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Oral history interview with Martha Longenecker, 2008 July 29

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Martha Longenecker on 2008 July 29. The interview took place at Longenecker's home and studio in La Jolla, California, and was conducted by Jo Lauria 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.

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

JO LAURIA: This is July 29, 2008, disc one, recording interview with Martha Longenecker at her house and studio in La Jolla [CA].

Martha, can you please pronounce your name just so we have it correctly?

MARTHA LONGENECKER: Martha Longenecker.

MS. LAURIA: And as you know, we're going to start out with a few simple entries, biographical information. Where and when were you born?

MS. LONGENECKER: I was born in 1920, specifically on May 18, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

MS. LAURIA: And could you describe briefly your childhood and family background for us?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, first of all, my family, consisting of a brother and sister, mother and father, moved to California when I was only nine months of age. And I've never been back to Oklahoma. [Laughs.] So I can't tell you much about that. But we moved to California. And it was a beautiful cabana area at the time, full of orange trees. And we had a kind of a ranch-like home. And it was a wonderful place. I remember that we had turkeys and chickens, and we had fruits and like, and a solar house my father had designed. So we were there until I was almost five.

And then we moved to Monterey Park, which is south of Alhambra and south of South Pasadena and Pasadena Junior College, where I later went to school. And there is so much to tell about my childhood. I don't know what aspects you want. I might just give you some early recollections. I have an unusually good memory. And I actually remember being on the train. It sounds unbelievable, I was only nine months of age. But I just remember this sensation of our train going like this, and the other train going like this. And it's just so amazing to me, you know.

MS. LAURIA: So you remember your train going forward and another one passing.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah, just we were going, and there was suddenly this thing, very fast. And that has stayed with me. And I think it's rather interesting because life is kind of like that, you know. And then of course, I remember so many things about nature. I particularly loved climbing trees and digging caves and swimming and all of those things that are natural to children. Obviously I wasn't raised in New York or the city. I was raised with natural things.

MS. LAURIA: And do you remember specifically any art experiences that you might have had at an early age?

MS. LONGENECKER: I do, interestingly enough. I was preschool. And I can actually see the little bathroom—I had gone in the bathroom—and the washbasin where you wash your hands. There was some powder on the rim here, and some water had gotten on it. And I put my little finger in it, and it felt so good. You know, it was pasty. Well, it was actually clay because it was some of my mother's talcum powder or something that had spilled a little bit and gotten wet. And I just loved it. And I just played with it, and took some more of her powder and had a little ball of clay.

My mother came in. My mother was a marvelous woman. She wasn't the kind who would yell at me or shake me or anything. She just let me know that, no, I was not to play with that powder. [Laughs.] But I remember my feelings, because when you're very young you can't articulate it. But I remember my feelings of, boy, this was wonderful. Maybe I shouldn't have done it, but I'm sure glad I did. [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: And you mentioned that you went to City College in Pasadena. Could you sort of walk us through your educational background?

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes, after—my education was straight, uninterrupted. Kindergarten, where I stayed an extra term because I loved it so much, and then I skipped 1-A and went right to 1-B. And I had the wonderful thing of split elementary schools, because my mother was an elementary school teacher and principal in Los Angeles County. And this was different district that we were living in. But for a couple of years I went to her school because I had had a bad case of cold or something, and she wanted me near her.

And the advantage of that was that, even more than Monterey Park, the district where she taught, at the edge of Los Angeles, was in the hills. And there was a creek that ran through it. And we children would go down to the creek and play with the pollywogs and make sleds that would go down the hills. And so, not only were we getting our basic education of reading, writing, et cetera, we were having the fun of, not only nature, but of playing together and all.

I feel I had a very healthy childhood of developing a friend in the first grade, the first day of school. And she was my friend for life until she died. The occasion was that on this day I was so enthralled. It was my first day after coming out of kindergarten, to be in a classroom with little desks and little inkwells. And we each had our own. And I was delighting in this within the first few minutes of our meeting. And then the door opened, and a cute little girl with brown long curls came in. And the teacher said, "Oh, Gretchen. Oh, we don't have any place for you to sit. Oh, Martha, why don't you share your desk with her?" And I thought, "Oh, goodness." But I did. And then we had a recess, and there was Farmer in the Dell, and she chose me. And we kind of bonded.

And so those—all those early memories of the people we met, I realize in retrospect had such a profound influence on my life. She, too, ended up in art. And her older sister of three years—we thought she was a fine artist then, even though she would have been only, what, eight or nine? But she was always drawing. And so we as younger ones would draw, too, lots of tablets. And we collected movie stars and drew. And then that sister grew up and became the head of docents of L.A. County Museum [of Art]. And interestingly enough, then, in the early days of Mingei International Museum [San Diego, CA], which I founded back in '78, she became the head of our docents there.

So it seems like every childhood contact I had also was in my life later and was also a very determining part of this museum that came later.

MS. LAURIA: That's wonderful. Very serendipitous.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes.

MS. LAURIA: And from elementary school, you went off to high school in the same—

MS. LONGENECKER: I went to Alhambra High. And what was interesting there was that drawing and painting were, obviously, what I always loved to do. I don't remember any time in my life as a child that I wasn't drawing. And I came from a Quaker family. And we went to a church where it was quiet. And I was always sitting next to my mother as a little kid, drawing. And Christmas was not Christmas unless I had a new pencil box with eraser and colored pencils and so forth.

So, interestingly enough, when I went into high school, I was very eager to take the latest drawing or painting class. And there was an error in the programming, somehow. And I got into a leather class. And I was so upset the first day. "What? I don't want to take a leather class. I want to take drawing and painting." And the teacher was lovely. And she said, "Well, Martha, just sit there till the end of the period. Then we'll correct the mistake."

But I observed, and I became so fascinated with what she said in that opening day, I said, "I don't want to leave." And so I stayed and then so successful with this that I received—the only one in the class—a scholarship in the summer to go to a Russian leather studio in Los Angeles. It was called Burlins [ph]. And this also was terribly influential on my whole life, because these were master craftsmen from a lineage of leather workers doing bookbinding and making wallets and purses and anything. They knew everything about it—and I learned all about beautiful cowhide and calves and suede and how to handle everything. And the techniques of the tool sharp and no paste on things and so forth.

And then I also—then they brought me back a second summer as another—so I was quite proficient as a very young person in bookbinding and all of that. But still, I was—my drawing and painting was important. So as I went into junior college, then I focused on that, besides all my academics. And I always—I loved algebra and geometry and—I loved all those things. But art was the thing that was dominant.

And I was fortunate in having an extremely vital, generous young woman teacher of watercolor. Her name was Buhler, Ms. Buhler. She died very young. She died maybe within the next 10 years after she'd been my teacher.

MS. LAURIA: Do you remember how she spelled her name?

MS. LONGENECKER: I think it's B-U-H-L-E-R, but I will check that. But it was fortunate, because she too was a dedicated watercolorist. I mean, this was where—she was teaching in junior college, but that was it. So things were done right. You know, you learned how to stretch the paper and you knew all about it, and the colors and the brushes. And furthermore, she took us on field trips. We would—we took one where we spent the night so we could be up at 4 a.m. painting the hills when the sun came up.

And the most critical thing she did, which determined my life, was that she took us to Scripps College [Claremont, CA] to see an exhibition of Millard Sheets watercolors. Now, this would have been in—it would be in the 1930s. And Millard was this young—I always thought of him as a white stallion, he's such a creative leader. And we didn't meet him that day, but we saw this gallery at Scripps, full of these fresh watercolors of the Chino Hills and the horses. And I just was blown away by it. I'd never seen watercolor like that.

MS. LAURIA: So you were a junior?

MS. LONGENECKER: I was at junior college, so I was—gosh, how old are you when you're in junior college?

MS. LAURIA: Eighteen? Seventeen?

MS. LONGENECKER: Probably 17, something like that.

MS. LAURIA: So how much older was Millard?

MS. LONGENECKER: Millard was at least 10 years older than I.

MS. LAURIA: Okay.

MS. LONGENECKER: But it was just a delightful experience. I didn't even think of meeting him. He wasn't around. But I just knew, okay, I'm coming back here to study watercolor with this man. And I went on to UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles]. And that decision was made partly because it was so inexpensive. I think we paid 29 dollars a semester, whereas if you went to Scripps or other places it was very expensive. And I had the grades for it, so that was fine. And I minored in English.

And an interesting thing was, my parents wanted me to take education immediately, to become a teacher. Naturally, they want their child to be able to support themselves. But I was so passionate for art, I just couldn't give up that time from painting and all. And I really hadn't said anything to them about it, because I wasn't that kind of person, rebelling. But somehow, my watercolor teacher, Ms. Buhler, knew this. And unbeknownst to me, she made an appointment for lunch with my mother and—I learned about this later—and said, "Leave Martha alone. She knows what she's doing." And so they let me alone. And I majored in art at UCLA.

And of course, that was wonderful because I was a painting major. And I had some very good teachers. But they required you to take electives in order that you broaden yourself. And I remember taking advertising design, which I enjoyed, and helped me. When I did the museum, I could design all the brochures. I knew how to do it, you see. And in fact, my interest in that was so strong that, when I graduated from UCLA with a painting major—and I had these electives of ceramics, and I had this advertising design—I applied for a scholarship to Art Center School.

Art Center, north of Pasadena now—it used to be in L.A.—was the top graphic design school in the nation, I think. And I loved it. But I loved painting. And I had this pull to Millard. So I said, okay. I'll apply there. If I get a full scholarship, I'll go there. Otherwise, I go to Claremont. And I remember when the director, Archie Whettemire [ph], informed me that I wasn't getting it, and I still smiled and said, "That's fine," he was just shocked because he was somebody I knew. He had been the head of the art department at Pasadena Junior College.

MS. LAURIA: And he was the head of the art department at Art Center?

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes, he became—Archie Whettemire, a very great man, wonderful man. And he thought I would be so disappointed. But then, of course, I explained. And I went on to Claremont.

But getting back to what you were asking, I think I've skipped something.

MS. LAURIA: Well, no. No, you didn't skip anything.

MS. LONGENECKER: Okay.

MS. LAURIA: But I'd like you to just comment on—I have interviewed other individuals who come from Quaker backgrounds. And they have always said that part of the reason that they have such a strong work ethic comes from the values of their religion. Do you feel that being a Quaker had some impact and influence on your life?

MS. LONGENECKER: I think it has everything to do with it. And yet, it was never verbalized. That's what's so interesting, you see. I just—as a child, I just went to the church, and we were quiet. And it was kind of a community church. It wasn't just pure Quaker, like the origins of my father's family in Philadelphia, for instance. I'm actually a descendant of Betsy Ross. She was my father's mother's mother's mother. And so I didn't know any of that. But it was just that it was a lovely place. And so it wasn't verbalized. It wasn't until I was an adult that I began to put it all together.

But I think the fundamental thing with being an artist and a Quaker is that it has to do with a centering, kind of quiet mind and observation, teaching yourself through looking. When I had a sabbatical leave and studied in Japan with Shoji Hamada, he gave me a very great compliment one evening, because he—the sun had gone down, we were still loading a kiln. And he didn't know where I was. He wondered if I'd gone back to the inn. And he was just looking around. And then I said, "Here I am," because I was back in the bushes, kind of just watching, you know. And he said, "You're just the right person. You teach yourself by observing."

And so I think that was something fundamental that maybe I didn't know, but you found in your other people you interviewed. The emphasis on looking and seeing and observing—it doesn't mean you don't also read and talk. But the real power is beyond the words.

MS. LAURIA: And when Ms. Buhler met for lunch with your mother, did you find at that point or at every point afterwards that your parents were supportive of your desire, your passion?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, my parents were very supportive of my having a good education and so forth, and in a wonderful way, both of them. But my father was, actually, a Philadelphia lawyer, originally, in early life. And naturally, if his daughter now is going to university, it was great that she loved to paint and draw, which I always did. [Laughs.] But he was king of looking for me to, you know, go to some very solid academic thing. So I can understand, now, being older, how he felt. But there was no big fuss about it, big issue. It was something that—it was there. And I—no issue had come. But my teacher was sensitive enough to know—and maybe she had faced it with other students—that she intervened in a very sweet way. And I've always been so grateful to her.

But getting back to UCLA and these choices—I think that was wonderful that they required you to take different things. Now, I had, through this accident in registration, had had exposure to craftsmanship, and Russian craftsmen, which was really something. And so when I took pottery, you know, I could appreciate the tools and the wheel and everything about it, you see. And the graphic arts—there are still disciplines and skills that are very valuable. But the reason I think that pottery stuck relates to your question about being born of a Quaker family—is that when I got in that class, with Laura Andresen, I just—it was like seeing Millard's paintings. You just—she was just such a great woman, you know. And when you're young, you don't analyze it. But you know you're in the presence of a great woman and a loving woman. She adored her students, and we adored her. And it was a joyful place, you know. We were always laughing and giggling and so forth.

MS. LAURIA: And she was teaching ceramics at UCLA?

MS. LONGENECKER: UCLA.

MS. LAURIA: And she was head of that area, was she not?

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. There was only Laura. She had been a student there not so many years before. And a Mrs. Newcomb—that's N-E-W-C-O-M-B—had been the pottery teacher. And a terrible thing had happened. She had melted wax to pour into the inner parts of some pottery vases, because they were using earthenware clay, which is porous even after being fired, and they were using glazes that crackle. So that if you put water in it for a flower, it will seep through or let moisture in. So at that time, they would melt wax, or Mrs. Newcomb would, and waterproof these things.

And she was doing that in the studio at UCLA. And the whole place caught fire, because wax volatilizes in the air, and then if there's one spark, it's a flash fire. And she was killed right there at UCLA. It was a terrible thing. And Laura was not there. Laura had already left to go to Columbia [University, New York City], I believe. You would have this in her records. And Laura was a magna cum laude student. She was bright, brilliant, and had gone on to Columbia. And they sought her to come out, to come back, and take over. So she hadn't been in that position long when I was there. Again, she wasn't too old.

And she was universe-oriented. I mean, from day one, you know, we were looking at Egyptian pots and Persian pots and American Indian pots and—aware of all that. So I can see everything I've done in the museum and all was really just a kind of distillation of Millard and Laura and all these people.

MS. LAURIA: And her sense of world history, too.

MS. LONGENECKER: Everything.

MS. LAURIA: It comes—goes back to Laura?

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. Yes. And then of course, it was so reinforced later with Millard. That's such a whole, huge story. I know your question earlier was about my mentors. I've had so many of them. It seems like there are these people at every phase of your life. I think the very first mentor I had was my kindergarten teacher. She again was a remarkable woman. She was probably 18 or 20. But to me, you know, she was a big, grown woman. And she was so creative.

And we did drawing, but we did perspective drawing in kindergarten. Right away, she made us aware that—of railroad tracks and things. And immediately, it changed everything. And then she acquainted us with three dimension. We brought them home, our butter cartons, the little boxes that hold four cubes of butter. And she'd have us put holes through the back and a little piece of down, we'd put a round cardboard wheel on it, so we had—and then the front of it, we'd cut back and put a little strip there so that it looked like a milk truck.

MS. LAURIA: You made sculptures.

MS. LONGENECKER: Right, right. And yet it was easy. So again, when you're only five, you're thinking three-dimensionally, you see. And psychologically, she was very astute. And I remember even as a young child realizing that with her because of—we had paints and scissors and sand and everything. And one day, she brought out the scissors, kind of just put them down in the middle of the table. Well, we all grabbed for it. I mean, you know, everybody wants to get their scissors. I was right there to grab. And then there weren't quite enough scissors. And she said, "Oh. And now for all those children that didn't grab first, I have brand-new scissors." And I thought, "Boy, are you clever. Do you understand us." [Laughs.] And so that was wonderful.

And then, of course, I had many good teachers in many different things. But as far as art goes, it was this experience in this leather class and my Russian teacher. Now, that's kind of amazing as a high school student, to have teachers who come from Russia, you see, to teach you a craft. And then to go on to—and Mrs. Buhler, who took such a personal interest in me, assured that nobody interfered with me in my love of art, and then getting to UCLA and having very good teachers. Mrs. Sui [ph] was marvelous. I don't know if you've ever heard of her. She was a design teacher. And, boy, was she good at it. And sometime, we'd say—people would say, "How come you say that's right?" She said, "Because I say so. I have the eye. I say so." And of course, later you learn all the principles and why.

And I had an excellent graphic design teacher—all of that. And then of course—but Laura, of course, just topped them all, for me, because she had now awakened that understanding of clay that I had touched on as a little tiny child, and loved, you see.

MS. LAURIA: The tactility?

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. And my second contact with that was with Connie Stengo [ph]. Connie Stengo was the older sister of my best friend, Gretchen. They were from Holland. It was Gretchen and Connie Benkezer [ph]. And so Connie had plasticine clay and was always making things. And I admired her. She made a whole head in a sculpture. But I wasn't attracted to the oily stuff. But I remembered this other.

So with Laura, now my hands are really in clay, and I was learning how you dried it and you fired it and you made these wonderful glazes, and how we looked at Persian, we looked at American, we looked at—so that all, you see, came together. At the same time, I was a painting major. I had that background. So I was interested in color and design. And my love of pottery, it didn't diminish that. I went right on to study with Millard. But then I continued pottery, also.

And William Manker was the teacher at Scripps at the time—a very fine man. He had a studio at Padua Hills. It's called William Manker Studio—very beautiful pieces, you know, timeless, beautiful pieces. But they were all cast.

MS. LAURIA: He did some production in limited production work, if I remember correctly.

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh, yes, yes. But very beautiful. I mean superb.

Yes, what we did was similar to what we did with Laura. At the time I studied with her—which I guess was in something like '39, she didn't throw on the potter's wheel. In fact, nobody was. Glenn Lukens was—she had worked a little bit with Glenn Lukens at USC [University of Southern California, Los Angeles]. And she had worked with Mrs. Newcomb there. They were using treadle potter's wheels. And at that time, we would take the clay and pile it up on the round wheel head, and we'd treadle the thing, and we'd turn, just like you would do with a lathe, a wood lathe, and make the shape of the outside. And then, with Laura, we then put a piece of linoleum, something flexible, around it, a little bit away from it, fastened it. So it stood up. As a dam. And then we mixed a

quick-setting plaster of Paris—sets up in 20 minutes.

And we'd put a thin sheet of an icing on it, and more, and now we have a mold. In 20 minutes, you turn the mold over, take the clay out. And you have a mold of the exterior of your pot. So that mold, when dried, would pull the moisture out of any clay that you press into it. So Glenn Lukens was pressing thick clay in, you know, and turning it. And Laura would have—I have many pieces of hers. And they've been given to the museum. And I'm sure you're familiar with it.

MS. LAURIA: So she was teaching you students how to do press molding?

MS. LONGENECKER: That's right.

MS. LAURIA: Using plaster molds.

MS. LONGENECKER: But they are our own molds. We start from scratch. And we do that. And so with William Manker, there was a step further, as far as production goes. And we would cast those molds. We would still make the mold. And he had a clever way of doing that, which I'll explain. But then we would take liquid, clay that has enough water, and that you poured it in. And then when it is—you watched it thicken against the sides of the plaster. And when it got thick enough, you poured it out. And you let that piece shrink away from it, and then you'd bring it out. And you'd just simply trim the edge. And you didn't have to dig it out.

MS. LAURIA: The process you're describing is actually referred to as slip casting.

MS. LONGENECKER: Right.

MS. LAURIA: And it's an industrial process.

MS. LONGENECKER: It's an industrial process. It's the way that he made pottery and had his show room, and all beautifully designed and wonderfully done. And he stressed a rather low-gloss glaze in beautiful color. He later did a lot of work in designing of building and interiors and all. He was a very sensitive designer.

But anyway, getting back to Laura, we used this other method. And she willed me her wheels. I have them right downstairs. I'll show them to you—two different potter's wheels. And my potter's wheel that I made later at home, I used at Idyllwild Arts Foundation [Idyllwild, CA], where I taught when the school was new. And I left that there, and I left the ball wheel there and so many things you can't really carry around with you. Pottery is not something you pick up like painting and do. You've got to have the whole studio ready to go.

MS. LAURIA: And did you think after you took this class with Laura, and then went on to study with Millard and with Manker, that you would actually end up becoming more interested in pottery?

MS. LONGENECKER: Never, ever entered my head on any of it. I was always, at each time, just totally doing what I was doing. And these things just grew out. I never sat down and said, "Now, what am I going to do five years from now?" In fact, there was—was it Louis Munford who was a great education man, writer? He visited our Claremont Graduate University when I was one of the graduate students. And he wanted to interview a number of us.

And one of his questions was, "Well, now, what do you really want to be doing 10 years from today?" And I thought, "How could I know what I'm going to do 10 years from today?" You're just kind of beginning life. And you—and so I just approached it in a normal—I said, "Well, I'm a young woman. I suppose I'd like to be married and have some children." [Laughs.] Which was normal, you know? He just looked shocked, like What? Here you are, one of the few going to graduate school, and you're just going to be a mother and have children? [Laughs.] But that's just natural life that goes on. I mean, I wouldn't have dreamed of saying, "Well, I'd like to teach in a university," or "I'd like to start a museum," because those are peripheral things, you see? Those are things you do at a given time, to—I don't know—what would you say?—actualize whatever your maturity is.

MS. LAURIA: Right.

MS. LONGENECKER: Whatever is growing inside of you, you do to actualize it. And I did teach at San Diego State 35 years, and they were wonderful years. But I was very happy when I finished it. I mean, there were some faculty members crying because their career was over. I didn't think of it as, my career was over. That aspect—I had started the museum 10 years before. Now you're in another aspect, you see.

MS. LAURIA: Right. And that is one of the questions. What other careers have you had? And it seems, Martha, that your life has been evolving organically, following a very natural pathway.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes, very, yes. Natural.

MS. LAURIA: Natural. One step naturally followed the other. But at some point, you must have thought, "Maybe I shall become a teacher because it is a way of earning a living and having an art career."

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. Your questions are so good. I really appreciate it, because it's true. You're thinking logically, because I loved and admired my father and mother. I appreciated that they had let me alone, and I majored in art. And now I was graduating UCLA and I was going on to Millard. I was going to more art. And I said, "But I will get a teaching credential." I looked into this.

At Claremont Graduate School you could—it's a concentrated program of one semester. And it was ideal because what you do then, you don't just—oh, how is it? You don't—you go for quite a while, but you don't go out and do some student teaching in a class and come back, like at San Diego State [University]. You go study in that community six weeks, whatever. You come back to the graduate school on Saturdays. You had a full day each Saturday, which was your education courses. And they taught you about things like, the temperature of the room is very important. [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: But it didn't disrupt your other graduate studies and your pursuit of art, is what you're saying.

MS. LONGENECKER: No.

MS. LAURIA: You could do both at the same time.

MS. LONGENECKER: That's right. And it's funny I remember that, though. You know, all the different things they teach, and I thought that was interesting. And then when I became a teacher and a museum director, I thought, they were so right. You know, if that museum is too cold or it's too hot or if you're trying to teach a class and they're not comfortable—but there's so much to academics, you know. So we had academics on Saturday with very good people. And then we were in the community.

And I chose Pasadena Junior College, where I had been a student not so many years ago. And Archie Whettemire, you see, had been there before, and he was there then. And I really bonded with him. He was this great man. And he moved on to be head of Art Center School, as I said. And then furthermore, Richard Patterson was there. He was very young, and he was teaching a crafts class. And Richard had learned to throw, you know, in a rudimentary way. And so he was showing his students how to throw. Well, I got to learn, you see. He showed me how. And then when I went back to—after the student teaching was over and I was back, or I was back on Saturdays, I would see Bill Manker, my pottery teacher. And I told him about the throwing. And that dear wonderful man, he built me a pottery—a kick wheel so I could throw in Claremont. Wasn't that amazing?

MS. LAURIA: It was. Now, were there other important teachers? —just to contextualize the time period.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah.

MS. LAURIA: Was Susan Peterson here yet?

MS. LONGENECKER: No, Susan—well, Susan taught at USC later. I don't really know anything about her schooling or anything. She was not involved at all in the UCLA or Pasadena Junior College or Claremont Graduate School. But—

MS. LAURIA: But you did know about Glenn Lukens, who was at USC at the same time?

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh yes, oh yes.

MS. LAURIA: And Laura Andreson was at UCLA. And then there was William Manker at Scripps.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. I worked directly with these people.

MS. LAURIA: Right. And Richard Patterson.

MS. LONGENECKER: I met them one by one, not because I read about them in the papers, but they just were my teachers. It was just a pathway of my life.

MS. LAURIA: But they have become very important historically.

MS. LONGENECKER: They have. At the time, we were just kind of all working together. And of course, that—jumping way ahead, during the war years, I sold at Dalzell Hatfield Art Galleries. They had a place in New York. They were top notch.

MS. LAURIA: What was the name?

MS. LONGENECKER: Dalzell Hatfield Art Galleries at the Ambassador Hotel.

MS. LAURIA: Oh yes, at Ambassador Hotel. The Natzlers showed there.

MS. LONGENECKER: Which show?

MS. LAURIA: Gertrude and Otto Natzler had shows at Dalzell Hatfield.

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh yes. Well, we were—they had just a few items they represented. See, this is jumping ahead, though. This is when I had—was in the process of getting my M.F.A. at Claremont Graduate School. I had gone out there and was taking painting with Millard and Hevenly [ph] and continuing my pottery with Manker. And I had finished my teaching credential right away that first year. And I was interviewing for jobs because I knew my parents would love for me to be self-sufficient. [Laughs.] I mean, they didn't have to say so; I knew that—logic.

And so I saw Millard one day. He was my teacher, and he saw me, he said, "What's up," you know? You know, always peppy, and I said, "Oh, I just had an interview for a job. I'm excited about it." They came to campus to interview us, the different high schools. And so I had just had this. And he took hold of me by my shoulders and said, "You're not going anywhere." [Laughs.] You'd have to know Millard to know how wonderful he was. "You're not going anywhere." He looks at his thumb, and he said, "I don't want any half-baked kids out there teaching art." He was right.

But I kind of like—what? I was thinking of my parents and all this. I didn't say anything, but all this is going—and he said, "You're staying right here. I want you to stay on here and go further and work on, complete your M.F.A.," you know. I had started it. But now I was going off to teach.

MS. LAURIA: Oh, I see. After you finished your educational degree or certificate—

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh, the education I did immediately that first year.

MS. LAURIA: Right. And then you were going to stop your M.F.A.?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, I was—well, you start your M.F.A. You have a masters of fine arts. It wasn't just an M.A. It's the equivalent of a doctorate they were offering. So I would need to stay on to do that. But I wasn't thinking of staying on then, because I—my parents had supported me that long, and I thought it was time for me now to interview and take a position, which you could get. But I wasn't thinking beyond it, but Millard was thinking further. And so he just grabbed me and said, "No, you're staying here." And he never let you build an ego. He wouldn't have said, "You're good," or anything. Nothing was ever said like that. It was just, "You're half-baked." [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.] So this was another pivotal point in your life?

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh, very pivotal. And so it was kind of flashed through my head. I'm not the kind to vocalize it. But Millard, my parents—I don't bother them. I just listen. And he said good-bye, and I just turned around and walked over to the graduate school office and said, "Do you have any scholarships?" And they said, "No, we don't have any for, you know, next semester at this time. But we've got loans." And I said, "What about that?" And they said, "Well, Henry Strong Foundation has a loan. You could borrow 5,000 [dollars] or something. And you don't have to pay it back for five years after you do—I didn't even borrow 5,000 [dollars]. I borrowed a little bit to just go on with. And so I said, "I'll take it."

So then I telephoned my parents and said that I was continuing to get my M.F.A., rather than choosing to accept a teaching position now, but that I had gotten a loan and I would handle it on my own. And so there was no problem.

MS. LAURIA: Wonderful. So what was Millard doing at this time, Martha? Do you remember? I know he was teaching. But he was working, I think, on many murals during—

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, but that came a little bit later. It came all during the time that I knew him. In the beginning—he had an amazing life. And by the way, his daughter, Carolyn Owenchal [ph], became a Unitarian minister, co-minister with her husband for 20 or 25 years, right here in San Diego. And then she retired a few years back, and she came over and worked for me. She didn't need a job, but I needed her. [Laughs.] And she was in development. And not—she said, "I'm no development officer, writing grants." I said, "I know you're not. But I mean big development, Carolyn. I just need you here, you know, with your"—

MS. LAURIA: Vision.

MS. LONGENECKER: – whole thing. So she came and then did that. And then when I left being the director, she

left that and is on our board now. And of course, she's a magnificent person.

MS. LAURIA: I guess my question was, what was Millard teaching at the time that you found to be so inspirational?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, it was the big focus, was his painting, you see. Because it was only two years between my junior college, two or three years, and when I was, you know, actually staying with him, you see. And so he was painting like mad and inspiring all the students. And of course, I wasn't alone. Everybody that worked with him felt this way about Millard. I remember speaking to a professor at UCLA once about—he was so annoyed that everybody looked up to him so much. But he was just so full of this powerful spirit and of giving. But what happened next was that—so I was staying on. And that was—when was Pearl Harbor, '42? Yeah, I think it was '42, December.

MS. LAURIA: I remember it was December 7th, 1941, I thought? [Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7th, 1941.] But it could be '42. We could look it up.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah, isn't that funny? Because I had met a young man who was working for Kaiser Steel Mills, a very fine position, and dating him and all. And then Pearl Harbor came along, which was such a shock. And we decided we wanted to get married. And of course, you were born later, so you don't know all the feelings, when your whole world is suddenly attacked and we had to drape our windows with black curtains in fear of the submarines off our coast. And later I came to love the Japanese, but it was a very different time.

And again, I was there, making pottery, starting painting, and dating. And then had decided to get married. And again, Millard strolled along one day and said, "What's up?" again or was always keeping in touch, you know, intimately and socially, aside from the classroom. And I said, "I'm getting married." "What?" [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: You know.

MS. LAURIA: Did he think that was too much of a diversion from your pursuit of art?

MS. LONGENECKER: You know, he somehow had taken me on like a father figure or something. And then he realized, and he said, "Well, is he a good guy?" And I said, "Well, of course he's a good guy." And he said, "Well, where are you going to live?" And I said, "I don't know, but that's not a problem. We'll find a place to live," you know, because Pearl Harbor had happened, you see? And then he immediately said, "Well, come for your honeymoon, come to our guest house." He had this wonderful house that an architect had built before they built their home on the property at Padua Hill. This architect had done this house. It was 16 feet by 20. The kitchen was six by six, the bathroom was about the same size. And there was just one L-shaped room where you slept. And it had a fireplace and so forth.

And so we did go there for our honeymoon. And it was a long honeymoon. Because we were there a number of weeks or months. And then because of the war, my husband decided to go to work for Lockheed. And we were hoping that would keep him out from having to go overseas. And we moved to Los Angeles. And then my husband was drafted for the Seabees, they needed them so badly. And of course, I told Millard and Mary—I was in touch with them, because now I had met his whole family, you know, living up there. And he had the four children. And so they said, "Come back. Come back. You know, rent our guest house for 15 dollars a month," which was great because our total income was 78 dollars during those three years of the war, you know, 78 dollars a month.

MS. LAURIA: Had you finished graduate school by the time you had married?

MS. LONGENECKER: No, no, no, no. This was my second year of graduate school, you see.

MS. LAURIA: And graduate school was three years?

MS. LONGENECKER: See, I had been there this one year and was ready to get a teaching credential, and he wouldn't let me go.

MS. LAURIA: Right.

MS. LONGENECKER: So I was in my second year.

MS. LAURIA: And then you left?

MS. LONGENECKER: That I had taken a loan out—but then the war came, and I had met Johnny, and we got married in December of 1942.

MS. LAURIA: And what was Johnny's last name?

MS. LONGENECKER: Longenecker.

MS. LAURIA: Okay. This is where you got the Longenecker.

MS. LONGENECKER: That's it.

MS. LAURIA: What is your family name?

MS. LONGENECKER: Williams.

MS. LAURIA: Okay.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah. And on my mother's side, though, it's Audigier, A-U-D-I-G-I-E-R. She was French, and my father was Welsh. The Quaker thing came from the father's side. But anyway—

MS. LAURIA: So you're back in Millard's guest room. And your husband is—

MS. LONGENECKER: Overseas.

MS. LAURIA: Overseas. And you're thinking of finishing graduate school?

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh, no. I was—I never stopped. I mean, once you start an MA, you know you're going to finish it. But life comes in between. And I became pregnant immediately. And my first child was born October 12, 1943. We were married December 20, 1942. So there was a lot going on. I mean, you have a war going on. You have Johnny off in Midway Island and out in the Pacific. And I have a baby. And so [laughs]—and also, this is when I had my first independent pottery studio. Once Johnny—I moved back to Millard Sheets's guest house, he converted the carport into a studio for me. We screened it in. And Millard's wife, Mary's mother, Carolyn's grandmother, gave me her kiln. She was fascinating. She was a Baskerville. And I later bought a high-temperature round kiln, a Denver kiln, that was shipped there. And so I was pregnant, but I was also going on with my pottery.

And—but my first—and my son was born, and we lived there for—from sometime in '43, because my son was born in October, so it would have been '43, and so I guess it was probably late spring of 43 when my husband went into the Seabees. And we lived there until 1950. My husband came home, I think—was it the end of the war?

MS. LAURIA: Nineteen forty-five?

MS. LONGENECKER: Something, '45. And then we—he built us a home in Claremont, a very beautiful redwood house, and my studio. And so we moved from the Sheets down to our own home in 1950. And so all this time, I was a mother and a potter, and you know, just life, [laughs] the whole thing.

MS. LAURIA: Were you establishing a name for yourself, because you mentioned—

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes, very much so, because first of all, I'd had this wonderful grounding, UCLA and Scripps and graduate school. And I didn't tell Millard that I knew Millard sold at Hatfield's. And so I was familiar with the quality of Dalzell Hatfield and knew that he had Glen Lukens. And I think—maybe they were just starting with the Natzlers, I don't know. But I took a basket of my pots in to see Dal, made an appointment with him. And he liked them. And I remember he used the word "amusing," which I thought was interesting. I never heard—he was a very sophisticated man, and so was Ruth. And he said he finds them quite amusing and very different from Glen Luken's and different from the Natzlers. [Laughs.] So he took me on. I was part of his group.

MS. LAURIA: And would you just describe the gallery at the time, the location and the setting?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, it was at the Ambassador Hotel of Los Angeles, which was a kind of top place. Coconut Grove was where we had our senior dance, prom, and all—a beautiful place. And it was a top gallery. And of course, they were of New York and Los Angeles, because they had another location there. And Dal had gone up with the real ones like Stendhal, Earl Stendhal, you know, had started early. And Dal learned a lot from him. And they were real dealers. They knew their art backwards and forwards. And Dal knew how to show things, you know. He and Stendhal had been responsible for really bringing to America an awareness of all the contemporary modern French painters. And so he would have [Pablo] Picassos and everything.

MS. LAURIA: And so it was a very prestigious venue for you.

MS. LONGENECKER: Very, the most. Well, it was the top, kind of, in the nation, I think. And I was always so

impressed because Dal would say, "You don't ever show a painting unless it's under the right light and the background. You just don't do that." And he had kind of a black velvet stand, and the room is just right. Also, there was wine or liquor or whatever. Your guest comes in, and they are comfortable, and lights, and then he brings out one painting. You really look at that painting, you see? There's no sloppy thing of just tossing it—he was wonderful.

And then he also—because they are such professionals and they also are so kind of straight arrows, you know, mature. So, no contract. He said he would take me on. Our deal was—what was it? I'd get—how was it?—half and half, think it was, something like—whatever it was.

MS. LAURIA: Very similar to today, 50 percent to the artist, 50 percent to the gallery.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah. And he said, "Look. If we can't trust each other, if we can't shake hands, we have nothing."

[TELEPHONE RINGS.]

And so that's the way we started off. And I dealt with him for 20 years. That's a long time.

[END MD 01.]

MS. LAURIA: This is the continuing interview, disk two, with Martha Longenecker, conducted by Jo Lauria, for the Archives of American Art, July 29, at her home studio in La Jolla.

And I know we left off, Martha, when you were just beginning to talk about your teaching career. And Johnny, your husband, had come back from the war, and it was the 1950s, and you build this beautiful house out of redwood in Claremont.

MS. LONGENECKER: With a studio.

MS. LAURIA: With a studio. And you were showing your pots at Dalzell Hatfield.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. I had begun there in the war years, showing with Dalzell Hatfield, Dal and Ruth.

MS. LAURIA: And this was the time when people began to recognize your work. And then you just told me a lovely story about Laura Andresen going to a museum in the Southwest?

MS. LONGENECKER: I think it was.

MS. LAURIA: And she went to the museum, and what did she encounter?

MS. LONGENECKER: My show. [Laughs.] She called me. We kind of laughed about it, because of course it hadn't been so many years since I'd begun with her.

MS. LAURIA: And she saw your work at the museum?

MS. LONGENECKER: That's right, because at that time, being one of the very few potters that Dalzell Hatfield represented—the others were the Natzlers and Glenn Lukens and Myra Gotshal [ph] from Cranbrook [Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI]. And I think I was the only other one. And I sold with him for 20 years. And they would send shows out, you see. And it was because of that work, the pottery I made at home while I was being a mother and having my own studio, that I was later invited to come down to San Diego State. And in fact, they sent the Dean of the College of Fine Arts up to Claremont to meet me and see my studio and have breakfast with his wife and my husband, and followed by my going down there and meeting the faculty, et cetera, and their signing me up that day to develop the ceramics program at San Diego State.

They had Ilsa Rooco [ph], a very fine designer, and her husband was Roy Rooco, a great architect. Anyway, Ilsa was teaching one pottery class, along with her many interior design courses. And she really didn't want to continue that, and I was sought out. Another reason I think it might have happened is that Laura and—Ilsa Rooco and Laura Andresen, my first pottery teacher at UCLA, were very close friends. And I had actually met Ilsa at UCLA when she could come up to visit Laura. But because I was well known then, exhibiting then, being a mother and a potter, the university chose me to come and develop the department.

We started with just the one class that Ilsa had and developed it to full time for me. And then another professor, full time also.

MS. LAURIA: And what year was that?

MS. LONGENECKER: That was 1955 when I went down there. And then of course, another interesting thing was that in graduation, Laura Andresen at UCLA had given me the book, *A Potter's Book* by Bernard Leach [London: Faber and Faber United, 1940], which told about the Mingei movement and Dr. [Soetsu] Yanagi and so many of the individuals in Japan. And so later, in 1952—this was while we were still living in Claremont and I had my studio and all—I heard that three of these men, Dr. Yanagi, Hamada, and not Kuwi, but Bernard Leach, the potter from England, were going to be at Los Angeles. And so—for a seminar. And interestingly enough, I hadn't even thought of going because I was much too occupied being a mother and a potter and a wife.

And my mother heard about it, and she said, "Well, you're going, aren't you?" And I said, "Well, no, it would cost 35 dollars, you know." I didn't have that. And also, my son was young, and I said, "I need to take care of Daniel." And she said, "Well, I'll take care of Daniel. I'll give you the 35 dollars as a Christmas present. But go." [Laughs.] So I did have a wonderful mother. You had asked about being supportive; they were always supportive.

So that was a kind of pivotal turning point in my life, because you asked earlier about whether my Quaker heritage on my father's side had any connection to my life now and my work. And I said, yes, I think it had everything to do with it, not in a tangible way of my attending a church, aloud, or not verbally, but the whole attitude towards life and being centered and quiet and observing and so forth. So consequently, as I became a young adult and a mother, I was reading C.S. Lewis and [Søren] Kierkegaard and understanding our Christian heritage, but never was that consciously brought together with my classes with Laura or teaching with Millard. There was a spirit there, but we didn't talk about it.

So what was so changing for me, taking the seminar in Los Angeles—I'm trying to think. Was that at Chouinard [Art Institute]?

MS. LAURIA: It may have been at Chouinard, or it may have been at USC.

MS. LONGENECKER: No. It was at Chouinard.

MS. LAURIA: Okay.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah. And what was so amazing was, from the first day, the first moment of teaching this seminar, I think there were about 30 of us in that class; I'm sure that can be documented. There were a couple of nuns there. Sister Corrido was in it and a lot of young craftsmen, potters. And they turned everything upside-down from the way we approached the study of ceramics in the West. And they didn't start off by teaching technique or skills, all of which are very important. But they start off with the human being and saying the first quality that's necessary is humility. And you came to see that it wasn't just a human being. It's the nature of the material you're working with and its origins.

And of course, clay is broken down from granite rock over millennia through water. And clay goes through transformation, where we form it and let it dry to harden, and then we fire it—get our physical water and then we fire it to eliminate the chemical water. And we're back to something, if we fire it high enough, more stonelike again, stoneware. And the substances that give it color are the same things that create our jewels. It's just a handful of metallic oxides, cobalt, copper, iron, for instance, manganese, all of which we contain in our own bodies as trace elements, you see?

So right away, we have this holistic thing of life, you know, of where does this come from and what are we? We're energy. And somebody wanted their pottery critiqued, and they said, "Only in privacy, because when we critique your pottery, we're really critiquing your character."

MS. LAURIA: Was this seminar one day? Was it over the course of several days?

MS. LONGENECKER: It was one week, every day, all day—one week, and every minute fascinating. And the discussion was carried on by a wonderful—Bernard Leach, the Englishman who had written *A Potter's Book*, which Laura Andresen had given me when I graduated, you see. And Dr. Yanagi was very eloquent, a very brilliant scholar of Asia, probably one of the foremost. Most of his works are still in Japanese. But the Leaches translated his *Unknown Craftsman* [Soetsu Yanagi. Kodansha International, 1972] and some other things, which are just gems.

When I started Mingei International Museum, it was almost required reading. It was on every brochure to go and read the *Potter's Book* and the *Unknown Craftsman*, and so forth.

MS. LAURIA: And when you were sitting in this seminar back in 1952, had you any thought that you would someday be asked to found a museum?

MS. LONGENECKER: No, never knew, nothing. No, and there was no thought of my teaching then. Like I said, I was just totally occupied with pottery, which I loved. And I wasn't painting then because I couldn't do

everything. That had been my major before, but I was taking care of my child.

MS. LAURIA: And do you want to tell us a little bit about your life, as a wife and mother? I know that family is a theme that runs through your life as a mother, as a wife.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. Yes.

MS. LAURIA: What was your situation at this time? You had one child or—

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, my first child was born the year following my wedding, December 20, 1942. And he was—my first child was a daughter, Susan. And she was born on October 12 the following year. But she was born with a congenital heart, which at that time they didn't know how to fix. It was early in exploration. And she did have surgery when she was seven and didn't make it. A lot of them didn't make it. But she was a wonderful being. And she had her own kind of complete life, a very innocent life, a very pure life.

It's very interesting, as you get older and learn more about life, you don't see it as something so bad. You see it almost as a sort of sacred separateness, a purity. But my second child, Daniel, was born in 1948. And it just so happened, he had some problems, too. He had cerebral palsy. And so he didn't, you know, walk till he was four. And consequently, as a mother and father, we had exceptional children. And I spent a lot of time in that. But at the same time, because of that, I hadn't gone into any teaching or any other job. I was a mother and a potter, had my own studio and so forth. So then, the daughter had died in 1950, you see. And then it was '52 that Dr. Yanagi came over, and I took the seminar, and my mother took care of my son.

And then the big thing that happened there was that I was so blown away by the way their seminar brought all of life together, I no longer was thinking of my pottery as this craft and my learning it and loving it. And then this whole understanding of life and reading and all or something—it was one thing. It was totally one thing. And you saw that life was kind of an awakening experience and so forth and that—in Japan, the art is such a vehicle for that. The very act of preparing the clay and centering the wheel and forming it—it's just loaded with all of the implications and relationships of yourself being centered.

MS. LAURIA: And did you read or know about M.C. [Mary Caroline] Richards's book, which was titled *Centering in Pottery, Poetry, and the Person* [Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1964]?

MS. LONGENECKER: Not till after that. I don't remember what year that was. But now there's much more talk about—but there wasn't. So that's why it was so pivotal. And I—they, I guess, could see that I really got it, you know. I was like fertile earth that the seed fell on, you know. [Laughs.] I was just thrilled. And they wanted me to come to Japan right away. Of course, they didn't know about my family situation, and I couldn't do it. But they came to home and saw my studio and asked for a piece of pottery to take back to their museum and understood the whole thing.

And then a cousin of Dr. Yanagi, kind of a remote cousin, Sunni Sesaco [ph], had come over at the same time they had. And she stayed on for seven years. She went to Occidental College [Los Angeles, CA] and got her masters in French poetry. And we became friends immediately. She was living with the Runyons, the editor of the *Pasadena Star News* in Pasadena [Frederick G. Runyon]. And she would come out to Claremont. And then in the summers when I taught at Idyllwild Arts Foundation, she stayed with us in the mountains.

So life just kind of flowed. They went back. They wanted me to come, but I couldn't yet. And then—that was 52. And then in—what year was it? I guess it as 53, the very next year, I was contacted by USC. I had done some extended services classes for them at San Bernardino Valley College. And they—with Idlewild Arts Foundation, they had started—Bea and Max Krone started it. And they wanted me to come up and develop a ceramics program. And so I did that. And of course, Sunni came with us. And I'm trying to think how to answer your question.

MS. LAURIA: Well, I know that you got to San Diego because the dean came to see you. So we can jump over that part.

MS. LONGENECKER: Okay. Okay. Well, all right. Well, anyway, the point is, you asked about my family. And so it was family life. We talk about now—most people, if they're mothers, they're wholly on a job. We're all doing a lot of different things. We don't just set up a schedule and say, "I'm going to do this, this." We do what life requires at that moment. And so, although I had loved the seminar, I wasn't disappointed. I didn't feel like, just, you know, got to go to Japan. No, I just went on living. But what happened was that, I then was at Idyllwild. And then I got this call from—and I taught there three summers, and loved it. And there I became a close friend with Merce Cunningham, the dancer. And it was Marie and Miranda and all these very creative people.

But then I got this call wanting me to interview for teaching pottery at San Diego State. And I was a little bit flabbergasted. But it came to mind instantly, maybe this is what's supposed to happen. Maybe this is supposed

to be a way of my getting to Japan. Because I did understand that somehow I was destined to go to Japan, after meeting them and seeing the hugeness of it, you know. And that's exactly what happened. The Dean, Sorenson, came up with his wife in San Diego and had breakfast with my husband and me. And they saw my studio and the pottery, and they were convinced. And then I went down there and met wonderful Everett Jackson, the chairman, and all the other great people. And they hired me on the spot. They walked me over to the dean's office.

There had been 40 people competing for that job. And they had never found somebody they really wanted until —which made me feel very good. But it was a terrific change because we moved from Claremont and broke up the studio and—but it was better for my son, we thought. And then a miraculous thing happened. Ilsa Rooco had been the pottery teacher, and her husband the architect decided to move from their great architectural home. It was one that had been featured in *Architectural Digest*, a Ramdirth house. They were moving from it because the freeway was coming closer, taking part of their property. And they went to another area of San Diego and built a new house. And they wanted us to move into their house. And so we ended up moving into this great architectural home, which had a pottery studio, which had been Isla's. And also we had offices, which had been Lloyd's architectural—which my husband used. He was a general building contractor.

So each step in my life has been like something is there and moving you along, you know? And so—well, I used to go, "Okay, seventh year. Maybe I'll get a sabbatical." And what was so interesting was, I enjoyed my teaching and I enjoyed the students. And when that year came, I rather naively, as a young professor, said, "I'm going to apply for a sabbatical." And they said, "Oh, you won't get it. It takes you 20 years," and, "What a waste of time." And I completely believed them at first. I didn't apply. And then the faculty bulletin came out again and said, "This is the last day for people to try—you know, six years or more to apply for a sabbatical." And something said to me, "Well, what are you doing? You came down here, you know, started teaching because you needed to get a sabbatical and go to Japan, and now you're not applying," you know.

And so I walked over to the president's office. I've always believed in going to the top person whenever possible. And I didn't see him, but I saw his secretary. And I said, "I haven't applied, and I know it's the last day. But this is what I've been told." And she said, "Well, they're probably right. But if you will apply now, then if you get rejected, it goes on your chart as credits. And it's easier to get one next time around." I said, "Thank you so much." And I just went back to my office, sat down with no anxiety, wrote out exactly why I wanted to go to Japan, with whom I wanted to study. I knew all that—walked it back over and forgot about it.

About three months later, the dean, the same dean that had hired me, called me on the phone and said, "Sayonara." [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: I got this sabbatical. I can't tell you what that meant. I mean, to go around the world to Japan—I went through all my art history. I went back to New York and to England and, anyway, Holland and Italy and Turkey.

MS. LAURIA: How long?

MS. LONGENECKER: I spent—I would use three days or a week at these different places. So I can't remember the exact amount of time. I had a semester off. But I took the slow way back because my Japanese friends, Sunni and Hamada and all, had said, "Don't come here directly over the Pacific. It's too much of a cultural shock." And it would have been. It was so totally different. So like going that way and then going to India, where the pace of life slows down so much—I went to Bombay and New Delhi, just three kind of major places and then on. And then you get over to Singapore and life—the speed of life picks up. And Bangkok and—well, anyway, I got the feel of the world.

MS. LAURIA: And were you by yourself then?

MS. LONGENECKER: I was alone, but never alone. When you travel alone like that, and when you're young and have the energy, you're meeting people all the time. You're talking to them all the time.

MS. LAURIA: But you had to have a directive in your sabbatical application. Was it to study the—

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh, I made my own directive. I had written the thing that I—about the seminar, how I'd had the opportunity of meeting these people and had been invited to come over by Mr. Hamada. And what I wanted to learn and what the implications of that for my students and for the university, you know, which was tremendous. Because at that time, things weren't so world-oriented, you see? And of course, I came back so totally world oriented, started bringing people from India and all over the place. And so that was not difficult to write that up. But I didn't know when I went there exactly what I'd do. I knew I'd been invited.

And Dr. Yanagi had written me in 1961, when I first learned I was going to have it in the next year, and said,

could I please come right away rather than waiting, and there would be this wonderful Medieval ceramic show from England that Bernard Leach was bringing over and the different reasons. And also, he was writing with a pencil because he had had a stroke, you see. And I had to write and say, no, I can't change that. I have to wait for that semester. Well, he died before I got there. He evidently realized that.

And the other side of that sadness was that the spring when I got there, the spring of 1962, they had the memorial service for him at the top of Mount Koyasan, a very sacred Shingon Buddhist temple, which used to be restricted and only for men, but they had opened it up to women. And all of the few hundred members of the Mingei Association from all the islands of Japan were there for this memorial. And I was one of maybe three Caucasians. There was a man from Holland, and then there was the [Janet] Lippincott from Santa Fe that were there.

And it was also a place where Mr. Hamada was able to see that I met everyone from all over, because when I had gotten to Japan, again, it just seemed to be in the hands of fate. I'd had a note from him just a few days before I left home saying he would show me the best way of learning about Japanese pottery and to see him at a certain time after I got there, after he'd finished his show or something. But I went to a restaurant with my friend Sunni, you know, the woman who had come over with them and that I'd gotten acquainted with, and who was now technically my sponsor, vouching for me. And he and the owner of the restaurant walked in. They had just come back from Okinawa. And he just kind of laughed like this everyday occurrence, and after eating came over and sat down and dictated to Sunni all the places I was going to go and what I was going to do for the next three months.

And then he ended up saying, "And do you want to start by coming to Mashiko [ph]?" And so that's what happened. And he said, "Well, take the train to such-and-such-and-such." And then I said, "Well, I didn't know I'd get to actually make pottery until now. And I'm thrilled. But I didn't bring any work clothes." And he just kind of laughed and said, "Japanese work clothes." And I didn't bring tools. And, "Japanese tools." And finally, I just said —the popular expression of the day was, "Just bring my head?" And he laughed. And he shook his head, and he said, "No. Leave that behind." And that was really the key to the whole thing. It wasn't something as thinking and learning memories and association. It was direct perception and observing what they did. And he stressed that when I was there because it was never—it wasn't a lecture or anything. You just came, and you watched, and you participated as you could.

And he said he wanted me to come so that I could feel the spirit of the group, the way they worked together. And pottery is a teamwork in Japan. And there have those people who dig the clay and process the clay, and there are people who build the kilns, and there are other people who fire the kilns. And at the time you're loading the kilns, it takes lots of hands. And many times, both the men and women who have been working the rice fields, they are very skilled. They come in and do all of that and work on the clays. And they all enjoy each other so much. And it's a wonderful spirit.

And Mr. Hamada never signed his work. He said his work was the best signature. And very generous with it—they all worked together, and they felt quite comfortable to take any piece they wanted. In fact, they would often want to give me another piece, and I didn't take a piece from them at all. I took pieces from Mr. Hamada. But it's a totally different thing than what I had known in my limited life experience of, you're doing all of it, you know, loading the kiln and mixing the glazes and so forth. But then his plan was for me to get this big view after being there maybe six weeks, then to go on to visit these different kilns that he had laid out all over the islands, Kyushu [ph] in the south, Shikoku, and all of them. But he said to me, right away, when I got up there, that he was a wheel short. He had one more worker. And he wanted me to have a wheel to work on. And that the man who had formally apprenticed to him, Gotsuzu Shamokin [ph], lived next door and had his own kiln, had wheels, and we could go over and meet him and see if I could use a wheel there, and I could go back and forth between the two potters.

And so that's what happened. On the first day, we went over very formally, he—all this bowing and all. He asked Shamokin—Shamokin didn't speak any English or anything. And Hamada told me, yes, I could do that. And so sometimes I ate lunch at Shamokin's, sometimes I ate lunch with Mr. Hamada. But this way, as he said, I had the advantage of seeing all the work and seeing the difference in the firing, because that first day he took me and showed me Hamada's kilns.

He had two kilns. One was called little kiln, and I think it fired about 4000 pots, and then the big one, maybe 8,000. [Laughs.] And he showed me that he didn't have any damper on the kiln. The damper is the shelf, the ceramic shelf that slides in that controls the amount of draft going out the back of the kiln, because they are hillside kilns, going up, snakelike. And potters who want to control things very much and predict things then have to be very careful with the dampers and all of that. I think of Al King. He even used distilled waters when he made these things. But Hamada wanted nature to take over. So he showed me how he didn't control the kiln. And at that time, Mr. Shamokin had dampers on his, so he wanted me to see the difference because Shamokin was younger and did that.

MS. LAURIA: Is that what they refer to in Japanese as "the happy accident"?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, yes, although they don't call it an accident. It's working with other power. Constantly—Serisawa, the great painter and textile designer and so forth, who also came over to our university and taught—he had beautiful videos of him working and referring to "other power," meaning that if you know your media, the media has so much power in it, you know. It's part of this energy field of living nature and all. And you know your material, sensitive to it. And you're skilled with your own being. You can't be a great violinist unless you practice or pianist. Pottery is the same; you've got to be very skilled to know it so well you've forgotten it. They often said it's like a baseball player. They grab the ball and throw it without any thought. You've got to be that way.

But the poetry of it, the power of it, the individuality, the creativity, comes through you then. You're an instrument of it. So there's a lot to learn about this process and materials and developing your skill. But the other part is letting go, you see, not bringing your mind, not thinking that you're doing it all. It's just the opposite, the other power coming through. So he wanted to always work in a way where the fire could take over.

And of course, in Japan, the basic underlying philosophy is the Shinto. Even though you may be a Buddhist or a Christian, you're a Shinto. I mean, it's a gratitude for the natural world and the interconnection of everything. And you'd never fire a kiln in Japan at these people's places without the little ceremony of the sake in front of the kiln and the salt and throwing it in each direction, and bowing like you would before a Shinto shrine, and then starting the fire and letting it go and feeding the fire. It's very moving. Maybe you've seen some Japanese films related to that.

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

MS. LONGENECKER: So that you go there, and you're just caught up in this big living thing. And people work so hard making all these pots for months and then glazing them and loading the kiln and then firing it for three days and then letting it cool for days. And during those days, everybody just leans back, sleeps. It's so quiet. It's so wonderful. And then everybody starts to get excited because it's almost time to open, you know. And you gather around the kiln. And the doorways are bricked up. They aren't swinging doors like ours, mechanical. They're—and this is a chamber that goes up the hill. So they remove the bricks and all. And then one of the workers, usually, will go in and start bringing out the pot. And of course, Mr. Hamada is standing there, waiting to see it.

It's so cute because if the pot is real wonderful, they won't show it to him right away.

MS. LAURIA: They won't what?

MS. LONGENECKER: They have so much humor. They won't show it to him right away. They'll come out with this pot behind their back, see. And we're all looking, wanting to see and finally they bring it out. Then everybody said, "Ah." You know, they just love it. [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: Martha, to your knowledge, were you one of the first Americans to go to Japan to meet Mr. Hamada and be involved in the pottery?

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes, I think so. In 1952, the session in Los Angeles, the seminar, was the last of their stops on a round-the-world trip to meet and awaken young craftsmen to the essential need for us to continue to make and use things that are whole, that represent the unfragmented body, mind, and spirit of a human being. They predicted at that time that we would have a complete psychological breakdown of society if we continued just relying on machines, that a human being just developing the intellect and all.

And so, consequently, it was a very important mission for them. They had to wait a little bit of time after the war. You know, the war wasn't technically ended until '45, and there was a recovery. So this was '52, they managed to set this up. And they had had a big conference in England. And they had also gone up north to Montana where—I can't think of the name of the place.

MS. LAURIA: Archie Bray [Foundation, Bozeman, MT].

MS. LONGENECKER: Archie Bray. And it had different places. And also, I think, on to Texas. And I think that's where Bernard Leach met Janet, because he met—Bernard Leach, the Englishman, met an American along the way, whom he later married. But they got to L.A., and I was part of this group, smitten.

MS. LAURIA: Right.

MS. LONGENECKER: And so then later, I went over. But in the interval, in that 10 years before I got there, Janet Leach had now married Bernard. So she was at his place for a little while. And also, there was another young

man from Northern California. I can't think of his name—who went over for a short while. But that's the only one I know of. But Susan Peterson went as an observer, to write a book. But she didn't go over to study with him.

MS. LAURIA: Okay. So after this experience, with the three months that you had, who was taking care of your husband and your son?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, I had somebody at home that was doing that. And Daniel was also going to a private school at that time. My husband was a building contractor and just going on with his business.

MS. LAURIA: So you got back to San Diego State. And you told me that you were able to bring that world of knowledge back to your classes?

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh, yes, immediately, immediately. Well, what was so interesting was that Shamokin—I call him Sensei, which means "teacher," which you call a person you respect from Japan. He became a living treasure to Japan, like Hamada had become. And Hamada became that in the '50s. And he was so intrigued to think that I could have gone around the world and gotten there. And we shared the fact that we'd been so scared of each other, the countries, you know, before.

And I said, "Well, I was in the pottery lab making pottery when I heard that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, and I was horrified." And he said he was in school, and they got the word, "We're at war with the United States." And he thought, "What? Little Japan? We're at war with the United States?" He could almost see how impossible it was. And yet, he was drafted. He was off somewhere. And it was a very hard period.

So now, here I am, over there and loving pottery. And so I told him how I did it, I bought Europe on five dollars a day, and literally did it, stayed in two-dollar-a-night rooms and four flights up. I stayed at YMCAs and this whole thing, you know. Well, so, he wanted to do it, too. And the next year, he did. He always said Mr. Hamada had invited him to go with him, but he always traveled in a gorgeous way, which he couldn't afford.

But I immediately set it up for him to come over and demonstrate at the Pomona - is it called the Southern California Exposition? Or whatever it is—Richard Patterson was directing it at that time. They had the big art building, which Millard had set up earlier. And he had a big exhibition there, and then he had the demonstration. In fact, that wheel is the one he brought over to demonstrate that.

MS. LAURIA: Oh, you mean the L.A. County Fair [Los Angeles County Fairgrounds]?

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes.

MS. LAURIA: Okay, where Millard Sheets's gallery is.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes, uh-huh. Right, right. And it was a big thing up there. And then he also gave a seminar at San Diego State. And he gave one then at Long Beach [State University], which I'd arranged for the teacher. In other words, I helped him get money to set these things up so he could come.

MS. LAURIA: So he could work.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah, he could come over and exhibit and demonstrate. And then he went on to Europe and around the world, back to Japan. And that was the kind of beginning of our long friendship. And then I was back. I got some kind of a special grant six years later and went back. And then I got another sabbatical seven years from the first, and it became a regular thing. And Mr. Hamada came over in 63 and gave a lecture at the university. He wanted to give a seminar.

And I was so disappointed because we kept waiting for that letter. I wrote to San Diego State and to the administration that he was willing to come and give this—this great man to give this seminar, and couldn't get an answer. And finally when I got back, it was a pure thing of just, you know, why are you so favor the Japanese? You know, we had war with them. It was just unbelievable. It was unbelievable. They didn't realize what an opportunity had been lost.

But Long Beach—not Long Beach, but San Jose [State University] picked up on it. He waited for us, but we couldn't. So then he came then. But he came to L.A. first and came down here. And, you know, we had a lot of association going on. But there were other people in the Mingei Association, came over, too. Kaskey Serisawa, who is a living treasure with designing and painting and textiles—not only did he do a big show for us when we opened the museum—and this was in 1980. It was similar to the show he put on in Paris and brought over. But he—and another year came over and taught summer session at San Diego State. And it was fabulous.

MS. LAURIA: So there was a great cross-polinization.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. And then so many—the papermakers. We did a show—and, oh, the name was Abian

[ph]. And all the papermakers contributed to a big paper show. But then also, the people from India, which I had visited in both directions—I've got so many, so many of these people. They became involved. So what was happening was, at the university all this was going on. And so later, after I had met my second husband—my first husband is deceased—Sydney Martin Roth—he saw what I was doing, bringing these people from England and India. And he said, "You ought to be a nonprofit." [Laughs.] I said, "What's that?" And he said, "Well, you could at least get some donations to help facilitate this." [Laughs.]

And he paid for getting incorporated as Mingei International, with the simple mission of furthering the understanding of the art of the people from all cultures of the world, you see. There was no plan to do a museum. How could there be a plan?

MS. LAURIA: And what year was this, Martha?

MS. LONGENECKER: That was in—we finished the incorporation in '74. But actually, I began it in '72. And then my mother, my wonderful mother, was in her late 80s. And she developed cancer. And there was a period of being in the hospital. And we just put it on the back burner. The lawyers said, "Put it on the back burner." And then after she died, at the end of '73, we picked it up again, and we became fully incorporated as a nonprofit, public one in '74.

MS. LAURIA: So what—how would you explain the term Mingei to people who are not familiar with it?

MS. LONGENECKER: Okay. It's a little hard unless the people have some familiarity with the way things are made and done. So many people only have bought manmade things and have no idea. But it was coined by Dr. Yanagi because there was no word in any language to represent what they were trying to awaken in people. And that was the realization and awareness of what a human being is, the total being, that it's not a separate body and a mind and spirit put together. It's something that is born, is a unity. And the danger is the fragmentation of it. It's kind of like Humpty Dumpty can't be put back together again. It's the same thing. And so it's a very subtle thing, it's a very deep thing. It's what has always been talked about by Christ and Lao-tzu and Buddha and everything. It's the unity of life.

And Krishnamurti keeps stressing, you are the world. You are the world. Everything you do affects this whole world. Everything that you do affects me. We're not separate. We are of such a terrific energy field, a magnetic energy field. It's all interconnected, you see. So they—Dr. Yanagi goes very deep. And I had written about this in the book I wrote on Mingei of Japan, the Legacy of the Founders. Dr. Yanagi is an exceptional man, a brilliant young man of a high-bred, well-to-do family, went to the best school, Peers School. He had as his teacher, for instance, growing up, the great Suzuki, the Zen man. He had a great man, scientist from Germany. And when he was still in his teens, he was writing all these documents. I think it was on [Walt] Whitman and so forth.

And here in England, Bernard Leach was steeped, again, in all of this. So Yanagi realized, finally, that his lifelong search for truth had led him to the everyday art of the people, the expression of normal, natural people. And he started collecting these beautiful old rice bowls and sake cups or whatever, or the weavings. And he was a man sought after, a very high-level scholar of Asia. So he was taught at—was it Harvard [University, Cambridge, MA]? I think it was Harvard—when he was young. He was here for a year. And during that time—he'd also been to Europe and many places and had discovered Korea, and that's a whole other wonderful story.

MS. LAURIA: But you chose this name because you were committed to that principle?

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes.

MS. LAURIA: And that's what you aspired to do by bringing people from other cultures over to show whoever would attend—

MS. LONGENECKER: That's right. Whoever's ready for it.

MS. LAURIA: Right. And that was open to students, teachers? Was it open to the public?

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh, it's open to everybody. Of course, if you were going to take a course in the summer, you would have to go through signing up for the course. Just like, when I took this seminar, we had to pay our 35 dollars and, you know, sign up for it.

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

MS. LONGENECKER: But the thing is, when he taught that year—I think it was 1918; I forget these dates correctly—at Harvard, that's when he really saw how the Industrial Revolution had come in and changed America so much. And he saw the effects of the Industrial Revolution in England. And of course, you had the whole Morris craft movement and so forth. So when he went back to Japan, at that time, he became very serious, dedicating

the rest of his life to awakening people to the need. And he at that time, along with—he chose a bunch of [Carl] Jung's disciples gathered around him, these potters and craftsmen. And it was the two potters Kiwaif and Kyojo [ph], and Hamada Femashiko [ph] that started the Mingei Association and coined the word then by joining, the word meaning "everyone," men, in with men, with the word for "art," G-E-I, which is a very soft word. It's kind of "gay, gay, Mingei." Then they built the first museum in '36.

But before that, they had been collecting like mad all these things that most people didn't want. And then they offered to give it to the government, to the National Museum, to have this big section on Mingei. The government wasn't interested, you know. [Laughs.] And they said it was lucky for them, because, of course, they had to bury everything during the war and all. But after the war, they could get it out. So they went on with their legacy, you see.

MS. LAURIA: And this was a good paradigm for you.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah, it was a perfect time for me. But what's important to remember about that word is that, when they started, they were gathering things that were abundant. It was normal and natural from the pre-industrial way of life for people to make things beautifully and et cetera and to have that timeless quality. After the industrialization, that was no longer true. And so Dr. Yanagi talked a lot about the unknown craftsman, the people from the country. But Hamada was not from the country, nor was Leach, nor was Kuwai [ph]. But they were people who in their teens chose pottery and had gone to technical school and all. So they were delighted and eager when they met Yanagi, because he kind of put it together for them like he put it together for me, you see.

And so many people said, "Well, they're not really Mingei because they're not from the country." It doesn't have anything to do with that. It has to do with the state of mind. And I think that great woodblock writers, probably the greatest one of the twentieth century, Ashiko Munikata [ph], summed it up because he was like pure electricity. He could work so fast and his things were wonderful. And people kept saying he's such a genius. Nobody else can do that. He could go into a gallery and put up the blank scrolls and paint the whole show.

And he said, "No, I'm not a genius. I'm a remnant. I'm a remnant from those pre-industrial people who did this." And if you look at the Imma [ph] paintings on all the things and all the woodblock things of Kabuki, it's fantastic what these people—so he was a remnant. And when Hamada works or any of them, they say they want to work from a state of mind that's not yet born. He's used those exact words with me when we were alone and unloading a kiln once. He said—you know, we looked at a certain pot. "Yes, that one is good. I wish to always work from that state of mind that's not yet born." In other words, not of the state of mind of planning and thinking, dah-dah-dah. But working with the elements and the fire and the clay and the water and with the other power, you see.

At the same time, realizing you have to be very skillful. And it doesn't matter whether you live in Manhattan or you live in a little village. It's that quality of mind, that centeredness and oneness, which they said in their first lesson at the seminar, begins with humility. It's a complete reversal of what's often used in the New World, where it's this great little genius that's born and can make beautiful things. Everyone is born with the spirit. But it has to be recognized.

MS. LAURIA: So your mission that you recognized at this time, when you and your husband incorporated the Mingei, was to bring this spirit to those who were interested in it and could come and either register to school or be involved in one of the seminars.

MS. LONGENECKER: Right. Whoever. Yes.

MS. LAURIA: And you would have these internationally important, significant figures come over and conduct—

MS. LONGENECKER: It was—we were already doing it. Nelly Sethna [ph], a weaver from India, and her husband, a filmmaker, Hakusha [ph], curator of the Tribal Research Museum, they were all coming. In fact, some of them would meet me in Japan. It was so funny. At Mashiko where I was making pottery, Hakusha and his wife in her sari arrived at the train station in Mashiko. No, and the students loved it. And it was just not unnatural. I didn't dream there would be a museum, at all.

MS. LAURIA: Well, how did that happen? Because that's such an interesting point that—you're teaching. It's in the '60s. You—

MS. LONGENECKER: I taught from 1955 to 1980, full time. And then from 1980 to 1990, I taught one semester a year. But I took two of them off, so I really only taught eight because I had started the actual museum, which we'll talk about later. We opened it in May 5, 1978. So it had a lot of things going on.

So how did the museum start? Okay. It was just a natural flow, with a very exciting university life and all these

people coming and all, which my husband observed. And he was quite an entrepreneur, and so he got me incorporated. [Laughs.] And then one of our members was Judy Munk. She was an architect and wife of the famous geophysicist Walter Munk, the great oceanographer. And she herself was an unusual person. She had had infantile paralysis and been on an iron lung, and married and had four children, and always was in a wheelchair, but lived a dynamic life. And my first husband was a building contractor, and he had built part of their home for them. So I knew her well.

And she was one of the first to join Mingei International after we announced it. This organization existed from the end of '74 to 1976. And then I realized, spiritually and all, that with the birth of this nation, that we had to publicly announce Mingei. So we sent a letter out to maybe 200 or 300 friends and people we knew of. And we got back like 200 members, because it only cost you 15 dollars. And Judy was a member. And so we were kind of a museum without walls. Shamokin came over and did a show at the La Jolla Art Center, and various things were going on.

MS. LAURIA: And did you have a collection at that time?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, I had my collection, which was big—and ask me again about that in a few minutes, how it ties in with Mr. Hamada. So all of a sudden, then, in 1977, it had been announced just the year before, and Judy called and said University Town Center was in the planning stage next to the university. And it was to be a town center like you have in Europe, where you have ice skating rinks and theaters and restaurants and all kind of things, besides your big Robinsons and shopping things.

And that the founder, Ernest Han, and his architect, wanted a museum there. And she thought it would be such a delightful idea if our new foundation, Mingei, would do a museum there. And I was flabbergasted. And my exact words, which I've quoted many times, were, "Judy, you are nuts." [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: And, oh, she thought it would be so great. And I said, "But it's so premature. We've got two or three thousand dollars in the bank, which is great for what we're doing." I said, "Look. I'm a mother. I'm a full-time teacher. I don't know anything about a museum. I'm a potter." Didn't matter—didn't matter to Judy, she's a big spirit. And she's insisting on sending the head of the committee to my house. And then he saw my collection, which is fabulous, from all over the world. So he went just as nutty. He thought he could just see this and what it would do for their center.

And ultimately, I met with the group to tell them, again, that it would seem to be an impossibility, because I had incorporated with my best friend Althea [ph], who has passed on now, and my colleague at San Diego State, Frank Patwick [ph], who has passed on by now. And we were just fine with all of our artist friends and doing this at the university. But we were all busy, and we didn't really have time. And we had no plans.

And what they were offering was at that time maybe 4,000 square feet and for five years. And I said, "Well, we couldn't start anything, you know." And they said, "Well, how long does it take to start?" I said, "I think to start something is about 20 years." And anyway, they said, "We'll give you 20 years, a dollar a year, and 6,000 square feet if you will architecturally design and build out the, you know, interior." And this was where religion comes in, again. Again, I thought, how is this possible?

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: I'm certainly not capable of it. My little life experience has not prepared me to do this. And yet, here they are. This is an unprecedented offer—never before. That's a business world, offer a new organization a chance to have a museum. And what an opportunity for furthering the understanding of Mingei, if there could be, do you see? So I had to just take it totally by faith and say to them, "I cannot make a commitment because I have no background for doing this. But I can try." And I said, "It's going to be up to the community. We're going to find out whether they want this or not."

And so that's the spirit I took it on with. And it was amazing. There was an article in the newspaper, and the doctors knights [phonetic] read it and took me to lunch and gave me 5,000 [dollars], and, oh, all kinds of—the Irvine Foundation gave an initial 15,000 [dollars] matching, but I had applied for 35 [thousand dollars]. But the next year, they gave us the rest.

MS. LAURIA: Did you have employees at this time?

MS. LONGENECKER: No, no, no employees. No. There was no money. I finally, in that last year, employed somebody for three dollars an hour or something to kind of help me with some things—no, not at all.

MS. LAURIA: So it was all volunteers?

MS. LONGENECKER: All volunteers. But of course, the circle of friends was fantastic. The great folksinger and oceanographer, Sam Hinton, one of my closest friends, his wife and he had gone to UCLA with me. She was a potter and a weaver. Barbara and Fred Myers—he had been a university professor. They were the ones that were friends of [inaudible] and Gerard traveled with him, collected with him—were the main agents for bringing Mexican folk art into the United States. Just huge circle of wonderful people—Laura Andresen, all these things.

So we had just great riches that way. And also, great world connections—I immediately started an international advisory board. And they were the top people Comodaby Chattabadaya [ph] of India, Ajet Mukejy [ph] of India, university professor and representative of the United Nations from Korea. You know, Hamada, Serisawa, Yanagi, and all over. We had these connections so that, here it was kind of a living thing, everybody waiting for this thing to be born. And miraculous things happened that year.

MS. LAURIA: That was 1978?

MS. LONGENECKER: That was starting in '77. We had to demonstrate to them by the end of '77 that we could do it. They would not give us this 20-year lease until they saw we had the money in the bank, the whole thing. They feared letting some new organization start to build and have something unfinished and their being in a financial mess, which I understand. So we had less than a year, probably about seven months, to do all of this. We had—it sounds ridiculously small now. But at that time, 104,000 [dollars] was a lot of money. It was more like a million now. And we had to raise that much, you see.

But what you call divine providence entered in every dimension. One of the main ones was that, first we had to have the architectural design. It was a rather unusual shaped space that we were having on this. And it's really amusing to think about a California arts—the state commission for arts was giving grants of 350 dollars to organizations to help with their architectural planning. Nothing is that small today. It's all, you know, but in those days—And so I wanted to apply, but you had to have an architect's signature, and I didn't have one.

But again, it was all taken care of. There was—Beatrice Wood, who was a close friend, had a German scientist that I had met and stayed with. And that scientist had come and stayed with me. And she was here. And she—anyway, she was connected with people in India. And the whole thing just came together.

MS. LAURIA: So you made the commitment. You went the distance. And in that years' time, you were able to raise the funds.

MS. LONGENECKER: We were able to—at such a—the whole thing is a fantastic story, and so it's difficult for me to talk about. How in the world can I select things out? I would say one of the big things that happened in that was, we had gotten to the point where we had the amount of money that we originally had needed six months earlier, from the early bids. But it was a time of surge in real estate. So when it went out to bid, we didn't have enough.

And wonderful Bob Peterson, who had developed Jack in the Box after his father started it, and then later had many other things, and then he ended up being the husband to the mayor and so forth, was in our circle of friends. I had never personally known him, but he was married to one of the close friends of Althea. And so he called me and said he heard we were trying to do something, and went up there with me and climbed the hill. It was a pile of dirt—and learned about it, and then ended up giving us a huge chunk of money, 43,000 [dollars] or something, which we needed, you know. It was to be anonymous. And I kept it anonymous, but later he couldn't keep it anonymous, he was so proud of the museum. And he brought Barbara Rockefeller there and everybody from Europe. [Laughs.] It was just wonderful, these things that happened.

But then another strange thing happened. At the very end, because of this surge that was going up, we still couldn't afford it. And yet time was up. And one of these general contractors insisted that I contract it. And I kept telling him, no, I wasn't going to do that. I'd been married to a general building contractor, so I know what's involved. But he finally convinced me that—in his words, we would save a hell of a lot of money, and he shouted, "Hell of a lot of money," and demonstrated how, dah-dah-dah. And I still said, "But I can't. I'm teaching, I'm a mother. I can't do it." And he said, well, he'd give me a superintendent who could do it for 100 dollars a week. So he gave me his great superintendent. And working with him, we did it.

But looking back, it just seems impossible.

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: And then people would say, "What are you going to do now?" And I'd say, "I don't know." [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: Now you have the space.

MS. LONGENECKER: But anyway, everything unfolded because I mentioned the older sister of my first friend in the first grade who was an artist, three years older, and how she had become head of docents, and then she—her husband retired. He was superintendent of schools at L.A. County. And they moved to Delmar. And L.A. County Museum of Art gave her a membership in Mingei International.

MS. LAURIA: Wonderful.

MS. LONGENECKER: One of our first shows had been of Mary Hunt Concord, who had been a curator up there. And we used her collection for an Indonesian show. So they were well aware of us. So Connie didn't even know I was connected with it, but came on in and found out it was her childhood friend. And she immediately took over, organized the docents and got things going.

And that's what happened, and still happens. All of these people are just all over the world. They're just all waiting. And they come in and they—

MS. LAURIA: They connect.

MS. LONGENECKER: They do these things.

MS. LAURIA: Let's stop there.

[END MD 02.]

MS. LAURIA: This is tape number three, continuing interview with Martha Longenecker at her home and studio in La Jolla for the Archives of American Art on July 29.

And during the break, Martha mentioned two very important things that have connected with her throughout her career and her journey on this path. And it involves the Dalai Lama and [Jiddu] Krishnamurti. So Martha is going to talk a little bit about that. I have to pause the tape for a second, and then she'll come back.

[END MD 03 TR 01.]

MS. LAURIA: All right, Martha, you want to tell us about the pillars in your life that have been instrumental in your development?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, I guess if I think about it, it's almost like a forest of trees because I can remember all my life these important people and in retrospect thinking that without them or their specific total actions at the time, my life would have been completely different. And I mentioned that it was a pivotal point in my life. In 1952 I met Dr. Yanagi and, of course, Bernard Leach from England, and Hamada. But it's been many things.

After going to Japan on sabbatical in '62 the first time, and coming back, I was filled with this— and the next year Mr. Hamada came over, as I mentioned, and Shamokin came over. But I also was introduced to some neighbors, too, a great world teacher of the twentieth century, J. Krishnamurti. He was giving some summer lectures at Ojai [Art Center, Ojai, CA]. And so I went up. And I think I went up with my husband at the time. And then I was just shocked by the similarity of what he was saying and what I had learned through Dr. Yanagi, which had to do with the totality of interrelationship of all things. And Krishnamurti would repeat, "You are the world. And your relationships to another is society."

And I realized that they were saying the same thing, coming from different cultures. So I wondered about this a lot. And I had gone to hear Krishnamurti in Switzerland in summer of 1968. And that was just before I was going back to Japan on my second trip. And it was a wonderful week seminar at Gestalt, to which I had been drawn because three different friends had written me and wanted me to go. And I had been taught as a child by my mother to pay attention to threes. If there was anything in threes, you'd better take notice.

So I had gone and enjoyed it very much. And the next to the last day, there was the announcement that J. Krishnamurti again would be traveling around the world giving his talks as he did and would be returning to the United States. So I went to Alan Nadi [ph], who was coordinating the event, and said, "Is there any chance he could come to San Diego, talk to the students?" Because I was—everything was centered around my teaching the students. Next day he came back and said yes, Krishnamurti said yes, but not just because you think so, which was an interesting, simple answer. I said okay, I understand. And I went through all the procedures of bringing him over.

And ultimately, it resulted in his needing to stay at my home, my moving out and giving my home over to him and Mary Zimbalist, who was traveling with him and helping him in the last maybe 15 years of his life. And so there they were in my house, and the pottery, and the textiles of Japan and all. And I never liked to bother him, engage him in any conversations—everybody is after him. It was just always the essentials like the cat. You know, where's the cat's brush? And I'd get it for him and so forth. [Laughs.] And he was so charming.

But one day I said to him, looking at several Hamada pots setting there. And I said, this man with whom I studied in Japan, Shoji Hamada, I believe works from that state of mind you are describing in your work. And he said—these are his exact words, "You are quite right." And so I understood, then, yes, it was the same. And that's such an important point because that's really what the legacy is about and what I'm about in my life, helping people to recognize the creative world and that they are that world, and it's normal and natural for them to do this.

And beginning with that point, with his coming to San Diego, my life took another huge pivotal change. I met at that time the man who was to become my future husband, Sydney Martin Law. He had about at the same time, the year before, realized that Krishnamurti, this great teacher, was not being documented with videotape, still was a little tiny little hand-tape, and his books were not being published on paper that was going to last. Most of them were from India. And that he was regarded more as such a sacred man, you know, rather than letting the whole world know about him.

Well, my husband was a mass marketing genius. And so he approached the Krishnamurti Foundation and, on his own, pro bono, he offered to do something about this. So when Krishnamurti came to have the dialogs with the students, my husband had a camera crew there. And they put that on, and then they didn't take that camera off, and they documented the whole thing. And then the next—I had met him on that occasion, but I didn't have a chance to know him. He was older than I, about 17 years older. And so the next year, Krishnamurti was talking at Santa Monica. And I went up to that—again very interesting reasons. I went up, and following it, Martin called me and said, "Well, hello there," because he had met me before. And we ended up, anyway, later having dinner and being a pair from then on. We became married and we were together for 20 years.

But that 20 years, from 1970 up to 1990, which is when I finished all my teaching at San Diego State, but been developing the museum, I was with him. And Mingei International would never have been incorporated if it wasn't his idea of realizing that what I was doing was nonprofit work, you see. And he was such a help. He was our management consultant. He knew how to do things right. He'd say, "Don't make that little tight esthetic in gray. Make it so everybody can read it. Not everybody has 20/20 vision." And sensible things, you know, name cards, et cetera. And he set up the revolving publication fund with 50,000 [dollars] that he was administering as a trust for someone else, and then later he put more in from his own.

So that we published from our first show on. Now, we weren't able to do one for every exhibition, because we did a lot. But we've done a tremendous amount. But the last book we did was—that I did was in 2006. And we've got all of these publications. So he was certainly one of the big things of founding our museum. And from the beginning, our museum, once we could get it built—I've talked about that—was set up to continue. First of all, we opened with a 20-year, dollar-a-year lease on this gorgeous piece of property, you see, with no taxes. We had a pro bono lawyer for 15 years who managed to do a contract where we didn't have to take care of the outside and all this wonderful thing. I had a big collection we used. All my friends had big collections. So we could start off with that.

And then a rather miraculous thing happened later, because there were other people like Martin who had a big vision about the world. And that was an anonymous donor that came to us a few years prior to our moving into the new museum in Balboa Park, which was a huge transition. An anonymous foundation—Jack Shiny [ph] was the attorney who contacted me. And we just learned in 2006, when Margaret Cargill died, that she was the anonymous benefactress, who had started off with giving us 75,000 [dollars] a year for me to create videotapes.

And that had started because we had the beautiful books. She knew that. But she wanted to do something for this museum that we couldn't do, and didn't want it to be operations or anything. And so because Martin was doing all these videos for Krishnamurti, I said, okay, videos. And they liked it. So we started documenting. We have so many marvelous videos.

MS. LAURIA: And do they include openings and workshops and speaking engagements?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, the videos are videos in themselves, and it includes a lot of things. But for instance, one of them was on the show called "Kindred Spirits, the Eloquence of Function of Japanese Traditional Things."

MS. LAURIA: And Shaker.

MS. LONGENECKER: And Shaker.

MS. LAURIA: Which I saw at the Asian museum when it traveled to San Francisco.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. Yes. And the "Beaded Universe," the beads from all over the world; and the "North American Indian Adornment"—that's a beauty.

MS. LAURIA: So you have a film library now, film archive.

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh, yes, huge.

MS. LAURIA: That has been documenting your whole history, starting from when, Martha?

MS. LONGENECKER: It doesn't really—the whole history is so much bigger than these little—

MS. LAURIA: But I mean, it is picking up threads each year throughout the time?

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. As I say, it hasn't been approached from the standpoint that, did we get everything for this year? It's just a matter of what I can in a formal interview, like this—I was asked and could answer. And then we have the books and videos, which are so important for continuing the legacy.

But prior to my coming to the point where I felt that I should turn over the daily operations of the museum in order that I could focus on other things, I had initiated a program called See Mingei. It's a window to the creative world, and with grants from the [inaudible] Foundation and Margaret Cargill's anonymous foundation.

She was very advanced in her thinking. I didn't realize that when I was teaching at Idyllwild long ago, she had a mountain cabin up there. So she was evidently aware of it, and she was aware of the little museum here. But she would never allow anyone to know about her. She supported 25 charities in the United States. And it included the Episcopal home, the Salvation Army, KBBS, a big thing, and the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of the American Indian. Aside from that museum, we were the only other one she supported, you see. And she always supported it in a very special way.

I just feel I have to mention her because she is an example of these wonderful people you don't know about behind the scenes that care so much and are doing so much. We were told after her passing that if any one of the institutions she was supporting had found out and revealed her name, automatically all gifts would have been stopped to all of them. Fortunately, that never happened.

MS. LAURIA: So how long were you at the Town Center?

MS. LONGENECKER: We were there 20 years. But we moved to our new location at the end of our 18th year. When we started the museum—as I said, I didn't even know if we could do it. And so when they talked about a 20-year lease, I thought, "Well, gosh, that's a long time. I'm not even going to be on the planet for that time, and certainly not running a museum." Little did I know. But at least five years before we moved, we started then locating a new place. And that was—that's a long process. But we were fortunate to finally be given the new space of the newly rebuilt House of Charm and it's a 41,000-square-foot space, which we have for a 50-year lease, renewable and so forth.

MS. LAURIA: Well, did you find that you had to move because the lease was coming up to expire?

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. You see, Ernie Han had passed on. And we had a 20-year lease, which at a dollar a year—which is a big gift from the commercial world. And there are different people now buying into it. And also, it was too small for us. We outgrew it so very quickly.

MS. LAURIA: And in terms of members, so we can get an idea of how big you grew, what was your membership like when you first started out, and what is it now?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, it started with a couple of hundred people. I don't really know now. I'm just terrible on numbers like that. I suppose it's around 3000 people; I don't know. It's funny. I recall as a child when I'd go to a birthday party and I'd come back, my father would say, "Well, how many were there?" I said, "I don't know." [Laughs.] I've never been particularly quantity-oriented. But there have been just so many people who have made this thing possible.

MS. LAURIA: Well, you also mentioned the Dalai Lama.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes.

MS. LAURIA: How does he figure into the story?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, in that, I guess, you know, when you're—you grow up and you're kind of maturing, you become interested in all things. And then you also—at least, I think we're all attracted to different things. Early—the first piece of jewelry I ever bought was a Tibetan prayer charm, cost 45 cents in Old Chinatown, Los Angeles. Every time I had another 45 cents, I'd go buy another one until I have a whole necklace of them. I haven't worn it for a long time. I was just attracted to those things. And I'm always attracted to anything I've heard about him. And I was given the book, Tibet—what was it?—is it *Seven Years in Tibet*, by Heinrich Harrer [London: R. Hart-Davis, 1953]? I read that, and so forth.

And then I had the great fortune in the '60s of an Indian friend, a poet, an Indian poet who was visiting in La Jolla. And he had rented an apartment for a while—coming to me and my husband and saying the brother of the Dalai Lama, Tworpto Norbu [ph], was the—had been the chief abbot of the Qumbu Monastery on the Chinese border. And he had come to our country, and he was giving a lecture out at San Fernando Valley College. And he needed a ride. He didn't do commercial things. He had a wife now and two very little, little children. And I later learned his history, which I have to tell you a little bit about.

Anyway, we agreed to go up and pick him up and take him to San Fernando and bring him back. Well, it was fascinating. He showed the homemade movie of the escape of the Dalai Lama from Lhasa [Tibet] down to India, where they established the Dharmasala, a monastery, and told us the whole story about he, as the abbot of the monastery, had negotiated for years, thinking he could negotiate with China to leave them alone. But when it got to the point where they were absolutely going to murder the Dalai Lama, he had to pretend that, you know, he was accepting everything. They wanted to make him the Dalai Lama and all that sort—a very brilliant man and a man capable of concealing his feelings—got on whatever it was, yak or whatever. They didn't have wheels then in Tibet, made his way up to Lassa; it took a long time. Told his brother he must leave.

But still, the Dalai Lama would not leave. And he would only leave when they actually attacked. So he was prepared. And when they came and were really after him, he was taken down the back way disguised as a peasant, and so forth. And they photographed the whole thing. But he told us all the truth about all of this, because his mission in life now was to come to America to do this.

Now, what had happened to him? After he told the Dalai Lama, he had to get out of Tibet fast; he would have been murdered. So he went down the back way. And he went to Japan. And he was five years at the Ditokagi [ph] compound. I think it was five; it's what I remember. But the beautiful Buddhist compound in Kyoto, where you have the wonderful sand gardens and all—so that's where he was.

Now, he had been celibate, a priest, up to this time. But he also realized now, with the attack on Tibet and the slaughter of the people and the fact that the Chinese were forcing the women to marry—Tibetan women to marry Chinese, they wanted to get rid of the race—that it was important that he have children. So he took a Tibetan wife and had the two children. We met them. And then after—that all happened, but after the monastery. But now he was traveling and talking to people.

It was such an amazing thing. And again, always the university—I said well, students need to hear this. Can you come? And he said, well, he had his schedule. This was a Sunday night; next weekend was taken. He said, "All I could do would be to come in the middle of the week." I said, "Okay, I'll see what I can do." I went to my eight o'clock pottery class and, who should walk in but Dr. Theobold [ph], professor of literature, a very spiritual, beautiful man. And he just kind of dropped by to say hello. But he'd never visited me in my pottery before, which was remarkable.

So I immediately thought, "Oh, my God, something is happening here." And I immediately said I had met this man and that he could come. And in a few words, he said, "You've given me the ball. I'll run with it. Forget it, Martha. Call me back in a hour. I've got the auditorium, I've got the honorarium. We're all set. Phone him." [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: It was just done for me. So I called him, and then we arranged to pick him up, and picked him up and all. And then my Indian friend, Tarasine [ph] the poet, moved out of his apartment. It was on the water in La Jolla. And the four of them moved in for three days. [Laughs.] I called Abby Ranz [ph] and [inaudible] and bought the little children little charms, you know. It was so funny.

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: But it was just so natural, you know? And they were lovely, and they came over to my house for dinner, and I cooked leg of lamb because I knew Tibetans liked lamb. And I didn't have the right kind of tea, but we poured salt in it. [Laughs.] I mean, it was really hilarious.

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: And at that time, I was still potting. You know, I had my little pottery studio at home, as well as teaching. And when they went away, I made him a tea bowl, a white tea bowl. And I knew I made it for him. And I put it in the kiln and fired it, and astoundingly, when it came out, it had a beautiful red glow on the side of it. You say miraculous—well, it happened because there was a copper piece in the kiln near it. I didn't deliberately put it there. But it was there, and in the heat of the kiln, it bloomed off onto it. So it was just amazing.

So anyway, that was my first contact with the Dalai Lama because he said that they were 10 percent, the Tibetan population in the United States, the four of them, because there were only 40 Tibetans.

MS. LAURIA: Wow.

MS. LONGENECKER: I think it was 1964 or something—in the United States. So right away, I felt closer. And then I was invited to go to Switzerland later, some kind of a gathering, you know, of—I've added some beautiful name to it, transcendental something. It wasn't a society, but—

The Dalai Lama was coming. Mother Teresa was there. There were maharajas, there were ordinary people. There were all the people interested in the whole creative, spiritual, energy world, you know. And I was asked to decorate the meditation room. And so I took over a wonderful Krishnamurti big cloth painting that I had acquired in India and put it up.

Okay. So then the time came for our whole group to assemble in a big hall. And the Dalai Lama is coming to meet us before his talk. And everybody said, well, he's coming in now. And everybody kind of froze in a big ring around the room. And the door opened, and the Dalai Lama strolls in with the biggest beam you can imagine, just radiant. [Laughs.] And his men around him, you know. And everybody is just [silent]. And I thought it was so funny. It just happened automatically. I looked at him. And I know I had the biggest laugh on my face, thinking, why are these people so scared of him, you know? [Laughs.] And he caught it. He caught it. And he right away said, "You"—pointing at me—"come over here." [Laughs.] Like this. I sat down next to him. And I was able to very quickly say, "I've met your brother. [Inaudible] been around, dah-dah-dah-dah-dah, just something, you know, that little bit.

MS. LAURIA: So he knew the background.

MS. LONGENECKER: And he's very quick. He's very quick. He'd probably already heard, anyway, you know. He probably knew who I was, being the kind of person he is, you know.

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

MS. LONGENECKER: And so there was that. And then I later was invited to a luncheon by him, but I got a phone call saying the Dalai Lama needed to know the name of a particular doctor such-and-such. And I said, well, I don't know it, but I can—I'll get it. And then I'd been to lectures where he kind of [inaudible]. I mean, never have had another conversation with him. But I feel in touch with him. I read his things. And it's so pure, it's so beautiful.

I have a little plant on my porch right out here that is one branch of a plant from his altar, of a plant that a friend brought me. I have a friend who travels all over and goes to his conferences and so forth. We put that thing in water, and it rooted, and I put it in earth, and it's growing. It's out there. So I just feel like the whole maybe Quaker heritage that I had, and later joining the Episcopal church, teaching Sunday school, studying Kierkegaard and all these things—C.S. Lewis and meeting Yanagi and learning about Shinto and Buddhism and having that little personal contact there.

And then the Krishnamurti, which became such a huge part of my life because that last—how many years of life would that have been? That would have been 50, 70—it would have been maybe about the last 25 years of my husband's life was all devoted to Krishmamurti work. And so we were there a lot. And it involved—

But you see, it wasn't as if I was just doing that. I had been teaching, and now I was working on the museum. So there was this kind of energy, this kind of people pouring their energy into it.

MS. LAURIA: Did you ever connect that to the museum in a specific way? Or was it more in—

MS. LONGENECKER: Not in any way like an exhibition or trying to explain it, because you can't explain this kind of thing to a person who is not already in it.

MS. LAURIA: Um-hm. [Affirmative.]

MS. LONGENECKER: And understand how this flows.

MS. LAURIA: But you did collect from these countries.

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh, yes. Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

MS. LAURIA: So you could integrate some of that knowledge.

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh, yeah, these Tibetan things. And now, I'm a friend of a beautiful Tibetan doctor, Loksan

Dundra [ph], a marvelous Tibetan doctor who also went to Mongolia for many years. He's now here in California. He's in San Diego a couple of days a week. And a close, long-time friend of mine of 40 years who's the director of the Tibetan Healing Center—and she handles [inaudible] beginning of the museum. I mean, everybody—it's such a network that has brought this together.

MS. LAURIA: Well, Martha, I know it's hard because you've been involved in the museum for, you know, more than 30 years.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah.

MS. LAURIA: But what are some of the memorable collections that you've acquired?

MS. LONGENECKER: Okay.

MS. LAURIA: Or perhaps some of the more lasting memories of exhibitions that you organized?

MS. LONGENECKER: All right.

MS. LAURIA: And why do you think that they hold a greater significance in your life than maybe others?

MS. LONGENECKER: Okay. Well, first of all, when we started the museum, nobody understood what Mingei was about. And they also didn't understand folk art, even. It was like, "Oh, we're only interested in fine arts," you know, not realizing the depth of it. So I conceived—

MS. LAURIA: Were you pointing to your nose as to say that they were snobs?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, I don't know why I'm doing that. [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah, but it was that way. You know, like, "What's that?" you know. So I thought, "Okay, let's start with toys," the first tangible thing we meet, traditional toys that were made by hand by people who love us. It was very successful, wonderful toys. Okay. Then, of course, Mary Hunt Kahlenberg had her Indonesian collection. And so we had that, the "Rites of Passage." And then Keisuke Serisawa from Japan wanted to do his big show, "An Homage to My Teacher Hamada," who had died just before we opened the museum. And he did this gorgeous big show. And you can never forget that.

And then, of course, "Kindred Spirits of America," but also India. I've been to India frequently and took a group from the museum there for two weeks. And we've been told by authorities from India that our museum, Mingei International, has the biggest and best collection of the art of the people of India than any of the museums outside of India. We don't have the big sculptures in the Philadelphia Museum [of Art] and that kind of thing. But we have the textiles and pottery and the toys and all of that.

But we also brought over Dr. Yanagi's personal collection. You see, he had such a refined and wonderful eye. And it was very expensive for us to do. It cost us a lot, but we did that. We thought that was very, very important. And his son, who is such an artist and designer, of course, came with his wife. And oh, just so many, many different kinds of shows.

We did—incidentally, we had done some that aren't based essentially on the useful objects that people make that have everlasting beauty and all. But Millard Sheets—Millard was a person who also was world oriented. So when we lived there all those years, I was seeing all these Han dynasty horses and Persian things and African things, you see? All of that was feeding into me, never knowing I'd do a museum in the future.

And when we did our museum, he thought it was so beautiful. And he said, "Oh, I'm sorry [inaudible] the people. I wish I could have a show here." So I started thinking about it, and I decided to make it, you know, Millard Sheets painting around the world. And we borrowed practically his whole collection of gorgeous things from every country, and also then have these paintings that he had done in all of these areas around the world.

MS. LAURIA: So I was going to ask you, is the Mingei International restricted in any way to showing objects? Or do you have painting shows and textiles?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, in general, it's objects because in general, it's the objects that are essential to our life. And that includes the sacred things, the things we need to live. We need containers and we need clothes, et cetera. And how human beings have been very creative with it, you see.

MS. LAURIA: But esthetically, we need paintings.

MS. LONGENECKER: But there are ways, with other things, because like with Millard's, we showed the paintings of the countries and all and we showed the kind of objects they make. And then Norman Cousins—Norman Cousins was a friend of my husband's. And in fact, he was the trustee of my husband's estate. And Norman was a great photographer. And he had never had a big show of his work. He had shown in a library of United States University down the staircase and all. And so I decided to give him a show. And it was called "Cousins Around the World." And again, we showed things around the world. And we showed Norman's photographs of it. It was so beautiful. And when he came, he was such a sensitive man. He stood in the doorway and cried. [Laughs.] It meant so much to him to see that.

But I mention these people because they gave so much.

MS. LAURIA: And you had a special relationship with Niki de Saint Phalle?

MS. LONGENECKER: Oh yes, that. She just blew in like a storm in my life and had seen my home in a magazine and wanted to buy it. And anyway, she was unbelievable. But you had to know Niki to know how you would love her. And I've never known a woman who was so good or gave so much and made so many people happy. The big sculptures that she created for Noah's Ark project in Israel, she parked around our museum and all for some time, months, before shipping all of them. And everybody loved them so much. And when they had to be moved, some of the boys came and they were so mad because the animals weren't there. And one little boy went over and kicked the lamppost, he was so mad.

So Niki, hearing about it, created a big alligator, you know? So I named it Nikigator. And that's just been visited by, easily a million people that get joy out of it. But she came to town and ended up moving into my house in three days. And our leaving most things and coming over to a new place here that I had bought and intended to fix up. And we became very, very good friends.

And then we decided to do a show on Niki. And I told the boys that I'm really tossing you a wild card now. This is different than all of our Quaker things and our Japanese and our Indian, American Indian shows, which are wonderful there, Northwest Coast and everything. And the book that we did on her brought that out. But she was an outsider artist from that common term, because she had never had any art lesson, nor any training. She was just full of it. And—but, because she somehow caught the spirit and connected with all people, she had suddenly become so famous, like the leading woman sculptor of the twentieth century, you know, and the big show in Stockholm, you know. And it was always so shocking. It was always something that was far ahead. But somehow, it was okay if it was Niki. There was a cleanliness to it.

So everybody was a little bit wondering, but we did it. And it was just a wonderful show. So there's some variation. But you've got to stay to the core of the thing. You've got to realize that the program you're putting on, at least if I'm going to spend my life energy on it, must be relevant to the human being's realization of who they are and what they are, because there really isn't time for anything else. And there's so much that's distracting in the world and entertaining and taking you from the center, that I wouldn't have given up making my pottery, which I love to do and devoted all my energy to building this museum, if it was just a matter of having more people in it because if you want just a lot of people you can serve chocolates or ice cream or you can give them free baseballs. It's not a matter of quantity.

I think our museum is there for the minority. And I don't mean the minority of color. I mean the minority of people who need something more than they can find, that it's so much entertainment and different kind of things, and many of them wonderful—sports and all. But there people who really are looking for the essence of things. And there are so many wonderful artists who have that essence. And I think of people of the past, [Isamu] Noguchi, wonderful Noguchi and his life and the legacy he left. I think the Noguchi Museum in New York is one of the greatest places in the world.

MS. LAURIA: But the mission of the Mingei Museum is not limited to showing folk arts or folk arts of Japan?

MS. LONGENECKER: No, no, no, no, no.

MS. LAURIA: Because some people, at one point—and I know you said this when I was here before.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah.

MS. LAURIA: That people think that's what the Mingei Museum collects and exhibits—

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, there are people who aren't taking much time or trouble to think, because why would it be called "international"? It's always been called Mingei International, the art of the people internationally.

MS. LAURIA: So that applies to every country, including the United States?

MS. LONGENECKER: Every—at all times. It applies to—what is it? Out of the people transcending time, place, or race. And these things, if things are created from that wholeness, it doesn't matter whether it was 10 B.C. or whether it's 2008, they're going to have that life and spirit to it. And that's why if we look at the pieces from Cypress, it looks so modern and so wonderful. They're not dated, you see.

MS. LAURIA: Well, Sori Yanagi, the son of Mister—

MS. LONGENECKER: Dr. Yanagi.

MS. LAURIA: Dr. Yanagi—he is considered in today's vocabulary to be a designer, meaning that he does not—that he draws out or makes prototypes of a design, but doesn't hand craft the individual object throughout the process.

MS. LONGENECKER: Right. But that's been his choice.

MS. LAURIA: Right. No, but I was going to ask you, would he be someone whose work you would consider? Or does it have to be handmade?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, that's—it's kind of related. It's not the same, because it's only when a person is totally making something that you have that complete being born out of the—but we also are in a time in society where we have to have mass-produced things. There's a need for that.

MS. LAURIA: Well, the reason I asked is because I saw the exhibition of Eva Zeisel at the Mingei International Museum not too long ago, maybe a year ago.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes.

MS. LAURIA: And I thought it was a very interesting statement, because here is a woman who is over 100 years old.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes.

MS. LAURIA: And she started out as a production designer. I mean, she always did production

MS. LONGENECKER: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. LAURIA: But yet, there's a quality of the thought process from the mind to the hand that goes in all of her pieces. And that process is revealed in the end product.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes.

MS. LAURIA: And I thought it was a brave step.

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, it's not Mingei, though.

MS. LAURIA: No, it's not Mingei.

MS. LONGENECKER: No, no, no.

MS. LAURIA: But it is elastic enough—the mission of the museum?

MS. LONGENECKER: Because hers has so much of the thought process. It's not—it doesn't reach that other level. It's not totally free. Now, but Sori Yanagi's does. That's the thing that's so different. But you've got to remember that Sori Yanagi grew up with all these art people around him, deeply steeped in it. But then—

MS. LAURIA: Well, tell me the difference then.

MS. LONGENECKER: Okay, just a minute. But then he chose to go to Scandinavia to learn and so forth. So his—he comes out of a deep awareness of the natural world and a sensitivity to the balance of things of nature. And also, it comes out of a freedom from the ego, very self-confident about what he can do, but it doesn't come out of an egocentric base so that his things have a strength and a purity that live. And he deliberately has never pushed his name, even though there will be—was a big show in Tokyo of his designs of tunnels, bridges, the Olympic torch, furniture, lamps, silverware, plumbing fixtures, whatever needs to be designed and his design studio can do it.

But there's a—you have to see it to see the difference. But he was devoting his life to that need that was not being met, that in-between, because so much of mass production is just stuff. [Laughs.] You know what I mean.

MS. LAURIA: Soulless. People have said it's soulless.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. But it's a very delicate difference. And also, he was using people, like this Shusi [ph] pottery, a Buddhist brotherhood that's been making handmade wonderful pots for a long, long, long time. Well, that's where his pottery things are made. It's not some big old factory somewhere.

MS. LAURIA: Well, the—do you know, Martha, of other peers or predecessors who similarly did what you did? Become a founder of a museum and follow it through as the founding director for more than 30 years?

MS. LONGENECKER: There could be people, but I don't know them. I do know Jack Lenor Larsen, whom I love, and I've known for many years. And of course, he started off as a weaver, a wonderful weaver. And he had big vision, loved the world. And ultimately, I think it was around 80 different countries where he had weavers. He recognized that the hand weaver could be—may be able to do a yard or some few numbers of yards of something. And it was very expensive because, if you were back living in a different time, then it wouldn't have been. But now it was. And so the world was kind of devoid of these wonderful sensitive textiles.

And he solved that problem by going to the countries where they have been weavers of China or Indonesia and pointing out that, unlike pottery, which is so plastic and that little second of pressure makes a difference in the feel of it, weaving is something where you have your kind of loom you've developed that's appropriate. And then you set up your pedal arrangements for pedaling to make different patterns and sending the threads through and so forth. And it can be very complicated or very simple. But once it's figured out, it's an exact thing, you see, where you keep repeating it and you keep repeating it. And then whether you make one yard or hundreds of yards, it can be just the same.

And therefore, if it becomes automated in some way with machine, you've still got that same thing.

MS. LAURIA: Hm.

MS. LONGENECKER: And his varies. It's just so wonderful. You know, a lot of my things are remnants of Jack's. This, this—I used to get remnants from his place. I never get tired of Jack's stuff. He's got something.

MS. LAURIA: He also set up a nonprofit foundation, Longhouse Preserve.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes, that's what I was going to say. And I—but he did that before our museum. And of course, it wasn't—I wasn't connected to him. I didn't even know him at that time. But he's a big-thinking person and did international things. So he—I suppose that's one of the things we have in common, but I came to it in a different way to being a potter and teaching and then somebody wanting this thing.

But other than that, I don't know—I knew—I was a friend of Robert Bishop, I liked very much, the director of the Museum of American Folk Art in New York. But of course, he came from something else in Detroit, theater world, I think. And I don't know the old history of that. But that museum has pretty much gone under. And he came over and took it over and built it up. And that was just about the time we were starting. And we became acquainted, and I haven't—my husband had an apartment in New York, in Chicago. And so he left the New York apartment with me, and I've always been able to go there. And thus I've been able to know Jack and know the people at American Folk Art Museum and other institutions. It's been very helpful in the development of Mingei International.

So they didn't—he didn't found the museum. He took it over and made it work. And then when he died—oh, I can't think of his name right now. It will come to me, his—the man that followed him was so very, very fine. And he was the person who helped us with the inaugural exhibition for our new museum at Balboa Park. And—Gerard Workin [ph] was his name. He was a lawyer. And he had been assistant director to Robert. And then he took over. But he's also a great authority on American folk art, a real scholar in it. And he did a great job and managed to get rid of the old building and build the new facility.

And I knew him through all these years while all that was happening, and he knew me while all this was happening, and so forth. So we decided to do the inaugural show called "American Expressions of Liberty," showing the American spirit, Yankee ingenuity and the traditions of the world that we brought in all of these things.

And real freedom of Americans, not making a quilt, because they didn't have anything else. The colonists had to take the scraps and put them together to keep warm. Or the potter had to make something, or he didn't have anything to drink the water out of. But that now, in today's life, craftsmen throughout the world, but particularly in America leading the way, had chosen a craftsman's way of life. They had seen industrialism and all this. And they had chosen to select the natural materials, whether it be reed from the fields, or whether it be clay or glass or metal in order to, using their whole being and through their hands, through their skill and their knowledge making things for life now.

And there's every variation in it. There's simple little things that have the ability, to Jack Lenor Larsen, designing it for the whole world. But that is something that only comes out of the twentieth century. I mean, this is amazing, what's happened in the world. In the beginning of the twentieth century, here's Yanagi starting with Hamada and the other—realizing the need and making all this effort. And then Jack Lenor Larsen in doing what he's doing—it's amazing. So as you look at it in perspective, you can see all that's happened.

And my perspective is that, again, it's what Krishnamurti says, you are the world. You don't know how. [Laughs.] You do your thing. But then somebody else connects with it and—

MS. LAURIA: Well, that's very much like the Internet. And I was going to ask you—I know that once you retired from being the executive director or the director and then you became the emeritus, or emeriti?

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, emeritus is correct, I understand. Somebody said "emeriti," but I found out "emeritus" is right.

MS. LAURIA: Okay. Thank you.

MS. LONGENECKER: I like the sound of it better.

MS. LAURIA: And—but you took on this rather large project called Mingei See. And I know you—

MS. LONGENECKER: No, the other way, See—

MS. LAURIA: See Mingei, right, See Mingei—I'm sorry.

MS. LONGENECKER: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. LAURIA: And it has the—you told me the mission over the phone. But I'd like you to expound on that. And also, weave in your esthetic principles, because I know, as you've said to me, that you think that people should look and understand the art first through the senses, and then learn about it intellectually. Because sometimes intellectualization gets in the way of seeing.

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, it doesn't necessarily have to be first or last or anything. But they are two different things.

MS. LAURIA: Thank you. So explain—

MS. LONGENECKER: Yes. It's just like love.

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: You can read about it, talk about it, but you have to have felt love. You have to tingle with love to understand.

MS. LAURIA: That's a wonderful statement. May I steal that?

MS. LONGENECKER: You may. [Laughs.]

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: And boy, it's the truth. My father used to say, "Love makes the world go round." And he was so right. I—when I received an honorary doctorate from San Diego State a year ago, I quoted my father. I said, as a child, my father would show me a candle and say, "Knowledge is likened unto a candle. The larger the flame, the larger the circle of darkness." And of course, wanting to encourage the young graduates, I said, "And that's, in this enlightening age, with the Internet and all we're learning and going to Mars, and this tremendous circle of darkness, huge. You can expect it. But the darkness is nothing but an absence of light. And so, as you become enlightened, all that goes away. I mean, it's some kind of illusionary thing."

And that gets back again to religion and what life is—I didn't go into that part. I just gave them this other thing to think about. They got it, though, right away. They got still as little mice. And then I quoted Krishnamurti to them. I commented on them, "Do you realize how rare you are? You're so many—1500 graduates, you know. And in this world, what percentage of people in this world have ever even had school or university? You represent a little bit." And they are so radiant. The students are just marvelous when you look out over all these graduates. I just said, you know, that I was so—I don't know what I said, whatever came to me then, I was so inspired.

I don't know what word I used. Something came to me—energized, something—"just to look at you and to see

this. And in the words of the great twentieth century world teacher, remember, you are the world. And your relationship with another is society." I ended with that. They loved it. But I saw in that again how, not only ready people are for this, but they need it. They need it because they get all mixed up otherwise into all these different theories.

Now, your question was about these two things, a knowledge about something and this other kind of instinctive innate creativity you have in you. The fact that you have this innate creativity in you is evident. I mean, look at the tiniest thing, a little spider that can weave, or look at the little sea urchin. I mean, everything—a root, a seed. We're this highest development of evolution. And we have this great brain of evolution. We have all of that. We take credit for everything, but we really don't deserve credit for almost anything. I mean, our heart and our lungs and everything about us, we have to feed ourselves. And then we're so stupid, often, that we don't even take the right things in, you know. [Laughs.]

So there's no question about that existing, and there's no question about it being there in the creative world, because all you have to do is look through a few art books and look back at Neolithic times and cave paintings and anything from Africa or Tahiti—gorgeous baskets, mats. The problem comes in with this great brain of ours and our ability to look back and look ahead, the anxiety that comes in. The animal is born with a kind of brain that they can be hurt and remember that and change their action. But they don't sit around worrying about the next 10 years, you see. It's a whole different thing. And it's one reason we love them because they're not full of that anxiety. They're just there with you, you know, totally. [Laughs.]

And so when it comes to creativity, we all have our life, but very limited lifetime and experience. And if we put too much focus on that, what we do is very shallow, very shallow. It lacks the depth of this. And therefore, we might be able to design things very tastefully. There's a lot of graphic design that's very clever, spaced out nicely. But so what? I mean, it's pleasant at the moment. But there's something else, like a wonderful old Tibetan piece, you know, or a piece of early American, a crock or something, or American Indian something, that gives you a whole—I'm trying to say it's beyond words.

MS. LAURIA: Right. So you take that philosophy that you truly believe and try to use that—or use that as your governing principle, like when you did "See Mingei," the website. And also, the way you ran the museum. I just wanted you to comment on that because it is a very particular imprimatur that is Martha Longenecker, and not necessarily—other museums don't do it that way.

MS. LONGENECKER: Yeah. Okay. No, that's right.

MS. LAURIA: Other websites are not run that way.

MS. LONGENECKER: That's right.

MS. LAURIA: So I'd like you to sort of define, what is that signature?

MS. LONGENECKER: Okay. Because it's impossible in words to really describe the infinite that comes through, and realizing that these objects we're talking about are energy fields. We know through modern science that nothing is a solid. And everything is in a transformation. And knowing that, an object that's whole, a nonfragmented expression of an individual—individual means they're not fragmented—it's communicating. It's powerful. But people have to see them.

Just like music must be heard. You can write all about it, who composed it, and its relationship. But you have to hear it. And the same with food. You can describe it and have a food critic. You've got to taste it.

And so I want, to the best of my ability, in whatever I do, to show them the best and the highest from all over. And you can't bring everybody to the museum. You can't always put on that show. That's why I've wanted to do more traveling shows. We've always done some, and they've been very effective, like that "Beaded Universe" we took to New York and other countries, other states.

So with high-quality photography, which we've been able to have because of having our book fund from the beginning and being brought in contact to Lenten Gardner [ph] of New York, through John Darcy Noble, who is the great doll authority and curator of Dolls and Toys at the Museum of the City of New York for 20 years, moved out here—he brought Lenten in. And we started using Lenten for our books.

So then with the new data system coming in—I don't know how many years ago it's been, maybe six years ago—I applied for a grant to get an EmbARK database system because I felt that was important. And I broke it down into, of course, who gave the things, but the countries and the media and the use. And so we just had photography snapping little pictures of it, but it wasn't high-quality digital. So then I got this idea with the networks and all coming, what's coming ahead, that we needed to get the best high-digital resonance and all that. I don't have the right terminology. And we needed to set it up so that people all over the world don't have

to read some book that will convince them that people are creative. They can see it.

And so currently, after working on this project for three years, which I started before I left being the director—and I've never resigned from the museum. I've never retired. I retired from teaching. I retired from directing the daily operations. But I'm very active in the continuing legacy, because here they can go to the world map. They can click onto, currently, 19 geographical areas. In the future, it could be many more. Right now, they click onto Africa. But in the future, it could be Morocco, Ethiopia, and all the things. They click onto American Indian or pre-Columbian or Mexico or India, Himalayas, Southeast Asia, Oceania, Indonesia, all these gorgeous areas.

And the moment they click onto that geographical area, they now can click onto how they want to look at it. And we have the seven basic natural materials of the earth. We have things made of wood. Of course, it's all kinds of wood, including bamboo; all kinds of fibers, including even animal source such as the wool, or you have the cotton, or you have the silk of the animal. Or it can be other animal sources like the shell and, oh, coral and so forth.

But that's all you've got in the organics, because organic substances are those things that are consumed by fire. That's the first thing you learn when you study ceramics, as you know. And ceramics is the study of inorganic substances, which you mix and fire. So they consist of stone, which over millennia weathers down into clay. And then it consists of glass, which comes from the fusion of the clay at high temperatures. And the metals, which don't burn, but give the color—they're the same metals that produce the rubies and emeralds. And it's a very basic science that is not complicated.

And so there it is for each thing. And so then you see what that country did with it. You go to Mexico and you go to pottery, you're going to find that they fired the clay low. That's all they knew how to do. They used simple lead glazes and got greens, and so forth. Whereas, if you go to Japan, they've developed stonewares, et cetera. You go to China, and you see Han Dynasty and certain things.

Your eyes are opened because you see similarities. They're working with similar materials. But distinctions—what makes them different, you see. And it can be differences in techniques, in materials. But there's also this huge difference in what your blood is, where you were raised. It's very sensitive. And it's not that one is better than the other. It's just they're different. I love going to Africa, for instance. I've only been—I've been to Egypt three times. And I've been to Ethiopia—no, I haven't. I've been to Morocco. Not the rest of Africa, but I've seen a lot of books.

And that's one of the most amazing continents, because when you start looking at the art from that, the quality of weaving, and the quality of the pottery, all built so simply—and then if you want to jump back over to China, how different and marvelous with everything they did. And Japan is completely different. Korea is completely different.

MS. LAURIA: So this has been your continuing—

MS. LONGENECKER: Passion.

MS. LAURIA: - passion that you started before, perhaps three years before it actually hit the internet as a site.

MS. LONGENECKER: I got it launched at the end of 2007. And then—and now, since then, we've been adding more. And I think now, by another week, maybe, end of this month, we'll have 5,200 images from over the world. But I've been saying what my teachers, mentors, have always said, that this art speaks for itself and that it speaks in the language that transcends time, place, or race.

MS. LAURIA: But you're giving access.

MS. LONGENECKER: Access to it. And also, we're giving acknowledgement to people who gave the pieces. And we're giving acknowledgement, if we know who made it. And that's why we say it's a gift to the world from all who are part of the creative cycle of art. Cycle of art is made up of the people who take the natural materials, transform them into objects we need and use in our life, the people who collect it, care for them, pass them along so that others can enjoy them. Think of that Byzantine cup we have in our collection—never had a chip out of it. Think of the people who have handled that all this time.

But it also consists, the creative circle does, of the people who make it possible for them to be seen and inspire new creativity. Because that's the point. Unless they are out there, displayed right, they can't speak. And then it's only through seeing that new creativity can be inspired. And it just keeps going like that.

MS. LAURIA: So you're a catalyst.

MS. LONGENECKER: Maybe so.

MS. LAURIA: Your role has been as keeping the cycle in the proper—

MS. LONGENECKER: Contributing to it.

MS. LAURIA: Right.

MS. LONGENECKER: Because I acknowledge that infinite number of people—

MS. LAURIA: Right, but I mean, the idea of the Mingei International Museum is part of this cycle to continue the understanding and appreciation of—

MS. LONGENECKER: That's right. Not appreciation.

MS. LAURIA: Not appreciation?

MS. LONGENECKER: No. Because appreciation is a level of more kind of looking at it and saying, "Well, we understand them," or—no. It has to be understanding of the connectedness with the energy of the world and how it flows through us, you see.

MS. LAURIA: More experiential, then.

MS. LONGENECKER: Instead of our blocking it off with this marvelous intellect we've been given, we have to—Krishnamurti's entire teachings are based on freeing the human being, freeing him from his own limitations of—how do I? I can't put it right. I need to get a quote of his. But it's the idea that what we have experienced is so limited to life that is accessible to us in other ways, through hearing that music, through tasting that thing, through feeling, through seeing. Those are so huge. And we have to be very careful in a society where we're so tuned in to the intellect that we just don't have everybody reading about it and not really feeling it.

MS. LAURIA: So sensate experience would be what you'd like to achieve?

MS. LONGENECKER: We want them to be exposed to it. We want them to hear, see, feel. I'm not against books. Remember, we started our library the day we opened. And then of course, we published books. And we do videos. And we have a gorgeous library, wonderful library. So it's not that. But Dr. Yanagi is the one who really saw this and made a big point of it, that he didn't have the labels in his things. He wanted people to come and see the pot or the textile. He didn't want them to appreciate it because it was from Nairobi or because it was this. He wanted—what's that thing say?

It's like meeting a human being, a live being. You meet them. And even if you don't know all about them, where they went to school, you start communicating, you start seeing, you see. And it's just like your relationship with an animal, how people bond so with their dogs and cats. It's because they're not reading about them. It's directly experiencing them.

MS. LAURIA: [Laughs.]

MS. LONGENECKER: But there's a place for the other, too. And it's very important because of the age we're in. That's why we built a library from the beginning. It's why we do the videotapes. We do books. But we don't want to interfere with those sacred moments when they're in the museum, because most people aren't in museums long. They're lucky if they're there an hour or two. And we are so conditioned that—I am. At least, if I'm in a museum, there's a sign, I feel I've got to read every word. God, and I could be looking at that thing they've—5,000 years ago. See? That Han sculpture up there, the ram—you could spend the day—talk about meditation—looking at it.

MS. LAURIA: Right.

MS. LONGENECKER: [Laughs.] You see?

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

MS. LONGENECKER: But if we have a long description of it, nobody's going to look at it. They're just going to read about it. So there are other times and places. But we say what it is and from where it is. But now, please, enjoy me.

MS. LAURIA: Well, that's a beautiful place to end.

MS. LONGENECKER: Well, thank you.

MS. LAURIA: The end of the interview with Martha Longenecker. And this is the end of tape three.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]