dollars. And, you know, I got business from deep into San Francisco to deliver a piece, and I wandered everywhere with my brown towel. And so it spread a lot of publicity because this idiot is walking in the wrong sides of town with lots of jewelry. So I did a lot of crazy things like that, well planned. I hardly ever did anything that wasn't planned.

MS. BAIZERMAN: There was something I read-what did it say? I ran across it today. Just a second. Oh. "San Francisco's Most Professional Eccentric." [Laughs.]

MR. WINSTON: That's right. That's right.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I thought, oh, you probably were pretty proud of that!

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes! I worked on it. I planned all kinds of things. Like the two little old ladies that-that's been published-came up to the counter, and that was on Chinatown there, and they put rings on their fingers and they said, "Oh Bob, they're so beautiful, but they're a little loose; can you tighten them up?" And I reached down underneath and brought a hammer up and I said, "You just put your finger down there and I'll hit it, and when you put the ring back on it, it'll swell up right to it." [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: The finger will fit the ring.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And I went up to-and that, I don't think has been published, but after an art festival, we went to Top of the Mark, whatever hotel that was in --

MS. BAIZERMAN: The Mark Hopkins, yeah.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Anyway, I started wearing toe rings when-in 1943 I started wearing toe rings, and I was wearing earrings in 1938, and I always was carrying everything in a brown towel. And I-

[End Tape 2, Side B.]

[Begin Tape 3, Side 1.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Bob Winston at the artist's studio in Concord, California, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, August 15, 2002.

So. Now, you were reminded that we should not forget to talk about Art Farm. And I don't know what Art Farm is or when you did that or anything.

MR. WINSTON: Well, you see, I being the way I am, dyslexic, when I arrived at Berkeley, then what was I going to do? So for a year and a half I never did anything, just walked around, in and out of classes, wrote everything down. Of course, nobody could read it, but that's alright; it looked good. I'd say to John, "I'll take your book in for you."

"Yeah! Okay." I'd go up there and I'd walk towards the door, put my little test in my binder and hand it to the doctor and walked out.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Walked out. Well, you know what? I think we have some tapes on college. The Art Farm, how does that fit in with that, then?

MR. WINSTON: Well, I was getting around to that. You see, I got to know a lot of people in the university that way. And I had-which we've already mentioned-two courses, one on public speaking and the other one on psychology. So that then, by some hook or crook, I got to be a member of the university, and I still don't know that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That was the miracle part.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. [Laughs.] And so then I graduated. And we also mentioned the fact that I was teaching a year at Berkeley High and then went to the College of Arts and Crafts.

Well, by that time I had, in 1942, developed an old thing into a new thing, that is, the lost-wax casting. And I had already done a lot of regular sheet work and that sort of thing, so then what do you do? You've got something that nobody knows anything about, and so what you do? You become an eccentric, which is what I-we mentioned the fact that I was San Francisco's first really professional eccentric. So then my name got around that I was doing a pretty good job of teaching.

And so there was a man-what's his name?

KERRY KILMER: Mirasou?

MR. WINSTON: Mirasou. That's the wine people. This is one of the older members of the wine part. And he had built up above Los Gatos a very fancy workshop for himself, but he built it also so he could have teaching people in. And I just don't remember exactly how he got a hold of me, but I certainly always nosed around. I had already taught-I can't remember which place that was-an extension course. Well, that was fine because with the extension, you're not beaten down by the administration, as long as you have your little slip that you're going to teach this way. So that way. So I had taught somewhere under extension.

So Mr. Mirasou had this wonderful shop equipped with everything, stained glass and glassblowing and jewelry, and he asked me if I would teach a class. And as I had before, wherever I had been, I managed to get university credit for it. So he was very happy to have me come down. I went right over to San Jose University at that time and got that class classified as an extension, and I did that for seven and a half years.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So if I understand you right, you taught an extension class at the workshop at the winery? Is that it?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: For college credit? They could go up-how nice.

MR. WINSTON: Yes. He built quite a huge building. As I say, he had glassblowing and everything, and he wanted it for him because he wanted to do stone chopping and so forth, et cetera. And so that the name got around that I was teaching extension, and immediately we had quite a lot of class. And one of the things was-this was-Mark [Mark was a student of Bob's who stopped by and then stayed for the interview], didn't you come down one time, one year? Yeah. And Janedare [Winston's current wife] got a hold of the fact, and learned lost-wax casting and sheet and wire and all that sort of thing, and she got credit for it. And so for the next seven years, off and on, she showed up at my classes, so she finally got credit at the university, along with her art major. So she graduated, the first and only person that has ever graduated from Cal with two-one art and one jewelry. And so that all tied up-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Kind of two majors, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, yeah. And it all tied up later when she started working for her Ph.D.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that's your mom [Kerry Kilmer's mother], is Jane-and is it D-a-r-e?

MR. WINSTON: It's all one word. There were two grandparents, one Jane and the other, and so they made all one big name out of it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So her first name is Janedare?

MR. WINSTON: Uh-huh.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And so it's a small "d"?

MS. KILMER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Janedare. Okay.

MR. WINSTON: Lower case. Anyway, she just stacked up-

MS. BAIZERMAN: You mentioned her name to me before. I've heard it many times and I always thought it was two names. Thank you. I'm glad I understand that.

MR. WINSTON: So she stacked up a whole carload of extension classes which allowed her to graduate in that way. So we went along for seven years, seven and a half years, and then I decided to go down to Arizona in 1959, I guess it was. And immediately they heard that I was coming down, so they wanted me to form a craft meeting of some kind. So that I did that, but the two halves of Arizona just-what is it? One is-

KERRY KILMER: Phoenix?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Tucson?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, Tucson. One is Tucson, and it's a family-organized city. Everything is around. But Phoenix is wide open and they don't even care about families. They only care about what the classes are. So it became pretty obvious, as far as I was concerned, after a couple of years of that they were never going to get the people. It was only 115 miles, and you did that in a little over an hour, so transportation was no problem. It just was that way.

Well, I had a couple of places in the Phoenix area. And then a big grocery store went to the wall and the whole thing was empty.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I think you mentioned that.

MR. WINSTON: And so that I moved in there, and my wife and I taught in the evenings, with as many as 35 people at an evening.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It was the high point, in a way, of teaching of jewelry, I guess.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Then we got so good that people started dropping the university classes because they could get the-as probably in other institutions, but Arizona has-if you graduate from, say, Phoenix or Scottsdale, and then you want to come back and do graduate work, then they start to deduct this off this and that. Well, everybody found out that they could take extension and get their teacher's credit and all that without bothering about the university.

So for years, my wife and I used to have as many as 35 people an evening, and that's a lot of people. And so then eventually the little guys over at the university figured that they could teach just as well as we could, and I

heard this rumbled around. So I took two of my best students and had them register at the university and sign up for the class over there. And the interesting thing of it was that at the end-of-semester exhibit they had, both of my people were in the lineup, and both of them in jewelry, and just what the guy was trying to get rid of. And so about that time, I decided that I'd just work on jewelry myself for a while. I don't remember the exact dates there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But you kind of closed the school down and concentrated on your own work?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And then one of the grandchildren signed up to go into the paper company to deliver papers in the morning, and pretty soon she was having all kinds of trouble, because the people that signed up for the paper-because this is just a little girl-they just found out they couldn't quite pay for it. So they asked me if I'd take over her route. And that went on. So finally it was a nightly thing with me, the night paper, and it went on and on and on. All that time, I kept up with the jewelry and dropped down, no teaching but just straight jewelry. And then along came the departure from there to California.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You came back to California?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. My wife at that time had a heart attack and died.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that was down in Arizona?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, boy.

MR. WINSTON: I had not decided what to do, exactly. And Janedare had-some people, kind of hooked people with bad-they were selling very good gold-mine papers, and Janedare did not ask me whether they were any good. She signed up for some of them, and later it became clear that the lady had taken people for thousands and thousands of dollars.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Kind of a swindle?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And nobody would testify against them but Janedare, good old spunky Janedare. She had a problem of hearing very well but at a slow rate, and legally she had permission to record anything on the phone. And she had recorded this lady, who said, "Janedare, you have to bring those papers to me because I am leaving the country." And so it shows up that the federal people got after her and asked Janedare to testify. And of course, Janedare says, "Sure! Right now!" Good old spunky Janedare. And so she came down to Arizona to testify. And then-how did that go? When she came down to testify, she asked the judge if she could play a little record because it was legal. And of course, that hit the roof! [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Case closed! [Laughs.]

MR. WINSTON: Oh, man! So Janedare stayed over for another week, and by that time we --

MS. BAIZERMAN: Reacquainted yourselves.

MR. WINSTON: -got reacquainted. So she went home and there were a series of things.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Then you decided to move back.

MR. WINSTON: To move back.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh.

MR. WINSTON: And then when I moved back here, then I went into really production on jewelry and so forth, and that's the way things have gone.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did you teach classes when you came back?

MR. WINSTON: Yes. I always have taught classes. Even yesterday this Oriental lady phoned me up and asked me if she can come over and take a course from me. Well, I said, "Come on over and we'll talk about it." But I'm sure-I get a lot of people that come in and they want to learn how to do jewelry, and once they take one or two lessons, they've found out that it wasn't the magic that I seem to get out of it. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. It doesn't quite look like yours, does it?

MR. WINSTON: No. And so then I moved into this-where Pleasant Hill has put in all that thing there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: All that?

KERRY KILMER: Housing.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, new housing?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. They put all kinds of amusement things and stores in there and all that. So I was renting from a dentist. And at about that time, in those days we were having a lot of rain, and the house that I was in-it was 1,700 square feet-it leaked and there was moss growing here and moss growing there. And they came by, the Pleasant Hill people came by and said that there was a problem acquiring that property and I'd have to stay there.

And I said, you know, "You don't pay me for moving out of here?" And they said, "No; when we get this problem all salvaged, why, then we can figure out a price." Well, by that time I had several people who had colds and so forth, and I'm thinking pneumonia is going to come out of there. So out of the clear blue sky I came down here.

This was just a bare place. This used to be a hospital, this whole building.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really? For people? For humans?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. It was not emergency, but for bandaging arms and-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay.

KERRY KILMER: Emergent care.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, emergent care. Okay. Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: So this was nothing. This was wide open, and it was 12 feet wide and 50 feet long.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Not too many people needed a space with that dimension, huh?

MR. WINSTON: At that time, no. Since then, they've rented and re-rented, and people have moved out, and now we're solid rented here, four, five, six people now. But I'm still here.

MS. BAIZERMAN: What year did you move into this studio?

MR. WINSTON: I came from Arizona in '86, '87, so probably around '89, something like that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So, soon after you got here.

KERRY KILMER: But you've been only here, maybe, four years?

MR. WINSTON: Huh?

KERRY KILMER: You've been here-

MR. WINSTON: I've been here four years.

KERRY KILMER: -about four years.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Four years.

KERRY KILMER: Yeah, here. He was in a studio in Pleasant Hill, before the city of Pleasant Hill took it and condemned everything, leveled it. So he moved over here.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay.

MR. WINSTON: Believe it or not, they sold the property and rented it. And some very bright young man had put in the contract that until the moving had been completed, they didn't-on the frontage, they didn't have to pay rent. So it was about three years before the moving. I don't know how long they got by with it, but I'm sure that anybody that could put it in a contract like that-so then I moved up here.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You've been here quite a while.

MR. WINSTON: Four years.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Four years.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And this is 800 square feet, and where I moved all of this in was 1,700 square feet. So that's why everything goes up the wall.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Layers.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, layers. It's been very difficult.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Would this be a good time to walk around your studio and just point out what you have here and just how it's set up a little bit?

MR. WINSTON: [To Ms. Kilmer] Did I give you my coin purse-box, so she can contribute? [Laughs.]

KERRY KILMER: For the tour. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: [Laughs.] You mean I have to pay for my tour? Oh boy. You know, I don't have my wallet with me. I seem to have left it at home. [All laugh.]

MR. WINSTON: Oh. Yes.

KERRY KILMER: We take credit.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Visa? MasterCard?

MR. WINSTON: Sure. All this was divided into six units, this whole building. And at that time nobody was in it. Of course, once you get a renter, other people have gone through, and it's gone through many renters. The man is such a crumb.

MS. BAIZERMAN: The landlord, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Oh. He is a Greek of the worst varieties. And he started out with me at \$800 a month, and I'm now up to \$1,200 a month, and I have no recourse. I can move out, but it took me three years to build this. There was absolutely nothing here.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Just an open space.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And he had supervised the building of this building, I guess, so everything was screwed up. When I moved in, there were no floor plugs that worked. And it took me two, three years, almost two and a half years to get the overhead lights turned on. And so it's been a hassle. But in my case, at the age I am, you're not about to go out and take another building every two years. You've just got to expect \$100 a month more raise on your thing.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. Well, maybe we could start at the door and just kind of walk in, and you could tell me what's here. What you use for your jewelry. I notice there's some things in the-

MR. WINSTON: Check with her. Can I do that?

MS. KILMER: [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: [Laughs.] That would be okay?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, sure.

[The studio tour begins here.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: I notice even in the bathroom there, there's scales or something. You must do some-

MR. WINSTON: Oh, I didn't know that. I tried to get rid of those.

All that there was, there was no building in here. This was here. Because this was a hospital, they had to-this happens to be this.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Was that an examining room, do you think, or something?

MR. WINSTON: No. That was just a-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Just a little bathroom?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. See, the thing has required like this.



MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, yeah, for wheelchairs.

MR. WINSTON: And that has to be exactly that way and so forth. I put this in here. Four years, and he's never replaced that in there, so I use other things. Then in addition, I built that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Lots of shelves here in this room, and a scale for weighing stuff.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. All my chemicals are weighed out here. I have my steel mortar. This makes the cones. They fit in there like that. These are small divisions of the waxes I use. The rest are all in there. And I have three different things. Now this purple-ever since I started, way back 24 years ago, there was a special wax on the market called Peck's Purple. I used to buy it in 25-pound things. And then I had molds, different shapes, and I'd melt them, put them up, and I was shipping those all over.

You haven't got to my shipping department.

MS. BAIZERMAN: No. I'm looking forward to it.

MR. WINSTON: I'm the worst in the world on that.

Now, when they went to the wall, people really had gotten used to Peck's Purple, so I went and developed my own, only I spell it p-e-r-p-u-l. Perpul.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Your product now.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I have redski and bronski ["redski" and "bronski" probably referred to the wax he made, red wax and brown/bronze wax] over here, the three kinds there. But that's done in here.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you continue to fill orders for these products?

MR. WINSTON: Yes. Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Wow. Good for you.

MR. WINSTON: I just got an order last night for 10 bags of my stuff. And that's \$2,000.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, that's a nice supplement to your income, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Well, nobody has ever-they've tried to imitate me. And I'm skilled in the way I've manufactured it, so nobody has done it. But these are some of the other places. When we moved in here, I just redid the shelves. This is a contemporary building, which I did not know about. I built three houses in my spare time, but I did not know about steel studs. Now they don't have wooden studs any more. So right here, right here, the day I was going to put my shelves on here, I came with my little nail and hammer trying to find the stud.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Trying to find the stud, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Sixteen inches, it isn't there. I'm going on, I'm going on, and get up to 20 inches, but my little nail didn't work. So then I discovered the only thing is, they just have steel, and these are put on with special screws. So what I did, I decided where I needed the shelves, and so then I got the right-sized bolt and the right-sized drill. And on the other side, on my wax side, all the shelves are being held with screws.

And then I knocked this-as a kid, a 16-year-old kid, I was making contemporary furniture for people, and here I didn't have my Delta saw, but with a handsaw I built shelves in there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You did that. It's a big cupboard. And the color of it, how would you describe that color? Shocking pink, maybe? [Laughs.]

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I guess it is.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's a really bright pink, anyway, with a yellow top.

MR. WINSTON: And little pieces of scrap made the knobbies, and then these are just like that. [Demonstrating.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it keeps the shed open.

We're going to move the bicycle now, Bob's bicycle, which he still rides. It has a blue-a red hummingbird on his handlebars.

MR. WINSTON: [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: I'm not kidding! That's really what it is!

MR. WINSTON: [Laughs.] Yeah.

Then the only other great thing, this was an office, eight by 10, exactly what I needed to work on my wax in here.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So this is the room where you do your lost-

MR. WINSTON: My lost-my wax work.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Your wax work. Okay. I see there's some examples on the table.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. For all these years, I've always bought waxes, but it took me almost eight months, I guess, to develop those and get them out to people. And they use it, and then they say that they're fine. The most amazing sale was-one of my former students from five years back, or something like that, phoned me. He said, "I hear you've done your waxes, finally." "Yeah."

See, I have 50. There are three of them. That's 150 waxes. God, I do one-spindle at a time. And so these shelves, all of these shelves are-

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is your library.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Many of the things came from where we were downtown. But then this didn't work. So then I had the pieces of wood cut and then just pushed in there, so you got a nice, good-looking thing out of nowhere, which is what I seem to do best of all.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Making something out of nothing.

MR. WINSTON: Then at Christmastime, I make Christmas trees, as you see there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I see, yes. Balsawood with-is it stained green? Do you stain that?

MR. WINSTON: That's airplane cement, like the model makers use.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And then with the-oh, so it's a mobile, a mobile Christmas tree.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. It's been up here for two years. This is a newer one. This is a real mobile. That is made with balsa also. I've made things out of wood for so long, it just naturally comes by.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You just do it, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yes. Then I moved that in. That was there. That wasn't there. That was from the old place over there. And this wonderful purple outfit here, that was a shelf from the other place with a resistant top on it. Then I bought a-

[End Tape 3, Side A.]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: You've got a couple of machines here. What's that?

MR. WINSTON: A drill, and this is a jigsaw.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And this is for cutting metal? Oh, a Dremel.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, a Dremel, for furniture I used to do. Whenever I moved, I moved my livelihood with it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. Now here's another room.

MR. WINSTON: This is where I-like the lady today, she'll come over and she'll sit down here and learn to do jewelry here. And I don't think she'll probably do very well. [Laughs.] So many people see jewelry in the stores and it looks so simple.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's right. I've made a little jewelry myself and I know how hard it is. But it makes you appreciate other people's work a lot more, too.

MR. WINSTON: And trying to teach them a good way to do a good job of soldering, that's probably the hardest

part. And this was all moved in. The shelves came out of the other shop here.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you do the wax work in the front room, and then this is more for filing?

MR. WINSTON: This is the metalwork.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Metalwork.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And then when I get casts, make a cast or something, then I have it up here, and I do all the finishing work here.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Finishing work. I see lots of files.

MR. WINSTON: Yes, all that. Then this is my chemistry table. This is where I make my Win-Ox that keeps me alive. Just like the \$2,000 order I got yesterday. And I buy the bottles and I have the chemicals. And that's what's so interesting about it, because I read in a book that there were two elements in nature which also had an effect upon gold. It was just a little thing like that. So about that time I'd been making this Win-Ox product with other things, and so then I rode around and I finally found people that could give me samples, and it worked. And that's 20 years, 25 years I've been making Win-Ox.

MS. BAIZERMAN: How many of these little bottles do you sell a year, then?

MR. WINSTON: Well, when it was going really good, it was 9,000.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, my goodness.

MR. WINSTON: I'm down to about 6,000. But now with the thing on-down on jewelry, I'm not getting rich; I have my big orders, like that 10 packages is \$2,000. This is the way I made my way through high school. That's my master's degree there.

As we mentioned before, they couldn't find any way to flunk me, because my projects were so interesting. When we were doing East European and Roman time, there was the [quay ?], and that usually was on --

MS. BAIZERMAN: These are like little metal figures? Or are they wood?

MR. WINSTON: I found that where I lived in Southern California, that the ties were a wonderful cedar, which is very nice. So I'd go out with my saw and saw

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, you told me about that, the railroad ties. So these little figures, which look like little --

MR. WINSTON: They're in many, many pieces. Each leg is a separate thing and each part of it is glued with airplane --

MS. BAIZERMAN: And these got you through high school?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you still have them. You've saved these for, let's see, from 1932, 1934. They look like little gladiators or little knights.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. That was greenwood, English greenwood, and this was the Roman-the Christian crossing, New World, and then the German thing.

My master's degree was-mentioned that I was given 18 different periods of art, and one of them that I liked so much was Giotto, which is in 1330, and so I did supposedly a monk, so-called. But I happened to be in the shipyards those days, and I got a nice piece of mahogany for the backboard, and then I developed ink according to the code, the coding of that. And that is what we call one-hair brush, Giotto style. When you're painting that, no stroke can touch the other stroke until it dries, and so you'd have your hand going up and down like this, all the way across and back and forth.

And I ground my colors. I made-the purple I got out of a manufacturing place, and it came out in a powder but then I had the powders. I got dust out of top of buildings and so forth. So I made all that sort of thing.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's a painting that's about, maybe, 12 inches by 18 inches, and it's a very finely done portrait.

MR. WINSTON: Yes. It's in the Giotto period, 1330.

MS. BAIZERMAN: A rich, gold background surrounding this seated monk.

MR. WINSTON: That's real gold. My Japanese man in the art department showed me how to do the red under-Armenian bold, it's called. And that was how to lay real gold leaf down.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Gold leaf. It's beautiful. Very nice.

MR. WINSTON: So this is my chemistry room.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Very nice.

MR. WINSTON: All that.

I only take two students at a time. And this is where they do their lost-wax work, and then they have to go through the other processes. And then I have my nephew, a paraplegic nephew, who has learned to do jewelry very well. [Laughs.] Like today he came in to do his classes; he bops in whenever he feels like it, so I had to send him home. And this is where usually I display some of the jewelry that I've made. And these are my watercolors.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's very nice.

MR. WINSTON: Most of those colors I have ground and made for myself, and it's called-

MS. BAIZERMAN: This one says 1945.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. That's gouache technique. That's a particular-it's not like the gouache you buy in the store. This is made out of a formula that comes from 1330. And these are pieces of jewelry before I was making lost-wax casting.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So these go back to your earlier career, then.

MR. WINSTON: Yes, back to 1948.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Two necklaces hanging on the wall here. History right here on the wall, really.

MR. WINSTON: [Laughs.] Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Tell me, what do you think about the field of jewelry today? You know, you've spent a long time in this field and you've probably seen some changes in it. And what do you observe, looking around today?

MR. WINSTON: Well, one of them is, I made the change. In 1942, I was just starting in the art department at Cal, and I read in there about lost-wax casting and that it was 7,000 years old. And I don't know how the hell they ever learned to do what it is. [Laughs.] It's hard enough for us. And then I went all over the United States, not all over but many places in the United States. I had a kit that I could give lectures at universities on lost-wax casting and so forth.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you were almost like a missionary going out to spread the word, in a way, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yes, I am. Yeah. I'm the one that started the thing, which has gone crazy. Now you can hardly find a piece of lost-wax casting, other than mine and a few others. Now they go back, they can do anything. They can take something like this or like earrings or rings, and they make a rubber mold of it and then they inject wax in those molds and they go on with the lost-wax process. There's hardly any people like myself in the business, except some people that have been in it a long time.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you start with actually building up the wax to form the jewelry.

MR. WINSTON: Yes. I'll show you that, too.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes. So not too many people do that anymore? So you-

MR. WINSTON: Yes, they do. Everybody. Everything you see in a store, every piece in a jewelry department, and hundreds of pieces of your car, are cast by the lost-wax process.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I see.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So that's 1950.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But it's mold cast, mold made.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Mold made-

MR. WINSTON: Well, that's-

MS. BAIZERMAN: -positive.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. As I say, in 1942-1945, I opened up in a store in San Francisco, one in New York, and that was quite a sensation at that particular time. At the art festivals, mine was usually the only table with lost-wax casting in it. And then that got to growing to the point. And then about, I think, around 1956 the flower children came along and they saw the lost-wax casting. And so from there on, you can hardly find a handmade piece of jewelry.

Everything you see in a jewelry store, everything you see on the street, not every one, but the greater part of it, is done by the lost-wax process. There is no real lost-wax casting. They make a rubber mold. They make a good piece of jewelry, then they make a mold of it, and they can cast as much as 60 of them at a time. I'm considered kind of a nut because I don't-

MS. BAIZERMAN: You do them all one of a kind?

MR. WINSTON: One of a kind, yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you've seen some changes, then, in how people-it's like you gave birth to this technique, or reintroduced it.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes. I saw it grow. I saw it grow.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. And then you saw it kind of become this more of a production technique.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. In 1948 there was a show, 1948, yeah; and then the next one was 1953. In 1948 there was a national show of jewelry [Walker Art Center], and mine was the only one there in the lost-wax casting.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Is that right?

MR. WINSTON: And there was one fellow in New York which was wonderful. He's dead now. But he was very, very good, but he really didn't do lost-wax casting much.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Who was that? Do you remember who that was?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, what's his name? I'm sorry.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's okay. I just thought if you-

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah, he was very good. But in the original show he was along with a few outstanding-there were a few.

Here's a piece of the sheet-and-wire and soldering that I haven't finished yet, but now if I wanted to, I could make a rubber mold of that and then cast them and sell them all over.

I was known to be kind of a snotty man. [Laughs.] I used to cover my whole big table like this, the biggest portion, with water-worn rocks, rotted wood, and beautiful things like that. And I would-oh, I've done that for years as a matter of fact-I would walk away from the table-people would come up and say, "Oh, Bob, we've just got to have a piece of your work." And I'd say, "Well, I'd be glad to help you with that. My things are out there and I have something to do for a second. I'll be back in about two minutes." And I walked away.

I'd come back, and if they hadn't moved anything, I'd say, "I notice that you didn't really look." "No, all we want is a piece of Bob Winston's jewelry." "Sorry. Goodbye." [Laughs.] Don't give me that. You love my rocks, you love my rotten wood, but you don't get my jewelry until you do!

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, yeah. Right. The whole deal.

MR. WINSTON: So I was always crazy, doing that to people, because that's about the way it is.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: These were walls here; door, door, and door there, and then I did all the building in here. And the closets were here, because there were medical things in that. That's about how it is. Here's my soldering at this table, and I still do pieces of soldering and so forth like that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did you ever teach at any of those schools like Penland [Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC] or Arrowmont [Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, Gatlinburg, TN] or any of those?

MR. WINSTON: No.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh. You had a different experience in teaching, really.

MR. WINSTON: Yes. Mainly, I don't like the attitude of a lot of the people.

MS. BAIZERMAN: In those schools, you mean?

MR. WINSTON: I make jewelry for people to love, and I practice that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And what do you think the other people do? I mean, how do you see them?

MR. WINSTON: Well, they're turning out professionals. And that's why my lost-wax has grown in other directions, because mine are the world I live in and that sort of thing. I have lectured at lots of places, in Texas, I think both ends of Texas, and then up where the gambling places, the state-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Nevada.

MR. WINSTON: Nevada. I lectured. That was quite a long while ago. That was before much of lost-wax was around. People were trying it, but they just didn't-it has to be very particularly done.

There was an international conference up in Washington. I've lost track of that. And there were 12 of us that were asked to lecture, and it's always nice to be "Winston," because you're the last one. [Laughs.] And so I gave a good lecture on how I made lost-wax casting and the examples I had on the table. And then when we opened up for discussion, this fellow said, "Damn you, Winston." He said, "You've just ruined half my life. I've tried to make something like you make, and I didn't know how to do it in lost-wax casting." [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Isn't that funny? So if he had only known.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah! Well, it was there, but nobody could-well, see, you know, all that training I had in high school in the shops, and I always tried to outdo everybody in the shops and also fit around people. And people just didn't have that attitude. Of course, nobody has had my attitude too much. If you want to make money, you don't get my attitude. Thank goodness, Win-Ox keeps me alive.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Keeps you going. Yeah, that's great.

Well, is there anything-do you want to sit down again?

MR. WINSTON: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Is there anything else that you think we ought to get on this tape?

MR. WINSTON: Do you want to sit where your purse is?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, okay. Is there anything else you'd like to make sure we have on this tape? You know, are you still doing art fairs? Are you still going?

MR. WINSTON: This was a rock show this last week.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, I see.

MR. WINSTON: What I really did-I had anticipated. I made an announcement about December would be an open house.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Like an open house here at your studio?

MR. WINSTON: Yes. But everybody came to the rocks, but nobody walked around to those of us that were selling jewelry. Well, I sold one ring, but I talked to a lot of people. I enjoyed making people conscious. I don't care whether I sell anything or not. I just love being able to read personalities like I can and hit them with a couple of things. When I get a good reaction to them, then I'll go on and give them a good training course. And the people-

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you're still teaching, in a way, aren't you?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah. I teach every day in the week. So much so, down at Lyon's Restaurant one of the waitresses said, "You know, so and so came by Sunday and you weren't here. They missed you. They found it

almost tough to order without you here."

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's nice. You were missed.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Well, I spend a lot of time reading people. I'll say, "It looks like you had a little bit of a problem last night. I see that you're sagging a little bit." And pretty soon they open up and I talk to them. And so breakfast usually takes me two hours, and my breakfast is two eggs and one full piece of French toast. And now I've got them trained that they serve me two bowls of fruit now, because the doctor said, "You've got to have more fruit." "Okay."

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you go there every day, or just on Sundays?

MR. WINSTON: No, I miss maybe a couple of days a week, and so I have all that stuff over there that I chomp down.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And then do you sleep here usually?

MR. WINSTON: I never sleep.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You never sleep?

MR. WINSTON: I have two and a half hours of sitting in the chair or-sitting in the chair taking a nap. About two and a half, three hours.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's all you need?

MR. WINSTON: No, I'm not saying that's all I need, but that's all I'll allow myself.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Is that because-

MR. WINSTON: Oh, there's so much to do! And I've got people to call and people to order stuff and so forth, and a night goes by until it gets to be 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning and I'm still right here doing things. [Laughs.] So then I sit in my chair in there and put my feet up on a stool. The doctor says, "Keep your feet up. You're supposed to do that." Well, I put a chair underneath my feet and-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Prop them up.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I have a soft robe that I just throw over the top of me.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So work sounds like it's still very exciting to you.

MR. WINSTON: Oh yes, very exciting! Even the dull show that we had this last weekend. Lots of those people-hardly anything was sold but rocks, lots of rocks, lots of rocks.

But I look at people and I know what they're thinking. And two ladies went along; they didn't even stop to look at my table; they went along like that. And I looked, oh, I knew what they were. I saw they had a pretty good piece of jewelry on. So on the way back, they came back; they went over there, passed up my booth completely. One was probably, oh, 55, and the other one was probably 65 or something like that. One was short and one was very well dressed and had some very nice pieces of jewelry on. The other one just looked like a friend that came along.

So I went over there and, you know, I said, "I'm really upset." "What are you upset about?" "You didn't come by and see my great pile of jewelry." "Oh, your jewelry? Where's that?" I said, "Right where you walked by and not said a word to me." [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: You got a rise out of her, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. She got a ring sold to her.

MS. BAIZERMAN: No kidding? You're a good businessman, aren't you?

MR. WINSTON: I know how to read people. They get awfully tired. I can pick what they're thinking, what they want. Down at Lyon's, I came in Monday morning, was it, morning? I walked in, "Well, you know those two little old ladies that sit over there? They were here wondering why you weren't here for breakfast." [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: [Laughs.] They missed you. Your fan club.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So that I still am the same as I always was.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Your life sounds kind of full to me.

MR. WINSTON: It's full. There's never a day long enough. Of course, after all, I'm not as lively as I was when I was 40. And my legs, they're still riding the bicycle all right but they like a little rest now and then.

No, I'm busy. I sit down and think a lot, more so than I did as a younger person, because I've lots more things to plan for. But I'm still just like I always was. I just can't leave it alone. I have to work. But the thing of it is, being so dyslexic and not happy in society, I did a lot more planning of what next. And then, of course, my mother was a pain in the butt there, but I took a lot of planning to work things out of her. She never knew how many times that things got done because I had my mind on something she was going to do, something for me, but I just learned to get-

MS. BAIZERMAN: To work your way around-work her to think that it was kind of her --

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, it's interesting that, you know, that many hours ago when we started talking, we were talking about your dyslexia, you know, and now we're kind of reaching the end of our interviews and dyslexia has come up again.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You know, it's something that really runs through your life that you've had to deal with every day.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, it's always been with me, because I have a desire to be something but I never can feel-I always feel I'm second class because there's something missing in me.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, I'm not sure-I know what you mean, but it's just you're unable to do certain things because of this.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I can't write. I can't spell. And I've learned to live in society where writing and spelling is an important thing, and I've learned how to go around it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: There's probably nobody-there's a lot of dyslexic people, but very few people that are imaginative as I am. And I've always made it work for me. I've practiced for days and days standing in front of a drawing or something-we never had paintings; we always had calendars-explaining how I would explain that, and always remember how to bring something up that people will ask me about and so forth. So I've lived, I would say, really a completely false life.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I suppose you could look at it that way.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, because when I see people or when I'm in a crowd, I have to be very careful that I read what I see and I know where to speak and where I can't speak. The lady at the restaurant over here-I think I said that. She got a wonderful job, so she closed out the restaurant. But she used to call me and say, "There's somebody over here and I'm not sure about them in my restaurant. Will you come over?" And so I would come wandering in and look around and size them up, and she would say, "Well, what are they like?" [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, really.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So that's what I did, was I just read my colleagues in high school and so forth. I got all kinds of stuff. I was thinking the other day, one of the things that is very interesting is that on their graduation, the annual day, well, the school had always hired somebody to do that. And I went up to them and I said, "Now, you've got a printing press out there, and I got straight As in the printing press, and there's quite a number-there's Morrison and a couple of others; these guys are going to be printers when they get out of school, so why don't we print our annual?" "We can't do that." I said, "You know, you've told me a lot of things that I can't do, but I've always done it." "Well, okay, you give me an outline."

And I said, "I'll tell you an outline, how I'm going to handle it." And we got a wonderful annual out, because I had a lot of bright kids that were academics, and so you just fuss around in the right way, you get all those things done. And I could run the press better than anybody had ever run the press. And I was a photographer, so I knew what I could get out of photography. And then I had all these academic kids. They all became teachers. I saw them at the 25-year gathering, and they're all dumb, dry schoolteachers. No life left in them. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.



MR. WINSTON: So that I just used everybody. And I feel kind of sorry sometimes I use people, because I can fool people into thinking that I'm bright, when they're the ones who are making the decision, and get out of the people exactly what I need. And I don't know half of what has to be done, but you get these people and you anticipate them and you get them to do all that wonderful work for you, and then it comes back, "Well, Winston succeeded again." And then I have to think, 'Oh, God, I'm being a liar again.'" I lived on lies, basically, but I couldn't help it. I had to be top dog, but I didn't have what was necessary for top-dog work.

[End Tape 3.]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Bob Winston at the artist's studio in Concord, California, on September 18, 2001, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Well, we thought we'd talk a little bit today about-

MR. WINSTON: We'll follow whatever you have, and then we can slip mine in there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay. Well, I think it would be good-you know, what we've talked a lot about is your education and your career in teaching, and we've talked about some of the other things you've done, but I think we should focus a little bit on some of the things that helped you to stay afloat as a jeweler.

We talked a little bit about Win-Ox, your formula you invented, and maybe you could just sort of start at the beginning of that, how you came to invent it and then how it's been a useful thing for you.

MR. WINSTON: Yes, it has been very useful. Oxidation today has probably almost disappeared, and with the sheet-work people, because of the other things we were talking about. When I started with Win-Ox-I was looking it up today and I don't have the exact date-around 1945; by that time I had gotten very sick of boiling eggs and then taking the yolk and rubbing jewelry and then washing it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that was how people got rid of scale, oxidation?

MR. WINSTON: That made oxidation.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That made oxidation.

MR. WINSTON: But it was a very dumb way to have to, but nobody at that time had any oxidation that really worked. And I read in a book, as I read books-I can't spell and I can't write, but I can read books. I read that there were a couple of chemicals in the world of mining that were by-products-they were elements, actually-that had an effect upon gold and silver. And so I wrote around-or telephoned; I never wrote; I always telephoned-to find out, and I found that those were available but very difficult, because they are very essential in manufacturing some things, and it took some materials, and one of them I found was very important in hardening iron.

And so I finally managed to find-in, of all places, right in my backyard-one of the smaller chemicals, [name of the chemical element withheld at the request of Winston's heirs]. And this is a very dangerous chemical. I got a little piece of it on my finger yesterday, and it burns like the devil. And it's not killing; it just burns. But I learned later that way back in history-and it's kind of interesting-that that was used to make black buttons on old-fashioned shoes. It was a black-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, to make it black?

MR. WINSTON: Make it black. But it had completely disappeared.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So they used metal, and they blackened it to make buttons for high-buttoned shoes?

MR. WINSTON: Black buttons, yeah. Well anyway, that's just a sideline to it, but it was very interesting.

So then I found the other one, [name of the chemical element withheld at the request of Winston's heirs], which is a very important element in the manufacturing of steel and other things but is very expensive. It runs about around \$2,000 for 55 pounds of it, which is very expensive. For that reason is why my discovery-well, I can't call it discovery; I managed to put things together and they worked. But both of them are expensive. [Name of the chemical element withheld at the request of Winston's heirs] is about \$100 for about a quart, so it's very expensive. But I found that it was important. When you put those together along with HCl acid, that you got an oxidation that was so much better than anything else that we were using. And so that was in around 1945, '50, or something, along in that time, right after I had started with lost-wax casting, which was 1944, 1942. And so I made up a few bottles and passed them around to craftsmen, and, "Wow! Wow!" And so then I started figuring out how I could do it in a mass-production way.

So that the thing that was interesting here was that, inasmuch as I'm dyslexic and I can't read, I can't write or anything, a lot of things, I got on the telephone, and reading-I think *Lapidary Journal* was probably the one I read, looked at the ads of people-I looked for ads who were craftsmen. And I telephoned around the world and I finally came up with 386 people who wanted to order Win-Ox. And so then I started making Win-Ox and sending it around.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So when you say you make it, [name of the chemical element withheld at the request of Winston's heirs] is a liquid?

MR. WINSTON: No, they're both powders.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Powders, uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: Powders. And they're dissolved in hydrochloric acid.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Now, you're telling me your secret recipe. Is this-you know, when these tapes are written up, are you worried that your recipe is going to-

MR. WINSTON: I don't think so. One guy tried for 15 years to do it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh. So there's more to it than what's in it.

MR. WINSTON: Well, no. It's an expensive thing to start with. The quantities are not available, and you have to buy stocks, 55 pounds of one, you know, and so forth.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it's a big investment.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Nobody wanted to do that, but when they could have little bottles of it sent to them in the mail all over United States and all over the world, then it doesn't look so expensive. I just sent one order of 240 bottles down to the Indians, which I really made mine to give the Indians, American Indians, an oxidation, because they did not have it. And that's why, a goodly proportion, most of the oxidation you see in the Indian jewelry is my Win-Ox.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really?

MR. WINSTON: I have two other places that order 240 bottles of it a year. That's almost over 1,000 bottles that I make out a year. Well, it was great for me because, as you see, it's just a little table back there about two by six, and I can make supplies all over the world. Now, I actually have two real good people in Indonesia, but I do have four people in Indonesia that I ship to, Win-Ox. And I just shipped to this one company 10 packages that I can pack it up and then they can add the hydrochloric acid. They have the formula. Those 10 packages are \$3,000, so that plus \$1,100 the next day. Then there's dry spells when everybody-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Has plenty, huh?

MR. WINSTON: But the Indians keep on buying it, but they buy smaller quantities. They buy 40. And this one company buys 240 bottles of it, but that lasts them maybe all year long.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So do they get a discount if they order more?

MR. WINSTON: No.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: They only thing they get, if they argue too much, the price goes up. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, right. That's part of your philosophy, right?

MR. WINSTON: [Laughs.] Yeah. Yeah. And as I say, this one person has tried for 15 years. I understand somebody said he sold a formula to France, but the main thing is he was too cheap to use a quantity of-and he could not somehow-he was a chemist, but somehow he couldn't realize in his place why he couldn't ever outsell me, his little bottles. So what I did-[laughs]-I went and bought one of his bottles, and kept adding water to one of my bottles until I got something that was the same gray color that he had, and I call it Econo-Black.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, really.

MR. WINSTON: And I put it on the market. I knew that it would never go. A few people would --

MS. BAIZERMAN: It just wasn't as good.

MR. WINSTON: It wasn't as good, and so I-

MS. BAIZERMAN: It was all watered down.

MR. WINSTON: He was never able to do anything to do with my market. So, along with all the other crazy works I have, it's a kind of a businessman in sort of a curious sort of way.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, you are. And how many years? Since 1945, have you been distributing Win-Ox?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah, but I started 60 years ago.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, that's almost 60 years ago.

MR. WINSTON: Almost 60 years ago.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Son of a gun.

MR. WINSTON: Those funny little bottles that for-I won't put that in, I wouldn't suggest it-for years I sent it with the acid in a bottle, which is strictly against the law. And then over a period of time, I got them all weaned to the point that I could send the powders to them and they in turn put in the hydrochloric acid. So at these days in time, I send all over the world everything in the powder form.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you take the bottle and you put the powder in it?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, I weigh it out. And then now this one \$3,000 one, that's in a one-pound plastic bag. [Laughs.] I put it in a nice little box, and she takes 10 bags of it at a time. A little box like that's heavier than the devil.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So then she puts it in her own little bottles.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Well, it's in Indonesia, where they make-

MS. BAIZERMAN: -lots of jewelry.

MR. WINSTON: And that particular person has almost the right on all of Nordstrom's silver jewelry. But she was interesting. She was working for another person from Indonesia, and he was a nasty person. He didn't know how to handle people. He bossed her around and he really-just what I said, sat around and sucked his thumb while she did all the work. So I talked to her and I said, "Why don't you go back to Indonesia and find yourself a little island, and you are a good metalsmith, but he's just working you to death and you're not getting any money from him."

And so she did. She went back, and a year ago I talked to her. She now has 680 Indonesians. She has her own piece of property-I don't know what you do with it-and she is also building six houses for her supervisors to sit there, and then they have all the other Indonesians working in their home. People like to work in their home.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, yeah.

MR. WINSTON: But she has these-probably the brighter bunch of the people, and she built them a home.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Kind of a cottage industry.

MR. WINSTON: A cottage, in her home. And so she's a gal who-and I'm very glad, because he was not a nice man. I don't like people who boss people and they sit on their hind end and draw the money in. That bugs me. I know, from that amount of Win-Ox that she uses, that she must be-and then she has in San Francisco-in New York-eight people working in her office in New York. Isn't that wonderful? It's so nice to see this. She's about 37 years old, I guess, like that, and she has a wonderful --

MS. BAIZERMAN: Huge business.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So that's a story of Win-Ox. It's just one of those things. I'm lucky. I am a very lucky person. I read. I don't read well. That's why I had problems in school. But things stick in my mind, and for some unknown reason I put them together and they come out.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's a great example. The Win-Ox is a great example of that.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes! I look at it sometimes and I just have to laugh because my little two by six foot table feeds the world thousands of dollars worth of product.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. Think of all the jewelry that's been made using your product over all these 60-

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah. The Indians use it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: -nearly 60 years.

MR. WINSTON: All the Indian stuff in the Southwest is covered with Win-Ox! [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Win-Ox.

MR. WINSTON: The two things I enjoy most is that I got Lois away from this rotten man, and then the thing with the Hunt brothers.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, you were telling me before we started taping about the Hunt brothers and the effect they had on the silver market.

MR. WINSTON: The silver market. That forced it up from-

MS. BAIZERMAN: When was that, Bob?

MR. WINSTON: In 1936, actually earlier than that, but that's when I started really making jewelry. And it was only 38¢ an ounce. And silver went clear up to \$80 an ounce.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Thirty-eight cents to \$80. And that was in the '30s?

MR. WINSTON: No, that was up in the middle '40s, I guess it was.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Thirty-eight cents to how much?

MR. WINSTON: Eighty dollars an ounce.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Eighty dollars an ounce. I just want to remember that.

MR. WINSTON: I scrapped all my scraps and sold them at that time and went out of business.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really? Just dropped out for a while, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And gold went up to \$800 an ounce.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Wow.

MR. WINSTON: It was a very disastrous thing for the craftsmen.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's amazing.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. But then it dropped down.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So this kind of thing, it's like things outside your control can affect your career, can't they?

MR. WINSTON: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you had to drop out for a while because your materials were --

MR. WINSTON: I still kept some of the Indians, but they dropped out. But it was interesting that I scrapped all my gold too. I got over almost \$1,000 out of my scrap gold. There's some things that goes along with this. Nobody could afford to-there were 386 businesses of my business dropped out because nobody could afford to do it at \$80 an ounce. When I started with Win-Ox in the early '40s, or 1942, it was a tough time to get people to try it, because they couldn't understand the hydrochloric acid; they were scared to death of it. But gradually it built up over time. I made labels and everything over that.

And then when it went out of business because of --

MS. BAIZERMAN: -the market.

MR. WINSTON: -the market, then about 1956, somewhere between there and 1960, there was what we called the "flower children." They nearly broke our hold on-other craftsmen-the hold of having shows in parks and so forth and selling our stuff, because they were making pretty simple designs but by quantity. And so they dropped the price down in 1956 on through to '60 and so forth.

Then by that time, I had spread the word for lost-wax casting on many areas of the United States and even in Europe. It was a really tough kind of thing because by that time-soon after I started with lost-wax casting-I started selling my stuff under the name of "wearable jewelry." It took me clear up to 1960 to get rid of making handmade silver jewelry like everybody else. I just moved out from it. In the early '60s I was selling, in all the art festivals, lost-wax casting and had quit making-silversmithing. And by that time I had a reputation as a very fine silversmith. I still was doing-I never did mass-production silversmithing; I did maybe three or four of a kind, while the flower children were massproducing it. Well, that was kind of fun.

The way we started art festivals, I think we were the first-certainly in the West, and I understand there were a few very small places in the East-of actually having sidewalk shows and small places. So that spread pretty wide. But then when the Hunt brothers approached everything, the lost-wax casting didn't have a strong enough hold. The market wasn't there. So people started to do more sheet work, sheet-and-wire work.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Let's go back just a minute, because I think we talked off tape about the Hunt brothers, but the story of what happened, what they did to affect the market, maybe you should explain that a little more on tape.

MR. WINSTON: Well, I'm not a manipulator. I know that they spent millions of dollars.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And they were Canadian, right?

MR. WINSTON: No. The Hunt brothers are Texas, Texas millionaires.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Texas. Okay.

MR. WINSTON: And they're very, very, very wealthy people. Why they decided-well, I can't say this is an iron fact, I know, but Canada for many years is the only place that made good sheet silver, so they were selling all over the world their sheet silver. And so the Hunt brothers wanted to get, being they were millionaires, wanted to get control away from Canada, and they spent I don't know how many billions of dollars. They never did get the control, but they had so much money they never went broke, too. [Laughs.] After a while-that's all part of history of metal-they went back to their few million dollars they had left back in Texas and forgot it, but by that time, gold went from \$800 down to \$3 an ounce, something like that. Silver went back down to 38¢ an ounce. So that then it took a long time. Somewhere along the line, Win-Ox managed to hang on. As I say, I lost 386 stores down to four. I had four Indian groups.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really. Uh-huh. They continued.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So I was way down the line in that time. Then I really began to develop my skill at designing unusual, one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry, which I've stayed-still am a one-of-a-kind.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. You've consistently done that.

MR. WINSTON: But it always left me just kind of a lone wolf hanging out there. But I did art festivals for over 30 years, and that was always a place that I could, along with my jewelry, sell Win-Ox, and I gradually built it back up again. It never got up to 300 even today, but I have my Indians, and Indonesians besides, that are my business.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Good customers, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. But that's the way it was. I mean the Hunt brothers, in the history of metalsmithing, is a dirty word.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Legendary in the history. I'll have to look that up. That sounds interesting.

MR. WINSTON: But it was interesting how then the flower children faded out, but by that time they had taught all the silversmiths like myself-not me-but all about having tables to sell jewelry. And now we have, like in Walnut Creek here, two shows a year there of the whole street. Two blocks is closed off, and people with cases of silver and so forth.

But Win-Ox has never gone back to such an absolute. They found that people like the bright and shiny silver. But then I've never lost my Indonesian and the one little store I have in Switzerland. I don't know where it is. She comes over once every two years and buys the Win-Ox and takes it back over there and so forth.

But it's been an interesting thing. So one guy-[laughs] --

MS. BAIZERMAN: One guy with a six by two table can work miracles. And now that supported you. You said that paid about half of your support. Half of your yearly income came from your Win-Ox.

MR. WINSTON: Win-Ox, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And so it made it possible for you to-

MR. WINSTON: Keep alive.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Keep alive and keep-

MR. WINSTON: I've stuck with my one-of-a-kind.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. And you've really been able to have your career as a jeweler.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Then while I was still way back teaching, first started teaching at College of Arts and Crafts-I can't remember the date, but I think it was 1952-by that time I had worked up a pretty good reputation for everything. And from someplace-I think it was the president of College of Arts and Crafts, but somebody put me in line to exhibit with 22 other craftsmen in the United States at Walker Arts. But it was not a Walker Art show, which started later. This was a Walker Art Gallery small show, 22 of us, and at that time was the first time-I was up against good people out of New York and well-established other jewelers, and here's this little upstart making one-of-a-kind.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That was in the '50s, did you say?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. I think I have that noted.

MR. WINSTON: I think it's in a book somewhere I ran across it, I think one of the things that she wrote. Anyway, that was in 1952, I believe. Then the big show was in 1958. That's when the Walker Art center really established their shows, and I did over 30 or 40 different shows. I was doing 20 and 30 shows a year.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And the interesting thing was, I guess, I am basically a snot at heart, I think. I just love to make people do things they don't want to do. So that I started really making jewelry, maybe 10 or 12 of a kind, maybe only one or two of a kind, in 1944, I think it was, when I opened up the first show I had at that time. I had three different shows: one in New York, one in San Francisco, and then one on the table.

MS. BAIZERMAN: One on the table?

MR. WINSTON: That was the art festival, and I think that was in 1944. I'm not sure exactly when it was. But from there on, I was all the way up. I did 25 or 30 shows a year. Over a period of years, I taught down in Texas as a visiting professor. I taught-

[End Tape 4, Side A.]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B.]

I acquired four or five wives along the time. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: In succession, I hope. [Laughs.]

MR. WINSTON: Yes. I think during that time I had married three wives. As a matter of fact, I taught for seven years, seven and a half years, for San Jose State College.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Was that when you came back from the Southwest?

MR. WINSTON: Yes. No, that was before I went to the Southwest. See, rather than teaching at universities per se, I taught extensions, because that way I don't have to deal with the dumb administrators.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, all that bureaucracy.

MR. WINSTON: [Laughs.] Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, could we go back a minute to the art fairs, though? I would really like to-you know, some artists like to do art fairs and others don't. Can you tell me what you liked about it or what kept you at it for so long?

MR. WINSTON: I'm a built-in show horse, I think. I love people. And I did strange kinds of things. In the earlier

days, lost-wax casting was like a sore thumb. For the first eight years or six years or something like that, I'm not sure, I had to continue to make sheet and wire and also made lost-wax casting, because no one would-in the early stages, like in 1944 when I opened up in San Francisco in a little art store there, people would come by and they'd pick it up and they'd say, "Winston, what are you doing? How come you're not filing that smooth like all the rest of it? You've got to go back to it." And I stuck in it.

What I did, what I do is-I love people. People are such animals, basically. They're a stupid bunch of animals. On my art table-and I always had a bigger table than anybody else because I had piles of beautifully polished stones, natural stones, natural pieces of wood, parts of trees that had been-with wind and so forth. I'd have it all over my table, and into it was my jewelry.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You made this display with natural things.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And so people would come up and say, in the earlier days-I could hardly sell any jewelry, lost-wax, for the first five-because I had a reputation for my sheet-and-wire jewelry. I was top dogs in that field, but that wasn't fun like lost-wax casting. And so they'd pick up one of my pieces and they'd say, "Winston, when are you going to go back to your nice, smooth jewelry?" [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: And then I finally got a reputation for my jewelry, and then people would come up and say, "Oh, Bob, we just heard about you. We want a piece of your jewelry." And I'd say, "Well, fine. Now, I have to do a little something over here, and you just look over the things and see what you really like." And I'd come back and they hadn't moved anything, they hadn't picked up anything. I'd say, "How come you?"-"Well, we don't care; we just want a piece of your work." "Sorry. Go away. I don't sell to people who just want my piece of jewelry. I want you to love my jewelry." And I still am that way.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: So I built up a reputation that way. And so it always-as jewelry will, things swing up and down, up and down. Sometimes they don't, sometimes you like. But I always had people, when they came to my table, they picked it up and they loved it, or they could buy it.

I remember a group of people, and this very lovely lady and this very delightful young man who obviously were very much in love with each other. And they picked up this piece of jewelry, a ring it was, and, "Oh." They came back every day to look at it. They came back. They didn't say they wanted it because it was mine; they loved it.

And then the next year they came over all the way from Stockton to the art festival to see if I still had the ring. And I did. They put it on. She put it on. She wore it. So all through the show-I think that show was about a six- or maybe five-day show. I know it was a long time. Every day they were back to look at it. And so the last day, they came over and I said, "Now it's Sunday. It's the end of the show now. You can come over and see it for the last time."

And so when they came over and they picked it up, I had it all packaged up in a box for them. And I said, "You take it with you."

"Oh, we can't afford it. We just love it. We can't afford it."

I said, "Whenever you have some money sometime, here's my address."

They said, "Well, here's our name."

I said, "I don't want your name. I just want-this is my address, and whenever you any money." It took them seven years. They finally paid for the ring.

MS. BAIZERMAN: No kidding?

MR. WINSTON: So I always had fun doing things, and my tables were always full of people having fun. And I've stuck that way all along.

MS. BAIZERMAN: How many years did you do 30 to 40 shows a year? How many years did you keep that up?

MR. WINSTON: Thirty years.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really. And so what did you do? You were based in California by then?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, wherever I could-no, Texas. I went down for shows in Texas and over in Utah, Arizona.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So was that after you finished teaching, you did that?

MR. WINSTON: In those days I was making jewelry, and I was always teaching. I was born into teaching, I'm sure.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So what decades were you doing that?

MR. WINSTON: I'm just trying to think of them. I started traveling in 1955, and I did that traveling clear up to 1970, I guess. I moved to Arizona-what date did I move to Arizona? Anyway, they were just waiting for me to get down there, because they thought I could organize everything.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right. We talked quite a bit about that, I remember. Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: I told you about that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. But could we-just bear with me with the art fairs.

MR. WINSTON: Sure.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So tell me what you would do. Did you have a van that you lived in? What was it like for you on the road?

MR. WINSTON: [Laughs.] Well, in the earlier days I had a pre-war Jeep. The original jeep was made for small farmers to plow with. It was much heavier than the army Jeep. And I did a lot of traveling in that, more locally.

That was interesting because I equipped that Jeep with a solenoid that had a bell. That was in the days when signals went up and down, said stop and go. I made this solenoid so I could trip a bell that would sound just like a signal bell. Then I'd get into traffic, heavy traffic. The Russian dog used to salivate, you know? They'd maybe cut across the street this way and you can't get through; I'd ding the bell, and, true to form, they'd stop and let me go through.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really.

MR. WINSTON: I did crazy, wonderful things like that. So it was hard for me to keep track of-I enjoyed life so much. Somewhere along the line, I had a wife and a son and they lived right along with me. And so that gradually, I got such a good reputation that people started writing and dropping in my studio. I always had a studio of some kind. I lectured at universities and at schools, and for seven and a half years, I taught for San Jose, up in the hills above Los Gatos. They had a big studio up there, and my wife and I taught-not the present wife, but my wife and I taught together, and she followed me around for years, because I always taught extension. And she turned that into the university and finally got her master's degree. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, yeah, you told me about that, yeah, that she took all your classes and that was really great for her.

So you just traveled and did all these things, and-

MR. WINSTON: Yes. And when I went to Arizona, it was even worse. There, everybody was waiting for me to do something with Arizona. Well, you couldn't do anything because Arizona-and I think you have it in the notes there-that Tucson are family-oriented and Phoenix is commercially oriented, and you never could get anything to cook between the two of them.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right. So that was a lost cause.

MR. WINSTON: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, tell me, could we look for a little bit at the big picture; you know, kind of looking back over your life, the things that you look back on that just meant a lot to you, that were highlights of your career and your work?

MR. WINSTON: I enjoyed my work. My work is my life.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Is that right?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And it still is my life. I had a family. My wife at that time had four kids, five kids or something like that, when I married her, and I still keep track of the kids. But I always married-except I made two mistakes, they were not craftsmen-but I married craftsmen so that we would have fun together.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that was five different wives, was it?



MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Four wives.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Four wives. Okay.

MR. WINSTON: I went back and married the middle one. My one wife I lived with 27 years. But she wouldn't quit smoking, so she passed away. And I won't go into that. That was another crazy thing. I went back and picked up Janedare and-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Your current wife, yeah.

MR. WINSTON: So that's the way we are.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you made sure you married craftsmen so you could be in that world together, because your work-

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. They all worked with me. We were always a part of a-I've always worked as a group, a group of two.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you really made the best choice of a career somehow, didn't you?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Well, being sick for so many years, I wasn't me. It wasn't fun. I finally walked away from my mother, and I got away from that narrow-minded individual, got up into Berkeley, in the early days of Berkeley.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You became free, didn't you?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I became quite a free person.

When I went to Arizona, by that time I'd started to build my commercial-I don't know what you want to call it. I still sent things all over the United States. I developed a soap called For This, For That, and For Other Things. That was before some of the investments we have these days for casting. You had to have a substance on wax that the water would-the investment would adhere to it.

And I also-that's when what I called Bubble-Be-Gone-that was wild. I always had ideas. Bubble-Be-Gone was very expensive. I've forgotten what they called it commercially. That was the commercial name. I finally found out that a lot of craftsmen were trying to turn out-they have to have what's called a surfactant. It makes the wax-every craftsman around was trying to find out a way to beat this expensive stuff, and it didn't work. And I remembered an interesting thing, way back many years before, that smelt like what was in this commercial stuff that they were selling at such an expense. And I went around smelling, and-[laughs]-I smelt so many bottles, one day I got looped.

MS. BAIZERMAN: [Laughs.] You got high on bubbly stuff.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I couldn't make it out of the store. But I did discover that the United States government, in order to-alcohol's a very useful product, but if they make the ethanol, which is what alcohol is that you drink, the fine per gallon is tremendous. It's like \$35, \$40 a quart.

MS. BAIZERMAN: For a tax, kind of, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, a tax. And I found that-and I have no idea, I don't remember how I found out-that there was something called Alcohol 19. And I wrote around, and finally a letter came from the government saying that it was available in San Pedro, out in Arizona. I had a big yellow truck.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, I think you told me about this. And you went and picked it up.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And so things like that were very important.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And then you invented.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, I invented it. Well, I didn't invent it. They just kept it secret so nobody knew how to make it, and I broke the ban on it. And that was Bubble Be-Gone. And I had the Soap 444, and what else?

Well, anyway, I used to drive-I told you the other day, I drove 2,800 miles in four days on the West Coast selling these things. [Laughs.] But I had fun. I never worried about whether I had food or not, but I always found out that if you didn't worry, things would be there. So I put thousands of miles on my truck selling all these products. And one time I rented this-I think it's in our other day-this empty store, big store building. So in there I had sometimes eight people mixing soap and mixing with --

MS. BAIZERMAN: And this was soap that was for jewelers?

MR. WINSTON: Well, no, it turned out that it was just a wonderful-I sometimes never knew why I had it. One lady used to write from San Diego for two and three pounds of it because it was the only soap that turned her son's tennis shoes white. I can't even remember why we used it. It was necessary for something, but I don't remember about that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So looking back, do you look at your life-was there anything you would have changed, or do you feel like it came together for you in the right way?

MR. WINSTON: Well, you see, having died several times in operations and all the things-the operations on my ears and so forth-it was so much fun not worrying about anything. You get to the point where if you come to dying, so close, then why worry about that? Have fun with it. Obviously, the number of wives I had kind of would speak for that. [Laughs.].

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. That's right.

MR. WINSTON: The wife I had for 27 years, she was a real doll and a wonderful craftsman. But then Janedare followed me for many years around. Everywhere I was teaching extension, she was collecting-learning about jewelry and turning that in to the university. So when she finally graduated from university, she was the only person that has ever graduated with an art degree and also a jewelry degree, because she had all those units.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. So you have no regrets, it sounds like.

MR. WINSTON: I have no regrets. I have no regrets.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And it sounds almost like you had as much fun with your inventing and figuring out things as you did from jewelry making.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes!

MS. BAIZERMAN: That both were kind of equally important to you.

MR. WINSTON: Yes. Each rubbed off of the other. But it's the salesman that was-was me.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Consistent with both of those.

MR. WINSTON: Talking to people. Talking to people. I love people. And I think people are such idiots most of the time. And I worked lots with people in a psychological way to get them into jewelry, and I taught a lot of people to use their spare time making jewelry and so forth, and made life happy for people. And what I was working was always to make people happy. Some of my ways were a little strange; I don't think they would work on a psychology book, but of course, then my son turns out to be psychiatrist. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, that's right. How do you think that happened? Did you influence him?

MR. WINSTON: No, I don't. I think he was, when he was in college, was always interested in psychology. And of course, he's quite a boy now these days.

MS. BAIZERMAN: How old is he now?

MR. WINSTON: He's 56. He's the same age as your bracelet. I made that in 1948.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Is that right? Is that right?

[Explaining the bracelet reference] Bob is speaking about a bracelet that he made that ended up in my supplies and got taken back to the museum. It's going to be returned to him, though-for the record [bracelet was returned and is now part of the Renwick Collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum].

MR. WINSTON: But that's the way it was.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Now, you've been thinking a lot about things that you wanted to be sure that were included in our talking together.

MR. WINSTON: Well, I've covered them now.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay. Good. And I think I've pretty well covered my list, too. This has been a fun process. We've had some good talks, haven't we?

MR. WINSTON: I bet you've never come across anybody that-[laughs]-

MS. BAIZERMAN: You are a unique individual.

MR. WINSTON: I am indeed. That's the interesting part. I know that I'm an interesting person because-apparently I knew from the beginning that I was dyslexic-I didn't know why-because I just could not do what people did in school.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you knew you weren't dumb.

MR. WINSTON: No.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You knew you were smart, but you just-

MR. WINSTON: I always wanted to be ahead. I always wanted to win. But how do you do that? Well, you become an eccentric. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Remember that article that said you were a professional eccentric?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah! [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's a pretty good description.

MR. WINSTON: I spent an awful lot of time developing all these crazy patterns that would amount up to something, and I could get the other things. I'm a made person in many respects.

MS. BAIZERMAN: A self-made man, in a way, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you sort of decided what kind of image you wanted to create or something like that, or what kind of person you wanted to create.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Well, when I got out of Cal and I looked back, and I realized that by that time I'd been working so hard getting through school, but then if I looked back, I said, you know, I always get by by being eccentric, so why don't I become San Francisco's first really professional eccentric, which I was for years and years and years and had a lot of fun. I did a lot of crazy things, but never anything that was harmful, but things that played upon the stupidity of people, in many respects. I love people, but they are kind of dumb when you come right down to it. They're so short-lived. They don't realize-they make themselves limited because they can't open up.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You really say what's on your mind and are open to things, and a lot of people aren't so much that way.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah. On the Cal campus, even in those days-there were some pretty wild people there, but the profs liked me because I'm very solidly founded upon information, and I make sure that whatever I do is based upon fact, even though I change it around a little bit so nobody recognizes it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. You have a lot wisdom and experience to draw on when you approach a problem, I think.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, it's been interesting spending time with a professional eccentric.

MR. WINSTON: [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's been a real pleasure to meet you and hear about your life. I really enjoyed it.

MR. WINSTON: Well, I'm not egotistical about my life. My life is fun, and I try to get people to understand that they can have fun.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You're a good model for other people, I think.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. I try not to harm things. Everything has got kind of a lovable connotation to it. But I love-

[End Tape 4, Side B.]

[Begin Tape 5.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Bob Winston at the artist's studio in Concord, California, on October 10, 2002, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Well, Bob, I told you that one of the problems I had when I went back and listened to the tapes was that one of our tapes was very garbled. It was like we were both talking underwater. And it could not be understood.

MR. WINSTON: [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: So what I'd like to retrace with you-fortunately, it's been a few weeks, so we haven't talked about it real recently. But I'd really like to hear again about your days of-you know, the story of how you got to be a student at Berkeley we've covered really well, because that was a struggle. And then there came a point where you were actually a student and you transferred-was it from political science?

MR. WINSTON: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You left political science. Maybe we should start there. You were a political science major at UC Berkeley.

MR. WINSTON: Well, my mother was the first woman agent in Traveler's Insurance Company in the world, and she was a very tight-minded lady. Maybe after my father had passed away, she assumed that at the age of 16, she had the complete growth of me, lock, stock and barrel, and she was a very narrow-minded person. So I was a very free-minded individual, to be able to live. And the doctor friend, Dr. Davis, a very wonderful-open-minded, experimental, in the osteopathic world-said to her that she had to give up. So I was shipped off with a friend to Berkeley.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Now, let's see. I think we've recorded about the early days at Berkeley.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Yeah. Well, okay.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So, what-

MR. WINSTON: Then we'll lead in there in a second.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay. Okay, great.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. We've gone over my year-and-a-half stay at Berkeley. And I was ready to graduate in econ and political science, and I thought-well, being dyslexic as I was, I just always had a lot of friends. I couldn't keep up writing so much, but I learned to talk very carefully. And so somebody said, "Well, why don't you go over and take some art training?" And so I am ready to graduate in econ and political science, and I was high senior and had struggled through many ways of getting there. And I went over and looked at the chart of the professors, and this one I had heard lecture, and that one I had heard, and they were limited-minded. And then I had listened to a very soft-spoken, very lovable kind of young man who was a professor, John Haley, a painter and very much interested in the rest of the world, but in the art department in those days there was not much available.

So I looked at all the rest of them. Finally, John Haley was what I was going to sign up with, and so I signed up with him for Art 1, Art 2 later, and went to work in his classes. And the more I tried to draw, and being dyslexic-which I found out, later at 22 I found I was dyslexic-that something was different in my stuff. But it was kind of nice-John Haley was kind of a soft-spoken Irishman, and we talked about Irish background and so forth. And one day I decided I had to go see John, and I went over to see John. And he said, "Bob, how are you?"

I said, "Well, I came in to drop my art training." I said, "You always have something nice to say about me, but my work does not look like anybody else's."

And he said, "Well, of course I realize you had no art training in your family, so why don't we go over to the library and look at things?" And so to the art department library we went over, and he started out and I said, "You know, John, you always have something interesting about my work. It's neither good, bad or-bad; it's always just like it's more interesting than anybody else's." And so he opened up and he finally came to this very colorful, violent kind of a painting. And I looked at it and I said, "John, how does anybody get anything ever published? That, it just isn't like anybody else's, and it's scrubbed on and the colors clash." But I said, "I like the way they do that, but does anybody do this?"

"Oh, yeah," he said. "And do you know who that is?" And I said, "No." I said, "I don't know how I would ever think of that, that way." He said, "Well, that's van Gogh." [Laughs.]

From there we went on through this, that, and the other one, and finally came to these wonderful, wild things. I said, "John, it looks just like my stuff! But I don't consider anybody would ever publish my stuff. It's different than

anybody else's and it doesn't look like anybody else's."

He said, "You don't know who it is?"

I said, "You know, we never had any art in my home." I said, "I always built things and I always made things, and the neighbors would come over and say, 'Well, how did you think of that?'" I said, "That's the way, in class, when I get in your class, how do I think of that? I just do that."

He said, "You really don't know?" He said, "That's Picasso." And he said, "You better come to my class."  
[Laughs.]

And from there on, I started to evolve into something different than anybody else in the class. I just couldn't think that way. So I went year after year with John Haley. And we talked because, at 16, I was building furniture, and at 18, I was doing unusual things in wood, without any training.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: It just came out.

So he said, "Well, I've got these things for the World's Fair." This was in 1938, or maybe late '37. He said, "It's a contest." And he said, "I've been assigned to do 18 different peep shows[dioramas], and," he said, "I don't even know how you go about a peep show." He said, "You've built furniture and you've built houses and you've done this and that; maybe you could just-could you possibly maybe ride out to my house in"-[pause]-there I go, I forget things. I'm sorry.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's okay.

MR. WINSTON: -"Richmond, up in the hills of Richmond, right along the water, to my studio."

I went out there, and there is this beautiful, very contemporary building right on the water, with all the beauty in the world. And so I went out every weekend for 18 to 20 weeks, I guess. And at first he said, "How do you start a peep show?"

And I said, "Well, you need to do this, and you have to learn to get perspective in it."

He said, "You know you and I don't really agree on perspective."

And I said, "No." I said, "That's why I've always come to you, because you have a different way of looking at things." And so until the Fair was ready to open, I worked with him. And he would make a little sketch of what he had in mind.

And he said, "Now, I don't even know how to-what is it?"

I said, "Well, that's this and that's this. This is something that overlaps there," and words I had learned since I was with him. And so we went on with our 18 different things. One of them was of the Panama Canal, and then a mosquito, and that really led us to some pretty abstract mosquitoes, with yellow spots for malaria and all the other things.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Could I interrupt you just a second?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: The peep show was like something you looked into, and it was like a diorama or a --

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, dioramas, in a way.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But this one you looked through a hole to-

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, uh-huh.

MS. BAIZERMAN: -see into it. Okay.

MR. WINSTON: You got a different or a whole perspective, whatever you want to call it.

And these were about, I would guess, 16 vertical [inches], 14 horizontal [inches], and in length around 24 inches. They were pretty good-sized things, so it gave you a chance to really build things, and so for the next-all those weeks and months. When we got to South America, well, we had a wonderful time with great big abstract mosquitoes, and a doctor who was abstract in shape and his eye projected down onto a microscope-and John

taught me perspective and what was wrong with perspective.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you learned a lot.

MR. WINSTON: I learned. And then eventually we started making our-in the dioramas, which he was very knowledgeable about now, but he would say, "I want to do this and that." And I went out to a brickyard where the dust was way up in the top of the brickyard, very fine, beautiful dust, and collected that for a red-earth red. And you could buy it, earth red, green earth, but I bought some in a rock show, some green earth, and ground that up for him. And we made a lot of our own colors.

And it was so wonderful working with him. He was such a colorist and such a soft, wonderful man.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Gentle.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, he'd always take out his pencil and he would start dangling it and scratching it on a piece of paper, and eventually he would do little scratch lines, and pretty soon a wonderful face, abstract face would come out, or abstract body. It was very wonderful to have that, and we became very-very close.

MS. BAIZERMAN: How much older was he than you at that time?

MR. WINSTON: Only nine years older.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So he was a young man himself.

MR. WINSTON: A full professor at nine years.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Wow.

MR. WINSTON: Of course, by that time I was 24, 25.

And so we won first prize at the-

MS. BAIZERMAN: And this was at the New York World's Fair?

MR. WINSTON: No, this is the World Fair on Treasure Island.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, Treasure Island. Of course.

MR. WINSTON: Treasure Island. Yeah, in 1938.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: In high school, I used to bend a few wires into a piece of jewelry and solder it. I did all kinds of metalwork, so I soldered it into. Then I started bending some of the wires like John had drawn-but he didn't know how to bend something that was three dimensional, out of a piece of wire. And we went on from that to a whole space world, which he was very wonderful on-on space.

And then Mr. Obata was giving me the Japanese world of woodblocks and so forth, and I went over and studied 18th-century Japanese woodblocks along with that. And I was taking it at the same time. By that time, I got into the university legally and I took anthropology courses, and I did a great deal of studying with African, especially some of the very-Watusi, wonderful people. But it was nice because John could point out to me this was a different way of approaching it, this and that and the other thing. And so eventually I graduated.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Would you call John Haley a mentor?

MR. WINSTON: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Would you say that?

MR. WINSTON: I've always said he's the one that saved my life.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh. More than a mentor.

MR. WINSTON: Well, yeah. At the age of 93, my mother was kind of ill, in bed but not ill, but 93. And she was talking to a friend of hers and she said, "You know, it's too bad Bob didn't stay with the insurance business." As I said, she was the top lady in the whole realm of that. But she said, "You know, he could have been so wealthy, and instead of that, he's just a poor artist."

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. She didn't ever understand.

MR. WINSTON: Never, never did understand. Of course, we never understood the day I was born, I think. [Laughs.] As I have said before, I ran away from home at 19 months.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, that's right.

MR. WINSTON: And I was working in a-playing in the tools in a garage.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. You were already a precocious youngster.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It sounds like, though, some of your gregariousness and, you know, your outgoing personality may have something to do with her. You know, salespeople generally have --

MR. WINSTON: I was everything she wasn't.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You don't see anything in her-

MR. WINSTON: I loved-

MS. BAIZERMAN: -salesmanship that-

MR. WINSTON: Well, her salesmanship was different than anybody else's. That's why she was so successful. She started right out without ever any particular training, except guided. And she was a very lovable person, but she was a very dastardly person when it came to something that was just slightly out of line. Oh man, she just-ladies that might be flirting with somebody else's husband were just death as far as she was concerned. There was no flexibility to it. And so that we were completely like-that kind of thing. But, as I say, she said --

MS. BAIZERMAN: You're nothing but a lowly artist.

MR. WINSTON: Yes. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: And yet that was what you really needed after growing up the way you did, perhaps.

MR. WINSTON: Well, the nicer thing-she wanted to be sure that she had me controlled. And of course, being what I was, she never did know what the other person was doing down underneath the ground, you know. And so that I learned how to worm her for everything that I needed to-at the age of about 10, I had paid \$5 for a broken-down old lathe, which I put together, and I was making tops and all kinds of-

MS. BAIZERMAN: I remember that.

MR. WINSTON: That's what we talked about.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: So all the way through, I would trade off-and I have said before, how she would want a rosebush moved and I wouldn't move it, but then when I saw something I could get for moving that, then I got what-

MS. BAIZERMAN: You figured out how to work her, yeah.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. So I absolutely lived that way.

MS. BAIZERMAN: What about Mr. Obata? Now, he used-

MR. WINSTON: He was Japanese-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right.

MR. WINSTON: And very famous, could have been much more famous if he had stayed in Japan than if he came to this world.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, really?

MR. WINSTON: And he was definitely-well, when the Japanese were put off to camp, they had to remove him, because there were lines of Japanese that were not as American. Mr. Obata was-I used to go fishing with him, and his hands were so fast, we'd go into a river and he'd shake his hands in the water, and up would come-he would catch a trout in his hands. He was very wonderful. But I was the only one that he really enjoyed. Of course, I'd been raised with Japanese and Chinese and Mexicans in Southern California, so that I had no feelings about who's who, you know.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. And this was, kind of, pre-war, right around wartime, almost.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Well, it started in 1922, actually, when we moved into the little ranch on the place, and then I had nothing but Japanese and Mexicans to-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, when you were in the country.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Five miles out of Long Beach, but at that time, five miles was like miles and miles.

MS. BAIZERMAN: At the time of Pearl Harbor, were you still in school then, in the university?

MR. WINSTON: Yes. In fact, my very close friend, who was a year older than I, which made us around 25, 26, she was a horse lady in her spare time. We were busy in her apartment doing one of the newest things we-she also was a very good friend with John Haley, and he had assigned some things, and we were on the floor painting when-Pearl Harbor. And of course, we were just shocked to the high hilt there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Then Mr. Obata did go into an internment camp, then?

MR. WINSTON: Yes, they finally got him into it, but he only lasted a short while because people-well, he was so American. There were a string of Japanese that were thought maybe America was all right, but their home-but he was Japanese and American-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Real assimilated.

MR. WINSTON: -from the word go.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And how old was he at that time, would you say?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, he must've been 50, I guess. He had a lot of fun with me because of my relationship with John and the fact that I ground my own colors. He taught me how to grind colors, and he would ask me, if he had a big wall thing to do and had to have colors, he would ask me to come with him and he would-

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is Mr. Obata?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, Mr. Obata. And so I'd do all the things for him.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I see.

MR. WINSTON: In fact, one time he needed something in coal black that was sparkly and that was ground fine enough that he could paint with it. And so I ground up a pound of tourmaline, which is hardness of seven, and I worked and worked and worked to grind that down, and then he was able to finish the painting with that.

So my relationship with Mr. Obata and John Haley more or less stopped right there, except once a teaching assistant, Karl Kasten, who at this time is still here, and then so forth, et cetera. And he's still the same very soft, pushy, kind of lethargical kind of person. He's just a little ways over the hill from where I am here.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's right. He lives in Berkeley, I think.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, when did the jewelry thing enter your life? It sounds like at Berkeley you were mostly doing painting, and were you doing a little sculpture at this time?

MR. WINSTON: Well, when I was in the art department, if one of the teachers had a need for a particular kind of table or chair, I would sit down and go to my little studio in the bottom of my boarding house and whip up what they needed.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you sold them furniture?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, I did. I worked almost all the way through Cal. My mother sent me \$30 a month. In those days that was fairly good. Cal was only \$25 a month or a year, or something like that. Then through this friend of



my mother's daughter, who was only-I was one month older than she, or something like that, and she was with the upper echelon, I will say. And so that I got to see San Francisco with them, and I saw that there were lots of things that I already did called jewelry, which I did for fun and so forth. And so-

MS. BAIZERMAN: You just came to jewelry like more or less just making things with-

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Is that right?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And on these trips to San Francisco I saw some jewelry. But being very alive with my hands, I thought, well, now it needs to be done like this, and so I started making jewelry in a very serious way down in the bottom of my boarding house.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So this was when you were a college student, in your mid-20s.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes. And a lot of the time-what I understood was wood-I made an awful lot of wood jewelry, sculptures and so forth. But thank goodness for Mr. Obata. He got me into very early Japanese woodblock cutters, and then John lined me up for African sculpture, and also in 1938, the first time they'd really been putting a lot of oceanic properties of all kinds, sculptures and pots and so forth. So all of that, I just grew up-because I couldn't read. I had tons and tons of magazines and books and so forth, none of which I could really read. I could read to myself, but it was always a real problem.

MS. BAIZERMAN: A struggle.

MR. WINSTON: And so that with all of the help of John and Mr. Obata, and my friends, I used to be-well, I have mentioned that already, how I used to have special phrases that people liked, and I would memorize those and then I would fit them in the conversation, and suddenly I would become part of the conversation. And then I would drop out, and I'd just stand there, sit there and listen to everything. It was like a sponge. This was the one thing, that even though I didn't read, I sucked everything else that could function as words that I could put to work, and I could always have little phrases that I could get into a conversation.

So with these people that were interested in anthropology and paleontology and geology and so forth-in fact, one of my friends, her husband eventually became-and which she had met in school-became head of the zoology department. So these were very bright-and I was not their kind of brightness, but I put words together and so forth and et cetera.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So would you say it was part of your education to hang out with --

MR. WINSTON: Yes. Oh, I hung out with everybody. I even wormed my way-even though I wasn't a Mason, my family was not, they were-what is it, three old people, anyway-anything but Masons. But I wormed it out so that I got a membership into the Masonic club, and so that put me with a lot more intelligent people. So I just joined.

And then already with John, the freedom that I had with John, and taking anthropology and things like that, I began to realize that if you were a very intelligent but a very different person, you didn't have to be smart. You could get into anything because you had a lot of information and put it out in very insignificant words and lines dropped in a conversation, and so probably I had decided pretty much by the time I left John that I was going to be an eccentric; that being an eccentric, gave you lots of privileges that other people-but you had to also believe in being, we'll say, somewhat straight about where you were fitting. And you had to be able to pull-and fortunately, with having anthropology, paleontology, geology, European-and it was when I was in the East European history class-I don't think I was even in there otherwise; I was just sitting in there, and I was in the art department-that I first got a good feel of lost-wax casting.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh. Okay.

MR. WINSTON: But there was nothing available.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you did see-you did learn about it at that point in time.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. In very East Europe and places, there's 7,000 years-that all came with the history and anthropology and so forth-7,000 years. And then wandering around a bit, I learned that industry was using it-that was right after I graduated, in 1940-that the industry was using lost-wax casting but they would not-it is hard to believe there were things like that in those days; you're kind of a late day-but you signed up that, whatever you did in developing lost-wax casting, you were not allowed to tell anybody about it. And being a nosy kind of rascal, I did begin to put together what you needed to have lost-wax casting.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: So by 1944 in San Francisco, we had the first-that may be plus or minus two-the first art festival out in the park-it was an underground parking place. And I was the only one in probably 25 or 30 artists, craftsmen, potters, whatever you want, that had anything that was different. And at that time I really don't understand-things happen to me like never happen to other people. I've been very, very fortunate that out of nowhere come things that I need. I guess I have kind of a radar kind of thing that just brings things out of people that I can put together. In 1944, I think, in '45-

[End Tape 5, Side A.]

[BEGIN TAPE 5, SIDE B]

MR. WINSTON: I was always lucky to have John Haley to back me up, and many times he saved my neck, because I did things that the art department didn't enjoy. And Mr. Obata.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Do you think John Haley really saw your potentials, really saw that you had something special going for you?

MR. WINSTON: He thought I was the greatest thing that ever hit-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really? Did he?

MR. WINSTON: -the craft world. Yeah. Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So he saw you as somebody-he kind of encouraged you in the area of crafts?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, my gosh, yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: To go into craft, do you think?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Well, later on I taught him how to sculpt and how to build wire sculptures and so forth. Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: When did you-you used the word "artist." You know, you said in '44 there was an art fair. Were you thinking of yourself as an artist by then? Or when did you first start thinking of yourself as an artist?

MR. WINSTON: I never did really think of myself-I never have thought of myself as an artist.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh. You were trained in the art department, but-

MR. WINSTON: I've always just felt that I was different.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: But I never fit anything. That's why, being an eccentric, I could get into anything that would make me a little better in something that I wanted to be.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: But I never felt that I was an artist. Even today, while I am kind of an old man in the jewelry world, I still am not really an artist in that sense. I've become an eccentric because it allowed me to do things.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And it sounds like you really enjoyed it. I think we've talked about this before. You seem to relish --

MR. WINSTON: I relished, I relished being an eccentric. It was so much fun. Because fortunately, somewhere along the line-I don't know where-in my makeup was an understanding of people, and I could control people because I was so very positive. I'm a very positive person. But at the same time I feel I'm not positive, because I feel that there's part of me that's not right, and that's the eccentric part of me.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: And so that I just used that to make myself work, but I never was-I always have felt that I was a craftsman. Not an artist, but a craftsman. And as has happened so many times in thousands and thousands of years of people making things, they were always craftsmen. Nobody was an artist back in the 1800s or the 1600s; they were all craftsmen.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did you stay in touch with John Haley after that?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes, many years I used to-he'd call me up and have me coming over for Sunday dinner or

something, or he'd drop by. We went places, many places, together. I probably went to more places with Mr. Obata, because he was such a fisherman. [Laughs.] I just loved to watch him fish. But no, very close. But really, while Karl Kasten was-he never really understood me, but he was a good buddy of John Haley, and so he tolerated me. [Laughs.] And he wrote a very nice piece of information for this, whatever you're doing thing. And so no, I was-outside of-

MS. BAIZERMAN: You mean like a recommendation?

MR. WINSTON: Well, I asked him to write what he thought of me and I filed it away. I think you got some of that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: But I just managed to-I was obnoxious at the art department. Most of the teachers just hated my guts because I got so many things done and I had no rules or regulations. But I would get things.

Getting ready for when I knew that you were going to or somebody was going to look up-I found, and I didn't realize, I'd won two awards in the big museum in San Francisco. I don't remember anything. I never remembered anything. I was so interested in being an eccentric and see the fun that being an eccentric was, and I fortunately had-I'm a lousy draftsman, but you put it in wood or you put it in wires, and I can do all kinds of wonderful things. And fortunately, John emphasized so much the importance of that so-called abstraction of Picasso's and where I could find it. I had reams of books and so forth. And, of course, I didn't read very well, but I had a lot of pictures. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: The visual.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. And so that's the way. And then I just gradually grew into it. And then of course, as I mentioned already, that I got into the university by-I have no reason.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, that story is-

MR. WINSTON: Two extension classes and I became a sophomore! That's impossible. But I have had an impossible life.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Could I ask you another question? You know, just like John Haley was a mentor to you, and Mr. Obata probably, too, both of them, and really saw something in you, and then you became a success-you know, you became well-known and people appreciated what you did-in your own teaching, did you have students, a student or two like that?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, I have. But it's awfully hard to find somebody that really wants to work at it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's as hardworking. Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: Yes. Yes, several people. And I've done an awful lot of people-I've got them started in the art game, lost-wax casting. And I have just one very wild person. He's really difficult to understand. He's a great big, tall man, aged just about 50 now. He's just now moved over to one of the western states and is setting up there. But he has become-not as wild or as notorious. I became notorious because how could this fool be-because the thing with me is I had to know and I had to be perfect in something before I could become an eccentric, and so that I didn't make mistakes too much of turning out poor things, or if I did, people never saw them until they had developed into something that I could get an "Oh! Winston," you know, and I lived on that particular thing.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, even now, this neck piece you have on today with the big stone, you know, that's one of those wild things, don't you think?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes! In fact-

MS. BAIZERMAN: The big turquoise stone.

MR. WINSTON: -one of my very best pieces of jewelry I put aside for this crazy, wonderful stone. It's a waterworn piece of turquoise, and it happened to have a hole in it, or a depression in it, and I found in my collection-there again, lucky me-I had that little crystal there was the exact shape of the stone that I picked up.

MS. BAIZERMAN: The depression.

MR. WINSTON: And all I had to do was just cleaned it up and glue it in. And then I had all these crazy snakes crawling around holding the stones in place. The stone is loose. When I was working on that, my mentor, my little nephew that is so wonderful-he now has his own card up on the-that's a wonderful thing.

MS. BAIZERMAN: He's your nephew that you taught?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. He's so stern. There's nothing about him, no leg, doesn't work, it just dangles, one of them, the other one-

MS. BAIZERMAN: He's so handicapped, or so disabled.

MR. WINSTON: So handicapped.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So disabled, yeah.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. He's difficult to deal with.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did he learn jewelry making from you?

MR. WINSTON: You should see the stuff he's got up on his-got his damn card in the world!

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's like a business card?

MR. WINSTON: No, no. On the television, one of the cards with paintings. And he's had people do the orientation of painting on there so his jewelry will fit into it. He's got, I think, 18 pieces is all he's got, and they're all good!

MS. BAIZERMAN: When did he start studying with you?

MR. WINSTON: Seven years ago, when his mother-well, he had nothing that worked. No legs that worked, no arms that worked. His hands were wonderful because he was a machinist, a specialist in machinery. And he first announced with me, he said, "I want you to understand"-because he has a tough time with speaking, too, with brain damage, voice damage, body damage. The only thing that really works are his two hands, and a brain that's as stubborn as a damn sculpture.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Determination.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes! And I have done more-at one time I had over 50 of my people that have graduated Arts and Crafts with me throughout the world as teachers.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh, 50.

MR. WINSTON: While I've done all these other things, the thing I am is a teacher and the training of teachers. And I'm very good at teaching people how to get themselves loose from whatever they were taught at home, who were constipated, as I say.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, in a way, you had to learn how to do that, don't you think? That you were brought up in a very restricted way-

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: -and you had to learn how to get out of that.

MR. WINSTON: Get around her.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And it helped your creativity, and maybe that's the way you have helped others.

MR. WINSTON: I'd rather you use not creativity, but imagination.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. Okay.

MR. WINSTON: As we've talked about it-that man is not creative; man is an imaginative animal.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: So I've tried to teach people to be imaginative and get away from all the constipation that their parents had done to them. And I have teachers all over the world, really in high places and so forth.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's great.

MR. WINSTON: But I have never been frightened by somebody that copied me. You see, if they could not open up and they were not too good a teacher, I dropped them, and maybe pick them up later. But I tried to teach people, with the freedom that I had, to teach other people how to do things. I've been very successful in lots of

people. I've had people who have been out-well, they've retired from teaching, who have come at art festivals and said, "Bob, you know, every day in teaching, I admired the concepts that you gave me, so that I had the freedom to be a good teacher." I have lots of things.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: That's really what I am, is a teacher. I just happened to have an ability to do some crazy things from time to time that people liked. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. So that's certainly been an important part of your life, hasn't it, all along?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes. Right now, some of my waxes now have turned into some very unusual pulling all my background into a couple of things I haven't even cast yet. They're so far out on a limb, like this thing. But even so, this thing with this rough stone in it, you see when you look at the other side of it, what it is is actually there's a piece of sculpture on the back side, which out of that grew these little stringers up here with snake's head and rattlers. And they hold the stone, but the stone is still loose. And there are lots of people who use natural forms, but they tie them down tight. And one of the things with me was stones that would be loose and-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Free, a little.

MR. WINSTON: -you'd find things that just keep it from falling out. Most of my jewelry, I say, you've got to understand this stone has the idea it wants to fall out, but it can't do it because of the way you set it.

And the other thing, fortunately-as we've had before-I was 22 before the word dyslexic came around. I've always been a teacher. I can remember seeing three and four men in my little studio, when I was 16, came over to help them design a piece of furniture. And of course, I built my first house when I was 25 or 30. But I've always been a teacher. I'm good at teaching. That's why I never really-I don't consider myself an artist. I'm a designer craftsman. That's why I always put my name down as a designer craftsman.

But I just can make things visually-because of the "dyslexic," I can make things so visually easy for people to understand. That reading in a book just-what I call it-just constipates them for trying to learn. I try to teach people how to enjoy the things around them. So I've been an outdoor man in many respects in that sort of way.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah.

MR. WINSTON: But I am very proud of me in some places, and at the same time I'm very sorry about me being so dyslexic. I've never really gotten away from the fear of having to go into a bank and sign a check. To me, that's the hardest thing in the world because my writing is so bad, and it was always so bad, that I'm embarrassed. And I'm embarrassed with so many things I do, because it all involves reading and writing.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's pretty hard, isn't it?

MR. WINSTON: Oh, man, and I was such a good liar. [Laughs.] As I've told you, I'd just pick out a couple of small words in a conversation which would bounce into my mind, and I could get up and give a half-an-hour lecture on anything that anybody asked me, but don't ask me to write something. They'd say, "Well, write that down, Bob." No, thank you. No, thank you. And it's just like a robe that goes over me. I get so panicky and-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Fearful. Uh-huh.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, that's-

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, because I don't want to be wrong. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: And especially in the days when you were growing up in school, you know, there wasn't any understanding of anything. So you really got wounded.

MR. WINSTON: Well, as I say, the teachers gave me Cs because they couldn't understand I did such wonderful things that weren't in the books, or I'd take the books and turn it into something wonderful visually.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You know, I bet if one of those teachers was here, they'd get a big kick out of your calling yourself a professional eccentric, because, you know, that's probably how they experienced you. You were different, and yet you made things work for yourself.

MR. WINSTON: Well, like I said, on graduation morning when my mother had breakfast for the 80-I mean, that was the class; it was a big class; it was 80 people-I looked up and here was my chemistry teacher saying-oh, I

can see it today. Here's her little car, she got out, and I said, "Oh, Ms. Griffiths, what are you out here for?" "Well," she said, "I came out to have breakfast, and maybe, I thought, I could take home my materials you have in your shop." [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, yeah, one of the teachers, huh?

MR. WINSTON: Yeah. Well, she made the big mistake of making me-in the chemistry department we had a big storage room, and she made me in charge of that storage room to issue to everybody else. Well, this is like-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Candy.

MR. WINSTON: -putting-a theft.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you issued a little more to yourself.

MR. WINSTON: Oh, yes, I did. Oh, I took all my chemistry pieces home and did them. And in chemistry, I could have-but she couldn't give me because I couldn't pass it, but when she'd ask, "Tell me about that," you know, this part, and I had big long lectures, even in high school, on things that I had read in the book and that I had made work. I made a distillery out in my little house and all kinds of things like that. [Laughs.] But everything was fun and it still is, as you can see.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. I can see you-

MR. WINSTON: I'm just happy with all the things that's happened to me. And I am also happy with me, but I also feel sorry for people who haven't that one little bright spot in their life that can make their-and they worry about a little lie or two, you know, and so forth.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. Well, you sure are continuing to have a good time. I can vouch for that. I think we've had a good time visiting.

MR. WINSTON: Look at that bike sitting there! [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: There's your bike parked right just a few feet from us.

MR. WINSTON: I'm 87 years old. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's a bright purple bike.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: How much did you say it cost to put that paint on there?

MR. WINSTON: A hundred and sixty-five dollars.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, customized purple bicycle. And handbrakes.

MR. WINSTON: Yeah, and a special seat.

MS. BAIZERMAN: A very long seat, long slender seat.

MR. WINSTON: Well, that seat's kind of interesting.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's a mountain bike, isn't it? The tires-

MR. WINSTON: Well, basically they could do that, if you were mountain people. [Laughs.]

But that seat, I have a strange body, because it was damaged or so forth. It never grew quite right, but I always made it work. And so I have a butt that doesn't fit on a bike. And so I went into the bike shop and I said, "Hey, I've got to do something." And he pulls out this one and this one and this one. And then he said, "Well, what about this one? It's long." And after I paid him-

[VOICE AT THE DOOR]: Is someone in there?

MR. WINSTON: Come on in.

After I had paid him for the damn thing, he told me he'd never been able to sell it to anybody. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, my gosh; isn't that strange.

MR. WINSTON: This is my nephew that I was talking about.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Hi.

We're going to wind up our interview now, but I just want to say in closing, since we're talking about the bike, that I sure hope you have many miles left.

MR. WINSTON: Thank you.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that you'll travel many more miles before-

MR. WINSTON: I think you're real wonderful to put up with me. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: [Laughs.] Well, it's been a pleasure, really.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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