



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Gertrude  
Goodrich, 2008 Mar. 13

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Gertrude Goodrich on 2008 March 13. Todd Snyder, Goodrich's son, also participates in the interview. The interview was conducted by George Gurney for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Gertrude Goodrich has reviewed the transcript and has made corrections and emendations. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

## Interview

GEORGE GURNEY: This is an interview with Gertrude Goodrich, artist/writer. Also participating is her son, Todd Snyder. The interview is being done by George Gurney, deputy chief curator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, on March 13, 2008. Welcome. Let's start off, Gertrude, by asking you where you grew up and what did your parents do and where did they come from.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: My parents were American born. I was born and raised in the Bronx in New York City. My father worked for a man who owned offices across the country. I don't know what they did, but my father was in charge of setting up the offices. My mother, before she met my father, was a textile designer. And in those days, of course, women had no choice. It was either you're a textile designer or a housewife. And so they were married and she had given up her career.

GEORGE GURNEY: Where was she from? Were they both from the New York area?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Both from New York, yes. I think she was 19 when they married and he was perhaps 22. So she gave birth to a daughter who, of course, was going to be her mother's puppet and do textile designing. My father saw me as a lawyer. [Laughs] In high school I promptly flunked Latin, so that took care of the law career, which turned me over to my mother. And I was going to be an artist which, since I never had the faculty of objecting to my parents' decisions, I became a painter.

GEORGE GURNEY: Where did you go to high school?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Evander Childs High School.

GEORGE GURNEY: In New York City?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: And the only—in New York City. And the only courses I passed with honors were art and English. I had to be tutored to get through high school. And then I went to the National Academy of Design for four years. My friends went to college. I went to the learn how to paint.

GEORGE GURNEY: So who did you study with at the National Academy?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't remember the names of the teachers but I know what the training was. For the first year we were permitted to draw in charcoal from casts of hands and feet, heads. Never the entire body. The second year we were graduated to do the entire figure from a cast in charcoal.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, did they have these casts at the Academy?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: You didn't go to the Metropolitan [Museum of Art] or something?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No. The third year we were permitted to paint from a live model and the fourth year we were permitted to just paint landscapes or whatever. That was four wasted years. So there I was, an artist.

GEORGE GURNEY: Why do you say wasted years?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't think it's necessary for that kind of training to be a painter.

GEORGE GURNEY: What did it teach you?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: What did it teach me?

GEORGE GURNEY: What did it teach you?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't think it taught me anything.

GEORGE GURNEY: Did it teach you to draw, in fact?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't know that I was taught. I just drew.

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Do you understand?

GEORGE GURNEY: Sure.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Oh, so there I was, a graduate of the National Academy of Design.

GEORGE GURNEY: And you were still living at home, I assume?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. I was in my twenties.

GEORGE GURNEY: Sure.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Then in 1935 or so my father's job took him to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and my mother went with him. And my father found a studio for me. I remember the address of the building. It was 3 East 14th Street, and it was a building that housed artists. Whatever floor I was on, and I don't remember that, Raphael Sawyer was my next-door neighbor. We both used the toilets in the hall. They were just a room and toilets in the hall. And I was on my own for the first time ever in my life. I lived with Aunt Minnie in the Bronx, my mother's sister, while my parents were away. And I saw an advertisement in the *New York Times* for a class in silk screen, silk screen printing. Silk screen, of course, until that time was used industrially. This is the first time I noticed that it was an art form. So I enrolled.

GEORGE GURNEY: Where was this?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: It was in New York City. My studio was at 14th Street and Fifth Avenue and this class was on 14th Street and Sixth Avenue, which is one block west. And for some damn fool reason I remember what I wore. This was, you know, a hundred years ago. I wore a red silk dress with black somethings on it, and a red felt hat with an enormously upturned brim, and at the top of the brim was an artificial canary that bobbed every time I moved. And in this silk screen class, which is why I'm telling this, there was a tall, good-looking young man who was fascinated by my canary—and every time he made a move toward me I moved away and every time I moved, of course, this thing jiggled. And the outcome of all of that is that Jerome Snyder became Todd Snyder's father.

GEORGE GURNEY: And where was he coming from?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: He was coming from a broken family. He was a New Yorker. This was his first art school class. His mother—he had an older brother, probably nine years older, and he lived with his older brother until the brother married and then, of course, Jerome was in the way. The mother remarried each time she was widowed, and that was four times. [They laugh.]

GEORGE GURNEY: Wow.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: So I asked Jerome about himself and he said he was on the WPA [Works Progress Administration].

GEORGE GURNEY: So this would have been '34 or '35?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: What is the WPA? I didn't know. You know, I was a Bronx princess. And he told me if an artist—can I get on the WPA? You have to apply for relief. What is relief? And so I used my studio address as my only address. I had no parents, no Aunt Minnie. And I applied for relief, which was granted.

GEORGE GURNEY: So now let's go back. Did you grow up in the Bronx or in New York City proper?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Bronx.

GEORGE GURNEY: In the Bronx.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: We moved to New York City on 96th Street and Lexington Avenue when I was I guess about 20 or so.

GEORGE GURNEY: So to begin with in high school you went to a Bronx high school?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Evander Childs High School. Where was I?

GEORGE GURNEY: You were talking about meeting Jerome.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yeah. Oh, and the WPA.

GEORGE GURNEY: And the WPA.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: So I qualified for relief and the next step is to take a portfolio to the WPA committee, which I did. And I was accepted and was assigned to the Easel Division. Do you know anything about the WPA?

GEORGE GURNEY: A little bit.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, the Easel Division is the elite corps. I had to turn—I was paid every week, twenty-two dollars and I think seventy-three cents.

GEORGE GURNEY: A princely sum.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I had to turn in to the government, being paid every week, one painting every six weeks. Jerome had to go to work every day. He was the mural assistant to Philip Guston. You know that name?

GEORGE GURNEY: Oh, sure. Sure. In fact, Philip Guston was also part of the team that worked on the Social Security [Building]. Had he [Jerome] trained to be a muralist?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: He never went to art school. This silk screen class was the only one he'd ever attended.

GEORGE GURNEY: So how did he get designated on the mural?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, he drew.

GEORGE GURNEY: He drew.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. So we lived in a loft above a bar on the corner of Sixth Avenue and 13th Street.

GEORGE GURNEY: Had you gotten married by this time?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Please, can you turn the recorder off?

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GEORGE GURNEY: We're recording now. So how was it that—did you two live together or were you married?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes, we were married.

GEORGE GURNEY: You were married. And you say this was?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: We got married in Connecticut because if we were married in New York it could be traced to the WPA.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right, and you weren't supposed to be married? Only one person could earn a salary?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: That's right. But the WPA never met my parents, who certainly wouldn't have tolerated my living in sin. So we were married, yes, and—

GEORGE GURNEY: Where did you get married?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: That's a whole other story and it's very funny. [Laughs.]

GEORGE GURNEY: This is what this is about.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: We got married in Connecticut. The name of the city in Connecticut I don't, I don't—it wasn't Stanford because that's way out of the way. It was someplace in Connecticut. Hartford. I don't know.

GEORGE GURNEY: That would be way out of the way.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: But the point is a few months ago—we were married in a temple because I thought my parents would blow their top if it were St. Patrick's Cathedral, you know. So my mother invited the entire family

to this. It wasn't until a few months ago, and this was—we were married in the '30s—that I came across the marriage certificate in my files. And it's all in Hebrew and it's signed by the bride and the groom and the best man, not one of whom used their real names because, you know, we were doing something illegal.

GEORGE GURNEY: And why was this illegal?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Because two people couldn't be married on WPA.

GEORGE GURNEY: On the WPA, okay.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: And the best man who signed it was a very well-known painter in later years. Vincent Campanella his name was. So I gave this document to Debra to read. Deborah is the wife of my elder son. She is non-Jewish by birth but she had an abysmal childhood and when she was graduated from high school she felt that the joy she found in the lives of her Jewish friends could be hers if she converted to Judaism. So since this marriage certificate was in Hebrew and it meant nothing to me I gave it to Debra to read and she said, "This isn't a marriage certificate. [Laughs] It's just a statement that a ceremony of some kind was performed by this person."

GEORGE GURNEY: So all this time you haven't been married?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: So I had the fun of telling my sons they're bastards.

MR. TODD SNYDER: Guess what that makes me. [They laugh.]

GEORGE GURNEY: I'll tell you a story afterwards. [They laugh.]

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: So, you know, life went on on the WPA. Eventually, of course, it—

GEORGE GURNEY: What kind of paintings were you painting every six weeks?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Easel paintings, watercolors.

GEORGE GURNEY: Watercolors?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. I was not allowed to paint nudes or anything political, so I painted landscapes, people.

GEORGE GURNEY: And I've forgotten who the head of the New York office was at that time. Did you have any—?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I've forgotten, too.

GEORGE GURNEY: Did you have any—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: It was a woman. Was it Juliana Force?

GEORGE GURNEY: Yes, that's my recollection.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: Did you have any contact with her?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No.

GEORGE GURNEY: No?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No.

GEORGE GURNEY: You just turned in your stuff and got paid?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes, to the man who was head of the Easel Division.

GEORGE GURNEY: Do you know who he was?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't remember his name. He wasn't a painter. He was just a person.

GEORGE GURNEY: Just an administrator?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

TODD SNYDER: And what was the subject matter of these watercolors?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: It was just street scenes and people. And I have two kids playing potsie [hopscotch], I remember.

TODD SNYDER: Things you saw about New York?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: About New York City, yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: Scenes of American life.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

TODD SNYDER: Yes.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: That was the mural. Now, the WPA closed in New York City, the art section, on December 5, 1941, before Pearl Harbor. But Jerome and I drove—oh, this isn't WPA but the government sponsored open competition for art for public buildings.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I think it was one-half of one percent of the monies allocated to public buildings had to be given to art work in those buildings.

GEORGE GURNEY: It was under the section of the Treasury.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes, the—

GEORGE GURNEY: And they did it for post offices and they had—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Something of Fine Arts. Department?

GEORGE GURNEY: Section of Fine Arts of the Treasury Department.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. Yes. Jerome and I had entered two competitions. The first one was for the mural in the post office in San Francisco. Anton Refregier won that. Do you know his name?

GEORGE GURNEY: I don't.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: We came in second and we were each given a post office in Michigan to do a mural in.

GEORGE GURNEY: This was common practice for them to give the second-place person in a competition some other.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Jerome's mural was in Fenton, Michigan, which is a spit and a holler outside of Detroit. Mine was in the south of Michigan in Buchanan. Jerome's mural is alive and well in a new post office in Buchanan that was designed especially to accommodate his mural over the postmaster's door, and there's today a bronze plaque with the history of the painting. My mural was thoroughly destroyed by the postmaster. He didn't think the government should be sponsoring art when the country was on a war production.

GEORGE GURNEY: So you did the mural. What was the subject of the mural?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, Jerome's was industry, the industry of Fenton, which was—

GEORGE GURNEY: Production.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Production. Mine was farm equipment. I think it—what's the name of the people who make those tractors?

TODD SNYDER: John Deere?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Deere, John Deere, I think, was headquartered in Buchanan and so I did something on producing two tractors.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, was this on canvas or did you do it right on the wall?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: On the wall. On the wall.

GEORGE GURNEY: So was it a fresco or was it—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, it wasn't fresco. I think we painted directly—I think we adhered canvas to the wall and painted on that.

GEORGE GURNEY: That was a frequent thing.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. So evidently he just ripped the canvas off the wall because the government tried to revive it and to no avail.

GEORGE GURNEY: He didn't whitewash it?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: And then he whitewashed the wall.

GEORGE GURNEY: And then he whitewashed it, okay. So that was really your first break with the Section of Fine Arts and the Treasury Department and so that got your name kind of in their attention.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, what got our name really was the second competition.

GEORGE GURNEY: So the second competition for the Social Security Building was, in fact, a competition?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: And there are a number of things that were done for that building. Did you apply for a particular—did you have to send in ideas for what you would do or—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, no. It was all left to us. We designed the four walls of the employees' cafeteria and each wall represented the activities of that section of the country: north, east, south and west. We came in first.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, did you do this with Jerome?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: He designed two walls and I designed two walls. He did the south and the east and I did the north and the west.

GEORGE GURNEY: I'm showing a ground plan of the cafeteria.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. Well, this no longer exists. The Social Security people moved out of the building and the current tenants—I don't remember who they are—

GEORGE GURNEY: Health, Education and Welfare.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: That's right. And they broke up the—

GEORGE GURNEY: And it may be different now.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Oh, really?

GEORGE GURNEY: Yes.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: They broke up the cafeteria into little spaces and didn't want the murals, so the Smithsonian took them and the Smithsonian now owns them.

GEORGE GURNEY: They're currently in the Smithsonian American Art Museum, which I am—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. There were 24 panels.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, can you tell me something about how you both came up with the subject matter?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: We devoted the north, east, south and west to the activities of that. [Shows photos.] This is the west wall. These are mine.

GEORGE GURNEY: That's cowboys.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: This is west. And this is, these are mine, west.

GEORGE GURNEY: And what are the subjects there? I'm reading the back.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: They're folk dancing.

GEORGE GURNEY: Folk dancing.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: This is the north wall.

GEORGE GURNEY: Movie Theater.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I did that. And this is the east wall.

GEORGE GURNEY: And that's the beach scene, and the boxers.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: The funny part of this is that Jerome designed it; I painted it.

GEORGE GURNEY: This is the beach scene, yes.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I'm sorry?

GEORGE GURNEY: The beach scene.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: The beach scene. This little boy is the image of Todd Snyder, who was born in 1953. His father designed this in 1942.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: But his father painted this mural, or designed it. I painted it. And down here I had that labeled "Life" but they said I couldn't use it so I changed it to "File" and I put a portrait of Lieutenant Jerome Snyder on the cover. [Laughs.]

GEORGE GURNEY: Now—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: This is, I think it's, this is mine. I think it may be—no, no, it's mine. I don't remember which wall it's on.

GEORGE GURNEY: This is the barber shop with—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. Yes, that's mine.

GEORGE GURNEY: With the pole.

TODD SNYDER: Is there any significance to the address and the name?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. At the time we lived in a loft at 504 Sixth Avenue.

TODD SNYDER: And E.E. Jackson, any significance?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No. No.

TODD SNYDER: You just made that up?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. And these clocks are on the wall.

GEORGE GURNEY: All the clocks that appear within the murals are part of the architecture?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes, and so Jerome designed around them.

GEORGE GURNEY: So he designed around. Now, how did you come to choose these particular scenes? Did you do kind of research or did you—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No. It was representative of that to us. I'd have to do research on the rodeo, and Jerome went to prize fights. I don't know what else he did. Oh, here's another clock.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, you made the designs. You went—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Each of us.

GEORGE GURNEY: You got the commission. You went home and you said, "Oh, boy, we've got this whole cafeteria. What are we going to do?" Now, so you sat down and made sketches?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, no, no. No, no, no.



GEORGE GURNEY: Or did you—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: When we first entered the competition—

GEORGE GURNEY: You made the design.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: —we submitted sketches of these scenes.

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay. So you made the sketches. Then you won the competition. And then what about thereafter, did you get criticism on what you could include or couldn't include?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, no, no. The government saw our sketches and on the basis of these sketches—which Todd has gone to get—gave us the commission. There was no discussion. It was all settled. This is what we were going to paint.

GEORGE GURNEY: There was no review and there was no kind of hesitation about saying, "Well, maybe you need more clothes on that figure," or, "We would like a slightly different subject"?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No.

GEORGE GURNEY: Because in other—I know for the sculptors frequently they were criticized about their figures and asked to make changes.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Oh?

GEORGE GURNEY: So that's why I'm asking that question.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: That never arose with us.

GEORGE GURNEY: But that was fairly early on and the things that I know about were fairly early on in the Section of Fine Arts kind of career. Later on, maybe in the early '40s, they weren't quite so—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, let me tell you this. They didn't ask us, ask me to change a thing. The award was announced I suppose late November. And on December 5, 1941 Jerome and I drove to Washington to sign the contracts which took care of painting on site in Washington. December 7th was Pearl Harbor.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, did they expect you to kind of pick up and come down and live in Washington while you were doing these?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: It was our choice but the choice was eradicated because of the war.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: So we had to find an apartment—because Jerome enlisted—for me, with a—

GEORGE GURNEY: He enlisted immediately?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes, but he wasn't called up immediately.

GEORGE GURNEY: No.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: It gave us time to go to Michigan to paint the post office murals. We had to find an apartment with a 24-foot wall because some of the Social Security canvases were 24 feet long. And I spent close to five years painting murals.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, how did you do this? Did you stretch out a big canvas on the wall and then sketch everything out?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No. First you have to submit a cartoon to Washington.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Which is a full-size drawing.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right. A full-size drawing. A 20-foot full-size drawing.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: In that—

GEORGE GURNEY: This is the review process that I'm interested in. Because they did want to see what you would do, going from a sketch, large.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, I took slides of the sketches and blew them up and then just traced the image that was flashed on the screen. I traced it on brown paper, just the outline.

GEORGE GURNEY: Butcher's paper? Butcher's paper?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't know that name.

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, it's what you use in a shop, you know, a butcher shop or something like that.

TODD SNYDER: Also known as craft paper. Sometimes they call it that.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

TODD SNYDER: It's a heavy, brown paper. It comes in a roll.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. Yes. Yes.

TODD SNYDER: Here are the original sketches. And then I photographed sections of them so that you could see the detail.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, do you still have these original sketches? Wow.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Would you like to have these?

GEORGE GURNEY: Sure. I mean, this is—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Could you—

TODD SNYDER: Yes, we can duplicate them. It's no problem.

GEORGE GURNEY: I mean, this is—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Todd took these photographs of the framed sketches on my wall.

GEORGE GURNEY: No kidding.

TODD SNYDER: The other day before we came down.

GEORGE GURNEY: Do you have plans for your sketches?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, I plan to give two walls each to my sons.

TODD SNYDER: Would the Smithsonian like to have them?

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, I mean, considering that these are here it's kind of a natural—

TODD SNYDER: I would be fine with that and I'm sure Rowan would be, too.

GEORGE GURNEY: But I'm just—it's kind of nice to kind of keep things together.

TODD SNYDER: Yes, absolutely.

GEORGE GURNEY: But anyway—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Absolutely.

GEORGE GURNEY: I mean, whenever. Just down the road.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

TODD SNYDER: I mean, the reason why we're here is posterity and that relates directly to it. So I'm—

GEORGE GURNEY: But this is, I mean, these are marvelous.

TODD SNYDER: Oh, they're wonderful. You should also know that there is other art of my mother's and father's.

GEORGE GURNEY: Did you do these sketches which you entered in the competition in tempera or what media, do you remember?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I imagine it was tempera. I don't really remember.

TODD SNYDER: Those are. It's written on the back.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Oh, it is?

TODD SNYDER: They're in tempera. Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay. Now, this is a lot of acreage of mural. It took you four years. Did you have any help?

TODD SNYDER: She did it all herself.

GEORGE GURNEY: In the sculpture business, you see, there was always a plaster caster and, you know, like—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: But you did them all yourself?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Right. The only help I had was when the photographer came to photograph each cartoon and he kept making passes at me, so I had a male artist friend come the day the photographer was coming.

GEORGE GURNEY: To help you.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Just to be there.

TODD SNYDER: And to protect her [laughs].

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, Jerome meanwhile has, in fact, gone off to war.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Right.

GEORGE GURNEY: And so where did he go?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: He was, he went to OCS [Officer Candidate School] and was stationed in Texas with an anti-aircraft battalion. They went overseas to the Battle of the Bulge and when that was over he finally succeeded in getting himself admitted to the infantry. Determined to get himself killed. He came home a captain in the infantry. May I take a minute to tell you an interesting aside?

GEORGE GURNEY: Sure. Of course.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Philippe Montebello, do you know his name?

GEORGE GURNEY: Of course.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, when Jerome was in Belgium he was stationed with the de Montebellos.

GEORGE GURNEY: Really?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Philippe and his brother, I think Henri, just children at the time.

GEORGE GURNEY: Amazing. It's a small world. [They Laugh.]

TODD SNYDER: Indeed.

GEORGE GURNEY: Did you ever connect over here?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No. I think Montebello came after Jerome had died. I think so. I don't remember.

GEORGE GURNEY: A few years before.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, anyway. So you finished the murals.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I finished the murals.

GEORGE GURNEY: And then you had to take them and bring them down to be installed.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: We got an award of \$8,000 for these murals in 1941. We were going to live the rest of our lives on that \$8,000. But you don't get it at once, as I've explained. You know, it's dribs and drabs, according to your contract, you submit something and get paid.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: What did you ask me?

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, so as you finished these did you bring them down and put them up?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Rolled each up and put it in storage.

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: And when Todd's elder brother was two months old my parents babysat and Jerome and I went to Washington to oversee the hanging of the murals.

GEORGE GURNEY: And this was after the war?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Two years after the war ended.

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay. And how did you affix them to the wall, do you remember?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't know. I don't remember. But before I got to paint them I had to clear every step with the Department of Fine Arts. That is, the government had commandeered the best canvas. There was none to buy. So I had to hunt up a fine muslin, send it to Washington for approval. The murals were painted on muslin. And then the paint I was going to use, I've forgotten what it was but that, too, was verboten. They're painted in beeswax emulsion and dry color, powdered color.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I couldn't use paint.

GEORGE GURNEY: So you kind of had to punt, as they say, to get materials so that you could complete the work, and you had to do this in New York during the time of the war.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, what other kind of restrictions might you have run into in terms of, because of the war, I mean.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: It was only technical restrictions. The government didn't interfere in any way, if that's what you mean.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, no, no. They accepted my cartoons and the finished painting, 24 times.

TODD SNYDER: Without revision.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. The only thing they objected to was my calling that magazine "Life." They said I couldn't do that.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right, okay. Now, was that in—was Jerome in the *Life* magazine when you entered it to begin with, or was that—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No. No. This was a panel Jerome had designed. Before the United States was at war.

GEORGE GURNEY: That was an add-on? I mean, that was something you put in there later?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. I changed it.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: When I was doing the finish I put him in.

GEORGE GURNEY: Did you make any other changes, I mean, as you went along?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No.

GEORGE GURNEY: Which is somewhat characteristic of artists.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. No, no, no, just as it was in the sketch.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, there were a number of other artists that were working on murals within the Social Security [building].

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Ben Shahn did the mural in the corridor.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: And I know Robert Cornbeck has sculpture in this building.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't know of other artists.

GEORGE GURNEY: How about—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Were they easel paintings?

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, Philip Guston was there. Philip Guston had a mural there also. Did you all talk about this at all?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, this was after the Project had ended.

GEORGE GURNEY: Yeah, okay. I didn't know whether—you know, sometimes the artists come down and work together or on location together.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: But I didn't work in Washington.

GEORGE GURNEY: But you didn't work there, so. I know Heinz Warneke did some big eagles for the Social Security and there was, they miscalculated the size.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Oh.

GEORGE GURNEY: And so they never were put up, and he was crushed about that. But anyway, did you have any contact with the architect, Louis Simon, who was the architect for the Treasury?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: [No audible response.]

GEORGE GURNEY: So primarily you just worked with the people in the Section of Fine Arts which, of course, had been disbanded.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Ed Rowan. Did you know him?

GEORGE GURNEY: Ed Rowan. I knew of him, yes. How often did you interact with Ed Rowan?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, when I would send the art work through he would call and say it was okay. The cartoons.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right. You didn't have an impression of Ed Rowan—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, no, no.

GEORGE GURNEY: —as a person?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No.

GEORGE GURNEY: How about Insley Hopper? How about Insley Hopper? That was another person in the section.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Edward Hopper did you say?

GEORGE GURNEY: No, Insley. There was a man named Insley Hopper who was also—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't know him.

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay. Well, anyway, so you finished the murals. Meanwhile are you painting on the side or exhibiting?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. No, not meanwhile; after.

GEORGE GURNEY: After. So basically for four years or more all your efforts were—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: That was my job.

GEORGE GURNEY: Were into this mural project.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEORGE GURNEY: So you complete the job. Then what?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, as I say, two years passed. Jerome came home. We had a baby.

GEORGE GURNEY: You had one child already?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, no, no.

GEORGE GURNEY: Jerome comes home, you have your first child.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

TODD SNYDER: I don't come along until '52.

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay. So the war is over. You're both artists.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, Jerome came home with a portfolio of drawings he had done of the GIs.

GEORGE GURNEY: Oh, really?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. And a friend of ours, Joe Kaufman, who was a children's book illustrator—we knew nothing about the commercial world. Joe said, "You've got to take these to Madison Avenue." And almost overnight Jerome became universally known. He was the first art director of *Sports Illustrated* magazine.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, as art director what was his job?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Art directing, choosing artists, okaying page layouts.

GEORGE GURNEY: How do you account for this kind of switch from artist/soldier to art director?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: The price of paintings. If he had continued to be a painter we'd have starved to death.

GEORGE GURNEY: How about yourself? How about yourself, what did—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, funny you should ask. Anything he could do, I could do certainly as well if not better. So I took a portfolio of my paintings to Madison Avenue and the guys patted me on the head and said, "These are lovely but we can't afford to pay enough for you to buy a hat." So during that time, whenever it happened, Jimmy Grunebaum, who at that time was the art director of *Scientific American* magazine, came to dinner. And I was telling him—

GEORGE GURNEY: How did you know him?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, he was on the Project.

GEORGE GURNEY: I mean, was he an artist too?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't remember what he did, but we knew him from those years. He must have been some kind of artist. He could have been a teacher, art teacher.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Jim said to me, "Why don't you take my portfolio around and tell them it's yours?" So I did. I got a job. My job was with some fourth-rate publishing company like True Romances or True Confessions or whatever. And my job was what we call paste-up the back of the book. And you get a sheet of cardboard, big, cut

in half, with columns delineated on each half, representing two facing pages of a magazine, with three columns delineated on each half. The outside column—this was a page, two pages in a magazine. The outside columns were going to be advertisements and my job was to paste up the printer's galleys in the two center columns.

Well, it went along fine until one day I started to read what I was doing and I saw that at the bottom of a column was a hyphenated word, and I didn't think that was very nice so I cut the whole paragraph out and just continued to paste. Well, the production period is six weeks. It took them that time to catch up with what I did, and that was the end of my first job. [Laughs.] And I kept getting jobs. Some employment agency was in love with me and they kept taking me back each time I got fired. For two years I kept making new mistakes each time. I worked for Franklin Simon, Helena Rubenstein, but I got fired, until I grew up to be an art director.

GEORGE GURNEY: And then who did you work for?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I did freelancing art for McGraw-Hill on books.

GEORGE GURNEY: What type of books?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Not textbooks. Books that you read for pleasure. I remember there was a book called *The Golden Road* [Felix Riesenberg, 1962] which is the Camino Real in San Francisco, down the coast. And there were three other books I did. The Camino Real I got Jerome Snyder to do the illustrations in. And then I also was an art director for *Simplicity Patterns*. I did the pattern book. And then I went to work for *Charm* magazine.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, what would you do for *Charm*?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, for many years I was the assistant to the art director and then she left and for a very short time I was the art director. I say for a very short time because Conde Nast bought the book and closed it down. And I worked for a gardening magazine as the art director.

GEORGE GURNEY: So you became an art director after the war?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Right, mm-hmm.

GEORGE GURNEY: And this was not uncommon for, well, I know for a number of sculptors—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No.

GEORGE GURNEY: —to make a shift that—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: —they could earn a living, and that was part and parcel. And they were kind of changing times, too.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: So did you stay in touch with other artists that you had known earlier?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Painters you mean?

GEORGE GURNEY: Yes.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: A few, yes. A few. When we lived at Sixth Avenue on the floor below were two women sculptors with whom my friendship lasted.

GEORGE GURNEY: Who were they?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: One was Charlotte Safier. She died a long time ago. And the other was Lily Shore, who died a few months ago. Lily continued her sculpture. She married. Who else do I know?

GEORGE GURNEY: But once you got into the kind of art directing that was your world from that time on?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Right.

GEORGE GURNEY: And you continued to live in New York City, and—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I worked while I was pregnant.

GEORGE GURNEY: So you had two kids.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEORGE GURNEY: And they grew up in New York, too. Did either of them become artists?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

TODD SNYDER: Well, I went to the High School of Music and Art in the art—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. Yes, you did.

TODD SNYDER: As an art student.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: And the head of the art department at the High School of Music and Art was Lou Titell, who had been on the Project as a teacher.

GEORGE GURNEY: Small world.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

TODD SNYDER: I've had many jobs in my career but about 25, 30 years ago I gravitated towards furniture design and cabinetmaking and I've been that ever since.

GEORGE GURNEY: So the artistic tradition goes on.

TODD SNYDER: Yes. The eye-hand connection continues.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: His elder brother has a doctorate in computer science and he's the CEO of a—

TODD SNYDER: CIO.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: CIO. I said to him, "Rowan, CIO to you doesn't mean what it meant to me, does it?" It's Chief Information Officer. You probably knew that. I didn't. And he's working for KPMG. It's an accounting company.

TODD SNYDER: I mean, as you well know, the arts and the sciences run parallel. He diverged. He went science; I went art.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right. Well, getting back to the '30s, the WPA, was there kind of a camaraderie that you had with other artists or did you just see—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Like nothing ever existed, absolutely.

GEORGE GURNEY: Can you describe that?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: We would meet once a week at the sign-in. Everybody came out of their studios on whatever day it was and we went to sign in. And, you know, we would exchange tips and gossip and—

GEORGE GURNEY: By signing in what do you mean? I mean, you had to go—so you were still here?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Sign that we were still—

GEORGE GURNEY: Still part of the Project.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

GEORGE GURNEY: And then you'd turn up six weeks later to get, or two weeks later to get your paycheck.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, no. It was sent in the mail.

GEORGE GURNEY: It was sent in the mail? Aha.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Every week.

GEORGE GURNEY: Every week. Now, when you'd turn things in where did you take them?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: To the offices of the art section of the WPA.

GEORGE GURNEY: And were these exhibited that you know of?



GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't know what happened to any of them.

GEORGE GURNEY: Do you have images of them by any chance?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Have what?

GEORGE GURNEY: Images of them.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No.

GEORGE GURNEY: Pictures of them.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No.

GEORGE GURNEY: We have in our collection an amazing number of works from 1934.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: From where?

GEORGE GURNEY: From the year 1934.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Oh.

GEORGE GURNEY: In fact, we could do an exhibition called 1934. And many of them are works that were painted on the Project.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: You don't have one of mine, do you?

GEORGE GURNEY: No. [They laugh.]

GEORGE GURNEY: And, you know, a lot of these were sent out to government offices and—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Hospitals, libraries.

GEORGE GURNEY: So, you know, keeping track of them was not the easiest thing in the world. But we do have a large collection of them, so it's interesting. In the '30s, the whole section of painting and sculpture, did you enter more competitions other than the one out in California?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, just the two.

GEORGE GURNEY: Just the two.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: Because I know a lot of people tried on a number of different occasions.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I didn't know of them until I'd heard of them.

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, initially there were many artists who were asked to compete. There was a kind of a major list that was kind of drawn up from advisors to the section. And they had people around the country that were kind of directors, if you want, and they would send in names of people they thought were prominent, you know, could do excellent work for the government. And there were little tallies on how many people turned up, you know. And then I think they had more open competitions, particularly for the post offices, which if you entered a big competition and they liked your work then they would, you know, deal it out.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Give you a mural, yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: So in doing the two projects out in Michigan were the people from the section, did they kind of oversee your drawings and review your drawings and things?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, yes. They approved the sketches and then you had to send them the cartoons and then you were free to paint the mural but they didn't have anything to say, to my knowledge, about the painting.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, did they suggest the subject matter or did you—usually in most cases the post office murals had some kind of relationship with the town or something there.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, it was the industry of the town.

GEORGE GURNEY: Industry of the town.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: But nobody had suggested it.

GEORGE GURNEY: Yes, okay. And were there guidelines that you had to follow that you know?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: What do you mean by a guideline?

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, guidelines. Well, they would say, you know, "We want you to do a mural that's five by five and it must deal with something about the town and it should be upbeat and it shouldn't be"—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes, I understand what you're saying but no, they never did. Probably they never did because they waited to see what we were going to do and it was acceptable.

GEORGE GURNEY: One of the things that I, at least my impression is that there is kind of a boosterism about many of these murals. It's very kind of pro-America, production, good things like harvests and so on that are positive, that want to give you—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, all these are.

GEORGE GURNEY: Yes.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: But nobody suggested it.

GEORGE GURNEY: Particularly coming out of the Depression, which was hard.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: They wanted people to feel good.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Well, that's interesting because for the San Francisco murals, though nothing had been suggested, Jerome's sketches were of the building of the Golden Gate Bridge, four or five different views of activities. And I did the westward movement again, you know, from pioneers and peddling and log houses to today's San Francisco.

GEORGE GURNEY: Often there are kind of stories within stories about history or the place or something. And this is very true.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: So you continued on as an art director in the '50s and '60s and continued to live in New York. You continued to live in New York and have ever since? Where are you living now?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I'm living in New Jersey now. When I remarried my husband worked as creative director for Houbigant, a perfumery. Their offices were in New Jersey. And so we looked for a weekend house in New Jersey because I was still writing for *New York Magazine*.

GEORGE GURNEY: Aha. You see, we haven't gotten on to the second part of your career.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: You want some more [laughs]?

TODD SNYDER: There's a little piece that's missing and that is my father passed away.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right, in '76.

TODD SNYDER: In '75.

GEORGE GURNEY: Seventy-six. Seventy-five?

TODD SNYDER: And my mother took over—my father started the Underground Gourmet column in *New York Magazine* in the early '60s. I don't know when it was sold. Part of the [*New York Herald-Tribune* and *New York* was their Sunday magazine section. The editor of that was Clay Felker. And my father and Milton Glazer, who would meet weekly for lunch, decided to turn that into a weekly column called the Underground Gourmet where they found restaurants in New York City where you could get a decent meal at that time for under \$2.50.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: A dinner.

GEORGE GURNEY: A dinner.

TODD SNYDER: A dinner. And when my father died my mother took over that column. At that time the *Herald-Tribune* had folded. Clay Felker, who was the editor, had taken the name *New York* and created *New York* magazine.

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay.

TODD SNYDER: With the same logo, so on and so forth. Just a little background information.

GEORGE GURNEY: So this is when your writing career began?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes, and then I—

GEORGE GURNEY: And you became a restaurant guide?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

TODD SNYDER: Critic.

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, critic, yes.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Inexpensive restaurants.

GEORGE GURNEY: Inexpensive restaurants.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: And I've—

GEORGE GURNEY: From the top to the bottom of Manhattan? From all over Manhattan?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes, and Brooklyn.

TODD SNYDER: And Brooklyn. We were living in Brooklyn Heights at the time. My parents moved to Brooklyn Heights in the early '60s, the first wave of gentrification.

GEORGE GURNEY: What was your address in Brooklyn?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: State Street.

TODD SNYDER: 171 State Street.

GEORGE GURNEY: William Zorach lived in Brooklyn Heights.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. Yes.

TODD SNYDER: And just for the record, the place with the 24-foot walls my mother—remember she said that she needed an apartment where they had 21- or 24-foot walls to do the cartoons for the Social Security. That was 92 Jane Street.

GEORGE GURNEY: Oh, really? Okay.

TODD SNYDER: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: In Manhattan.

TODD SNYDER: In Greenwich Village, yes. I believe Alexander Hamilton died at like 88 Jane Street.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: What was I saying?

GEORGE GURNEY: You had moved to Brooklyn, where you were at that time—

TODD SNYDER: You took over Underground Gourmet.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Oh, yes. Oh, the book. Herb Lubalin, who was another, world-renowned commercial artist. By "another" I mean Jerome Snyder. They asked me to write a book about him. I did that. And I've had essays published in the Sunday [*New York Times*].

GEORGE GURNEY: About?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Nature things.

GEORGE GURNEY: Like?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Like—

TODD SNYDER: One was called, "The Weeders' Digest."

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: That's right, yeah.

TODD SNYDER: My mother's attempt at gardening. [They laugh.]

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay, I'm going to turn this off because I don't want to—

[END OF TRACK AAA\_goodri08\_4101\_r.]

GEORGE GURNEY: This is the second tape and we're recording, so anyway. Do you still have papers from this period, from the '30s and '40s?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: What do you mean by papers?

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, things related to your murals and—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Correspondence, you mean?

GEORGE GURNEY: Correspondence and things of that nature.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I have a folder of correspondence. I can't recall that it's necessarily—I'll look.

GEORGE GURNEY: Because this is what the Archives of American Art is all about. The Archives started in 1954 by several people who were interested in collecting the papers of artists as a way of documenting the art of the country. And this is, so one of the things that the Archives does is try to accumulate this because it may be that, you know, you don't have a whole load of papers but when you put those papers together with other people's papers then it means something. It's not necessarily the individual things; it's the mass that becomes important in the long run. So if you have things that relate to your artistic career—correspondence with other artists or, you know—the Archives would love to have them.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I'll look.

GEORGE GURNEY: They like kind of filling in the holes. In some cases, you know, there have been artists that have given 20 feet worth of papers that they have collected. But I've always encouraged all the sculptors that I have dealt with, and in fact I did a lot of interviews back in the late '70s with artists that worked on the Federal Triangle buildings here, and I always encouraged them to give their papers because I knew that those papers combined with the government's papers, you get the other end of the story and that's very helpful.

The Section has their own kind of papers and they're very—sometimes very full. I mean, the documentation for your murals is sitting out there at the National Archives and probably everything that you had to approve is recorded. But sometimes they miss things and that's where it would be wonderful to have it.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. I'll look.

GEORGE GURNEY: As far as, you know, sketches and things like that, generally speaking the Archives wants more papers. You can have illustrations on letters and things like that, which they are delighted to have. But they're not collecting art per se.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

GEORGE GURNEY: So what Todd was saying about your husband and drawings and things, that's more something that would go to an art museum, and that's a wholly different matter.

TODD SNYDER: It's worth a shot.

GEORGE GURNEY: It's worth a shot, yes. Do you have any other things that you want to put down for posterity, stories that—

TODD SNYDER: Jackson Pollock, union steward.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: [Laughs] Todd is reminding me, the talk I gave at the [inaudible] I mentioned being on the Project and that as artists we had a union and my job was to collect dues from members, one of whom was Jackson Pollock. Twenty-five cents a month was our dues. And he was there in his studio, you know, canvases on

the floor, splashing paint. And we called him Jack the Dripper.

GEORGE GURNEY: Now, the union, this was set up fairly early on? When did the union start?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I suppose with the Project.

GEORGE GURNEY: And what was the idea behind the union?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I suppose, as in all unions, some kind of protection for their members.

GEORGE GURNEY: Right.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: But I don't—I was never that actively involved in any of it so I can't answer those questions.

GEORGE GURNEY: Who was the head of your union, do you know?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: It could have been Chet La More. I don't know. I shouldn't say. I don't know.

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, was there—I mean, this was kind of a chaotic time. Were there political kind of connections with the union?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Oh, I'm sure there was. You know, it's—I know nothing about the union. I wasn't that active.

TODD SNYDER: What was it called? Do you remember that?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I have it written down. Artists in something.

TODD SNYDER: Were there locals?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: What?

TODD SNYDER: Were there locals, individual locals or houses about the city?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I don't know, Todd, I don't know.

TODD SNYDER: Okay.

GEORGE GURNEY: I'm trying to think of something else that might relate to that period. Anyway, any other stories that come to mind?

TODD SNYDER: You had some stories about the 13th Street loft.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: About what?

TODD SNYDER: About the 13th Street loft, how you would all meet on the stairs.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Oh, yes, as artists after hours. The two sculptors lived on the floor beneath us. We were on the top floor.

GEORGE GURNEY: This is?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: 504 Sixth Avenue.

GEORGE GURNEY: After the war?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No.

GEORGE GURNEY: No? During—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: While the Project was on. And, you know, at the end of the day we would, just the four of us, hash over whatever was on our minds. And Jerome and I would sit on the top steps and the girls would sit on the lower steps and we would talk.

TODD SNYDER: You also said that those girls were good-looking and young men project artists—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Oh, yes.

TODD SNYDER: You mentioned some names.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Including Zero Mostel [laughs].

TODD SNYDER: Would come by and flirt.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes.

TODD SNYDER: You'd go to dances or things like that.

GEORGE GURNEY: Did you have any interaction with Moses Soyler?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, no. Raphael [Soyler] it was.

GEORGE GURNEY: Oh, okay.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: No, he never even knew I lived there.

GEORGE GURNEY: Who were some of the other students that you went to school with at the Academy?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Nobody who became a serious painter that I know of. You know, it was a middle-class activity for teenagers [laughs].

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, I don't know, the Academy has a pretty good reputation. A lot of people went there.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes. Oh, a lot of people went to it, yes. But in my opinion, it was spending one years of four learning to paint from old fogies who taught.

GEORGE GURNEY: So there were no redeeming factors?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Not to my mind.

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay, what can I say? [They laugh.]

GEORGE GURNEY: Well, anyway. Anything else that you have about your experiences with art and the Section and the Project?

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I can't think of any.

GEORGE GURNEY: All right. Well, that—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: You know, a painter is alone. It isn't that you go to work with 50 people at a desk. We were all loners, I suppose, except when we met.

GEORGE GURNEY: How was it during the war? I mean, it must have been very difficult to get by.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: If it was, I didn't notice. I don't think it was, really. I mean—

GEORGE GURNEY: I mean, everything was rationed. I mean, you had rations on almost everything.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: Yes, but when you live alone how much do you need?

GEORGE GURNEY: True.

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I wasn't supporting a family of five.

GEORGE GURNEY: Okay. Well—

GERTRUDE GOODRICH: I guess we've run the course.

GEORGE GURNEY: I think we've run the course then, and I'll just shut this off.

[END OF TRACK AAA\_goodri08\_4102\_r.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]