Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Lloyd E. Herman, 2010 Sept. 21

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Lloyd E. Herman and Paul J. Smith on 2010 September 21. The interview took place in New York, N.Y., and was conducted by Paul J. Smith 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 funded by the William and Mildred Lasdon Foundation.

Lloyd E. Herman and Paul J. Smith have reviewed the transcript and have made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

PAUL J. SMITH: This is Paul Smith conducting an oral interview with Lloyd Herman, for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, on Tuesday, September 21, in New York City. This is card one.

Lloyd, I want to begin with a focus on your early life and years in Corvallis, Oregon. So could you begin by telling me a bit about your family, your upbringing and childhood?

LLOYD E. HERMAN: I was born in March 1936, in Corvallis, Oregon, to Ray and Luella Herman. My dad at that point was a bookkeeper. I have a sister, Phyllis, who's five years older. My mother was Canadian, and she had gone to secretarial school in Winnipeg. But during my childhood she didn't have a paying job. She was a housewife and when I was five years old, we moved about three miles out of town to a farm of about a hundred acres that my father had bought. He was kind of a—I guess I'd call him a weekend farmer. I couldn't really call him a gentleman farmer; that would be too grand a term. But we had, you know, a few cows and chickens, and my sister and I had chores. Because she'd already started school in the public schools in Corvallis when we moved to the country, she enrolled in the Orleans School, which was a one-room country school about a little over a mile from where we lived. Naturally then when I turned six and was starting first grade, I went to Orleans School, too, where I went all eight grades. In fact from the third through the eighth grade, I was the only kid in my class out of about 36 maximum for all eight grades during the whole time I was there.

But thinking about how my family life and my school life affected my interest in the arts, we had really no art in our home. We had I think a couple of reproductions: *The End of the Trail* [James Earle Fraser, 1915] was one of them [laughs]; the Indian sitting on horseback. Basically the pictures we had in the house, my folks bought at the furniture store with the furniture. So we didn't have any original art at all. Though I started thinking that I got somehow interested in aesthetics as a kid, and I clipped pictures out of magazines of room interiors that I liked. I actually had a scrapbook kind of like an interior design scrapbook of things that I liked. I was very interested when I had a room of my own in what kind of bedspread I had. So clearly I had some kind of aesthetic recognition even at a fairly early age.

But we were involved in 4-H. I've often been asked, as a craft curator, if I practiced a craft and I said, "Well, I'm a failed 4-H woodworker," because I couldn't square the board to tack my 4-H poster on. But I did make a kind of a dopey little shelf and a wastebasket. They were really not very good and certainly not original at all. But it did give me some understanding of working with tools, even though I really wasn't very good at it.

MR. SMITH: So you had instinct to have a hands-on involvement.

MR. HERMAN: A little bit. But, you know, I think part of that is growing up in the country and on a farm. My dad could fix things. I was never particularly handy in that way, and I'm not now. But there is a kind of a sense of doing things yourself or making do or fixing things that might require a bit of baling wire to fix it or something simple like that.

In addition to 4-H woodworking, I did take a 4-H cooking class. I've just remembered that we learned to make three things: sponge cake, cooked cereal, and lemon drop cookies. My sister was much more involved with 4-H. And she entered a tailored wool suit in the county fair and state fair one year. But I never really got involved with anything that required a great deal of creativity until I got into high school.

When I graduated the eighth grade, since I was the only child in my class, we had to combine with another nearby one-room country school so there would be three graduates, and we could have a combined graduation. So then I took a school bus into town to Corvallis High School. I already knew some of the kids in my class there because my parents used to play cards with people in the town and three miles out doesn't seem like anything today. But for a kid it seemed like we were really out in the sticks. But I knew some of the kids of my parents' friends. So I already had kind of a little bit of a social circle when I went into town to school and kind of got acquainted pretty readily and got involved with, oh, singing in the choir. I think even—it must have even been

my freshman year in high school, I tried out for one of the school plays and got a very small role. I continued to act and sing in the choir. I was much more involved really with performing than I was visual arts at all. I did take regular art classes as you do in public school. But, you know, I tried my hand in clay, and I made some klunky little animals.

MR. SMITH: Was there an art program in high school?

MR. HERMAN: There was an art program in high school.

MR. SMITH: As well as a performing arts program.

MR. HERMAN: Well, there was a choir, and there was, you know, a school band. We had a lot of, oh, assemblies and even the high school auditorium was used even for some touring companies of plays. They weren't really very professional, but I certainly was exposed to a bit of theater then as well as acting in these amateur high school productions and singing also. With one of my best friends and a couple of girls, we had a song-and-dance act that we sang "By the Light of the Silvery Moon" and did a little soft shoe. So we performed that at school assemblies, and that was kind of fun. But, you know, in terms of the visual arts, I tried my hand at painting and at clay, and I wasn't very good at that. I liked charcoal sketching because it was fast, and I really didn't have patience to master anything.

MR. SMITH: Were there any teachers that were really important as mentors or influences in both elementary as well as high school?

MR. HERMAN: Well, my first teacher, Veda Torney, was a good friend of our family's, and she really was kind of a supervisor of the 4-H program, too.

MR. SMITH: This was in elementary school?

MR. HERMAN: In elementary school, at Orleans School. We had a couple of other teachers, one of whom played the piano so we sang a lot in grade school and always had Christmas programs, but we didn't really have a lot of performing possibilities while I was in grade school, unlike high school. But, you know, we just did the typical things that kids at that time did in grade school. It was mostly like coloring in coloring books. We weren't doing a lot of original drawings or anything like that.

MR. SMITH: In high school, when you were involved with the arts, you were enjoying that, but were you also recognized as having some talent by the faculty?

MR. HERMAN: Well, I guess I must have been because I got roles in plays and an occasional solo with the choir. My sister played the piano. I took piano lessons for a year, but I really didn't progress beyond being able to play a couple of simple chorded songs. But I did sing. So I had several songs I would sing for school assemblies. I was really more interested in performing there, both singing and acting, than I was involved in the visual arts at all.

MR. SMITH: Did you have any part-time job or involvement in earning some money?

MR. HERMAN: Well, my sister, because she's five years older, when we lived in the country, she picked cherries for one of our neighboring farmers. As soon as I was old enough to go out, I picked cherries. I picked hops and beans and strawberries. I remember that I loved earning my own money. I had a little bank that a savings and loan in town gave out to kids and every time I put a coin in and pulled the lever, it would go k-ching. [Laughs] Kind of like a little cash register. It would tell you how much you had in the bank. Well, that was just wonderful. I loved doing that and earning money. So, you know, I felt I was fairly ambitious about earning something then and then when I think the First Federal Savings & Loan, that gave out the banks, as soon as your bank registered $100, then you put it in the savings account there.

After all, I was born kind of at the end of the Depression. Then my sister and I both went through the World War II years as children. So we collected tinfoil and rubber bands, and string and things for the war effort. I remember rationing, in which you could get only so many eggs and milk. Of course we lived in the country, so that really wasn't a problem. Gasoline rationing was really more of a problem because we lived out in the country. I don't remember privation during the war. But then we grew vegetables. We had animals that we raised both for eggs and for meat. My mother canned fruits and jellies. Then as soon as home freezers became popular, we had a big home freezer.

MR. SMITH: There was an advantage to being on a farm.

MR. HERMAN: Oh, absolutely, yes, and we had a neighbor who butchered a pig or something. We'd maybe buy part of it. So I was really accustomed to really wholesome food and was very much involved, also, in caring for the farm animals.

MR. SMITH: Coming back to high school, were there any teachers there that were really important in your experience?

MR. HERMAN: I had a really good English teacher, Mrs. Hess. I think probably, because I was better in English than in social studies, which she also taught—and I liked her a lot, and liked English class. We had this funny drama and speech teacher, Ruby Ruth Smith, who was overly dramatic. We used to kind of make fun of her. But I had fun in the school plays and liked her, too. I had a great biology teacher, Mr. Thaw and I think probably even though that wouldn't have been an interest of mine, he made it interesting. I think the classes that I did poorly in were probably, oh, math and geometry. I really was not very good in science. I think I tried to take chemistry. I probably had a little chemistry. But that didn't suit my aptitudes.

MR. SMITH: As you were getting ready to graduate from high school, obviously you needed to think about where you would go for further education. How did that evolve, and where did you go after graduating from high school?

MR. HERMAN: Well, my sister and I really were only in school together in grade school. Because she was five years older, when I started high school, in my freshman year, she was already in college. It was always just assumed that both of us would go to college. Because we lived in Corvallis, where Oregon State University is, it was then Oregon State College, it was always assumed that we would go there. We could live at home. Both of us started living at home. But then my sister pledged a sorority and lived there part of the time. I pledged a fraternity, Lambda Chi Alpha, and lived one year in the fraternity. Oregon State was established as the agricultural and mining school primarily and didn't have a liberal arts program at all when I was there. It became a university only later. So I knew that if I wanted to pursue my education in speech and drama, which was certainly my interest, I was going to have to go to another school after my sophomore year.

I was involved in college, again, with plays. I acted in plays. I dabbled in radio and television broadcasting, although television was then in its infancy. Oregon Public Radio emanates from the campus of Oregon State University now. But I don't think it did at the time. I don't think there was such a thing as public radio in quite the same way. So I knew that I would have to finish only my basic work at Oregon State. Because I had joined the Naval Reserve when I was in high school, I used to travel with two of my classmates 40 miles once a month to our Naval Reserve meetings in Salem, Oregon, and every summer we'd have to do a kind of a reservists' duty for two weeks. So I'd already been to Navy boot camp, a short version of boot camp, in San Diego while I was still in high school.

I decided that rather than risk being eventually drafted, although we weren't at war during that time, I would go and take my two years active duty in the Navy after my sophomore year, and then go to another college when I got out.

MR. SMITH: You keep making reference to singing and performance that was a continuing interest. As you were then going on to college, were you seriously looking for courses that provided professional training, and did you have the fantasy and dream of being a professional actor?

MR. HERMAN: I did. I think that it wasn't really well formed probably at that stage. There's always this idea that you could teach or you could perform. I don't think really that I thought seriously of being a professional actor until after the Navy when I returned home, and I enrolled at the University of Oregon in Eugene, which did have a strong speech and drama program. So I enrolled in that. I wasn't at that point taking education courses. That came later. But I did perform there, and that really was my interest. After one year there—although I should backtrack a little bit and say after my freshman year at Oregon State, I got a job at the Oregon Caves National Monument in southern Oregon as a bellhop. Also when the regular tour guides were swamped, I could also lead tours through the caves as well. But the college kids who worked there as summer employees—because it was only open in the summer months—performed a campfire program every night. So I sang and performed record pantomimes and stuff like that.

MR. SMITH: What year was this?

MR. HERMAN: That would have been in '55, summer of '55 and that all kind of worked toward my idea of performing. I'd had other jobs. When I was in high school, I had a job as a janitor at the J.C. Penney Company every afternoon after school. Then on weekends I would sell menswear in the menswear department and in summer I was hired to work in the stockroom full time. I think from that I must have gone—I can't remember quite the order now—I worked in the Benton Hotel coffee shop in downtown Corvallis as a busboy and that was an after-school job, too, because I worked the dinner hours. So, you know, I was pretty busy even then trying to figure out how to earn money and save it, and then eventually invest it. I think probably it was really my parents who made me understand the importance of saving and investing because they got through the Depression and the Second World War and we, although I said we were never deprived, we were always certainly aware that other people did without.

MR. SMITH: Was some of this money spent on tuition at the schools?

MR. HERMAN: You know tuition was not really very much in those days at state schools. I think that my—I think my mother paid my tuition. My dad died when I was 16 and in high school. At that point, my mother sold the farm. He died very unexpectedly of a heart attack after coming home from a lodge meeting one night and [laughs] it's funny. I think because he had died without a will, when my mother died, we found her will, and it was made probably right after my dad had died and she was specifying care for Lloyd Herman as a minor because she was really preparing as he hadn't. But we moved into town really close to the high school only after he died. He had been successful enough in real estate. He had given up bookkeeping probably even before I started high school, and was selling real estate in the evenings, and then decided he would open his own company, Ray E. Herman Realty. So he'd been successful enough at that, that he left enough of an inheritance for my mother that she didn't have to work.

But even though she never had a paying job during my lifetime, she was active in other pursuits. She went through all the offices of the Rebecca Lodge, the women's aspect of the Odd Fellows' Lodge, twice. She was secretary of the grange in the country, where my parents were active, for more than 30 years even after we moved to town. She volunteered every year for the election board and the blood bank. In fact the year she died, at age 86, she was named Volunteer of the Year in my hometown. So she was really always involved with things. I think that certainly influenced my take on life, too, and the need to do something for others.

MR. SMITH: I sense that both of your parents were very motivated, it's obvious that some of that passed on to your energy.

MR. HERMAN: Yes, I think they were and, you know, it was interesting when my mother died, one of her best friends came up to me after the service and said, "You know your mother was always so positive about things," and I thought, you know, I think I get that from her, too. Because I generally look on the bright side of things rather than worrying about, oh, the most dire thing that could happen.

MR. SMITH: Coming back to your college days, could you clarify when you left college?

MR. HERMAN: Well, I went one year to the University of Oregon and had a little apartment off campus.

MR. SMITH: The University of Oregon was where?

MR. HERMAN: The University of Oregon in Eugene, which did have a liberal arts program. So I was a speech and drama major there and got involved almost immediately in college plays. That was very satisfying to me. I was a good enough actor to get good roles. There was even a role I had in the play *The Seven-Year Itch*, [George Axelrod, 1955] and they were taking the whole company on a USO tour of the Far East that summer. But for some reason I couldn't go. I don't really remember why. But anyway, I got very much involved with the theater there, and that's where I met Don Wilhelm who was a year ahead of me. We were both in *Inherit the Wind* [Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee, 1959] together, and became more than close friends. But I really wanted to pursue my acting the summer after my sophomore year, and applied to summer theaters for a summer internship and I was accepted at all three that I applied for. The Corning Summer Theater [Corning, New York] in Upstate New York and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon. But I accepted the Black Hills Playhouse in South Dakota because I could earn additional credits through the University of South Dakota [Vermillion, South Dakota] going there.

So I packed everything I had in my little Volkswagen Beetle and headed off to South Dakota; thinking that at the end of that summer of plays, I would simply continue on to Washington, D.C., where Don was moving to get a government job after he graduated and then I could attend Catholic University [The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.], which had a really strong drama department, in Washington.

MR. SMITH: What year was that?

MR. HERMAN: That would be '59 I did the summer stock. It's interesting because only this last year have I reconnected not only with my best friend, my shipmate in the Navy, but also I've been in touch all these years with Diane Struver who acted with me. She played Anne Frank at age 19, and I played her father [Laughs] at age 22. A lot of gray makeup in my hair. I still had hair then. But anyway, when I got to Washington, D.C., and Don had already found a little apartment near American University [Washington, D.C.] and I discovered that I would need two additional years to complete a bachelor's degree at Catholic University because I'd never studied any classic languages which were a requirement—two years. So instead I enrolled in American University, speech and drama, with a minor in education, thinking that I could teach. It really wasn't a very good program in that school, which was known primarily as a business school.

But I did graduate there in 1960, and I had jobs when I was working there as well. I got a job while at American U every afternoon as a dollar-an-hour typist at a trade association called the National Association of Travel

Organizations, or NATO, as we called it. [Laughs] We did claim to be the first NATO. So I'd go downtown every afternoon after my classes. It was mostly just kind of secretarial work. But I got involved in preparing listings of our member organizations for an annual book that we published that was really a directory of travel services. The members of NATO included hotel chains like Hilton and Holiday Inn, bus lines, railroads, tour operators. While I worked there, we launched the Visit USA program in an effort to, through the U.S. Commerce Department—which eventually took over the program—to encourage travel to the United States. So I kind of got involved in a little bit of writing there.

But I really wanted to act. Of course that was my senior year in college. So I was beginning to put out feelers for what the possibilities were. Well, Washington, D.C., had been really a sleepy Southern town up through the fifties. If you think that I moved there in '59, that was the Eisenhower era, and Washington really only became sophisticated during the Kennedy Administration which followed.

MR. SMITH: Sophisticated in the arts?

MR. HERMAN: Sophisticated in the arts and in terms of good restaurants when people started going out to dinner. So I was there at a really—at kind of a pivotal change in the nation's capital. But Washington did have a really strong resident theater company called Arena Stage [Washington, D.C.]. Of course that's where I applied. Well, it was, you know, an Equity company, a union company. There really weren't opportunities for novice actors. Even though I'd had a summer of summer stock and some good roles, it really wasn't experience that would have given me a job there as part of a company. Anyway, my boss at NATO offered me full-time employment that summer. I actually had job offers working as a merchandising intern with the J.C. Penney Company in New York and came up to New York for an interview. Also with the Hecht Company, which is now Macy's, in Washington, D.C. But it at that point was a very strong regional retail department store. I could have been an intern there. But instead I opted to return to stay with NATO where I was made a full-time employee and really was more involved with preparing the annual yearbook and directory, and writing press releases. I began to think of myself really as a beginning public relations person.

But I did get a call from Arena Stage that fall after my graduation in June, offered me a job as assistant box office manager. I thought, okay, well, that's at least working in a theater and getting closer to my dream. You know, they kind of held out the hope for me that maybe there would be a walk-on part or something that I could do. So anyway, I went to Arena Stage as assistant box office manager. Of course got to meet a lot of actors and became kind of on the fringe of the theater circle, such as it was in Washington, D.C. But it was customary at the end of the season, which ended in the spring, to work on the subscriptions for the following fall. Then when the subscriptions were all filled, the entire staff of Arena Stage went on unemployment for the summer until they started up again in the fall. So I was thinking, oh, this will be kind of nice. I'll have the summer off.

But then my old boss at NATO called and said that he had two choices: either he would have to pay—because I was then drawing on the unemployment compensation I'd paid there and he had paid, too—that he would have to pay more in unemployment insurance premiums or he could rehire me. So he made me an offer I couldn't refuse, and I went back to work there. There I really was office manager. It was a very small office. It sounds more important than it was. There was the executive director of NATO, Mr. [James L.] Bossemeyer; his assistant, Jim Gross, who was nearer my age; and one other employee. So there were just four of us in that office. So it really wasn't a grand deal. But it was a pleasant little office, and right downtown Washington; I enjoyed working there.

MR. SMITH: I'm curious about your having been brought up on the West Coast, and then living on the East Coast in our nation's capital. Did you find it more exciting to be in Washington?

MR. HERMAN: I think initially it was exciting to be in Washington, D.C., although not nearly as much as was to come. [Laughs] Because I, you know, I lived in Washington, D.C., for 29 years, from Eisenhower through the first Bush Administration and particularly to be in the nation's capital in the 1960's during the Kennedy era. That was a very exciting time. It was a time at which Washington truly became an international city and then through the Johnson era and all the civil rights legislation, the March on Washington, the Poor People's March, it was really quite a thrilling time to be there. At that point I was working for the Smithsonian, and I guess I should probably get into that.

MR. SMITH: I was wondering how you came from your theater world to the Smithsonian.

MR. HERMAN: Yes, well, that transition. [Laughs] Anyway, I returned to NATO full time and then I thought, you know—I'd really developed some experience in writing. I began to think that I could probably work for a bigger trade association because there were many trade associations headquartered in Washington, D.C., to be close to government. I thought, well, I could maybe get a better job. I applied for a job at the National Association of Home Builders, which is a very huge organization, as public relations manager for their headquarters building, the National Housing Center, also in downtown Washington, and was hired.

The National Housing Center not only held the staff for the NAHB, but it also had four floors of exhibits. My role as public relations manager, under a director of public relations for the association, was to publicize the Housing Center and its four floors of displays of shingles, toilets, and insulating materials. [Laughs] Household stuff that builders put in their houses. Well, that was really kind of a challenging task.

MR. SMITH: This was a full-time job.

MR. HERMAN: This was a full-time job.

MR. SMITH: And what year was that?

MR. HERMAN: I got that job in 1965.

MR. SMITH: Mid-'60s then.

MR. HERMAN: The mid-]'0s, yes.

MR. SMITH: An exciting era.

MR. HERMAN: It really was. So I had a budget for entertaining. I could take writers from the *Washington Post* out for lunch at nice places. It was really a considerable step up from NATO. But it was really hard to drum up stories to make toilets and shingles interesting. In the Housing Center, there was one floor that was kind of a multipurpose room that was used for conferences. I started thinking, well, we could put temporary exhibits in that room and then have something to publicize. So I started booking exhibits that were housing related from the American Federation of Arts and from the Smithsonian's Traveling Exhibitions Service. I remember one from the AFA called "Row House Revival" [1966]. Absolutely perfect. So I had something then to write press releases about and to try to get notice in the newspapers. One year *House Beautiful* magazine published their idea house. I got them interested enough in it that we recreated that house inside our public rooms. It was like a model home in this multipurpose space.

MR. SMITH: Where was this located in Washington?

MR. HERMAN: It was at Sixteenth and L Street. It's no longer at that address.

MR. SMITH: It was an office building [inaudible].

MR. HERMAN: It was an office—yes. It was like a six-floor office building, and the first four floors were exhibits.

MR. SMITH: That was sizable space.

MR. HERMAN: Oh, sizable space, yes. It was a very beautiful modernist building from the late fifties, all furnished with Knoll fabrics and furniture. So it was a pretty classy place. There were a lot of reference books there. There was a library so people looking at house plans and things like that could come in and browse the library, too. It was a very nice place to work.

MR. SMITH: So that was really the beginning of your involvement with exhibition organization.

MR. HERMAN: It was, yes.

MR. SMITH: You enjoyed that?

MR. HERMAN: I did, you know. I guess probably because it in a way was performing. I mean it was playing a role as a public relations person. [Laughs] Anyway, it was fun meeting journalists and particularly if I had something that I could talk about that I had to publicize. So I got acquainted more with people at the Smithsonian through their Traveling Exhibition Service. I remember we did one show that was of contemporary Swedish textiles. You know, anything that I felt—that I could see a link to home furnishings or housing or architectural design, I thought was appropriate for that program.

MR. SMITH: The center must have been well established for traveling shows because they're very selective about the quality and care of objects.

MR. HERMAN: Yes, well, about security and—absolutely. Well, it certainly—it was an air-conditioned building. You know in Washington, D.C., in the late '50s when I moved there, air conditioning was not yet commonplace, and the government, when the heat and humidity together reached a particular number, they would let the government employees go home because not all buildings were air-conditioned. But certainly the Housing Center was. There was never—I don't remember any question at all about security because people had to come in a front door, pass a reception desk to go up to those spaces. I don't remember, because I certainly was not

experienced as an object handler, I don't remember ever having white cotton gloves to handle objects. I think it's probably because those refinements in caring for objects professionally came later. That's when SITES, the Smithsonian Institution's Traveling Exhibition Service became a little more rigorous in protecting the objects that they had borrowed for these traveling shows.

MR. SMITH: So when did you make a connection with the Smithsonian itself?

MR. HERMAN: Well, during that year, probably in 1966, I met a friend at the Smithsonian, through the others in the Traveling Exhibition Service that I'd gotten acquainted with, who was the protocol officer for the Smithsonian. He told me about a couple of jobs there that he thought I might be suited for. One of them I absolutely was not suited for was visual information specialist for the National Portrait Gallery. Well, a visual information specialist is essentially an exhibit designer. I was not that. Even though that would've been interesting, because at that point the Portrait Gallery hadn't opened. They simply had an office in the old Arts and Industries Building, which was the Smithsonian's first museum building built in the 1880's. So they were just forming a staff and developing the program because the original Patent Office Building was just then undergoing restoration to be used jointly for the National Portrait Gallery and the National Collection of Fine Arts, which is now called the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

But that wasn't the right job for me. The other job was as administrative officer for the Director of the National Museum, which is an odd title to use today. But Frank Taylor was my boss. He was the director of the National Museum. At that point all of the Smithsonian museums were considered the National Museum. It was later that the Natural History Museum and the American History Museum got their own identity with National in front of their names.

MR. SMITH: Was this under Mr. Ripley's [S. Dillon Ripley] direction?

MR. HERMAN: That was—Dillon Ripley was the Secretary of the Smithsonian. He had come in only a couple of years before I was hired. He started really blowing the dust off the place and making it a lively place. It was such a privilege and a joy to work there during his tenure because he was really intent on making the Smithsonian a place for the public to want to come and to make education fun.

So Mr. Taylor interviewed me. Because of my limited experience in presenting these traveling exhibitions at the Housing Center, he saw a similarity in what I had been doing working for trade associations with what was going to be required to serve museums across the country after Congress had passed the National Museum Act. The National Museum Act really empowered—I guess empowered could be used—the Smithsonian to really offer advisory services to museums across the country. It was passed by Congress. Mr. Taylor really saw my helping to administer the National Museum Act as being not dissimilar from what I had done at trade associations, serving a national constituency.

The catch was that although Congress had passed the National Museum Act, they didn't fund it. So I was hired as his administrative officer and got involved not with the National Museum Act so much as with the renovation of the old Arts and Industries building, which had been really the first National Museum building, other than the old Smithsonian Castle, which had some art exhibits in it early on.

MR. SMITH: That's the building on the mall near the African Museum?

MR. HERMAN: It's the Arts and Industries building. It does say on the front of it U.S. National Museum. I think 1881 was when it was actually—the date that's on the building. It's right next door to the original Smithsonian Castle building, as we called it, designed by James Renwick. The Museum of African Art and the Sackler Gallery were built later behind the Castle.

MR. SMITH: So it was actually towards the capitol side of the Castle?

MR. HERMAN: Towards the Capitol from the Castle. I should backtrack a little bit about the Smithsonian. It was founded by James Smithson in I think 1847 or thereabouts, an Englishman who'd never set foot in the United States. But left his fortune to the United States to found "an institution for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men" Well, Congress wrestled with this gift from this foreigner for I think about four years, not knowing whether to take it or not. Or what an institution—what such an institution should be. So they thought, well, it would be scientific research, and science has always been very important in the history of the Smithsonian, and maybe a library and an art gallery. So James Renwick designed the original Smithsonian building, and it did have an art gallery and a library in it.

MR. SMITH: James Renwick was the architect?

MR. HERMAN: James Renwick was the architect. He also was known for designing at least one of the buildings at Vassar. There are other public buildings including Grace Church in New York City, and St. Patrick's Cathedral was

a James Renwick design. So he was a prominent architect I think already when he was hired to design the Smithsonian original building. But there was never a thought really about museums being part of this knowledge among men scheme until the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876. The Smithsonian, at the end of the Centennial was given 40 freight cars full of exhibits from the celebration. Well, that immediately made it necessary for them to think about museums and how are we going to house this stuff?

The Arts and Industries building was a direct result of not only that gift of all that stuff, but also an example of exposition architecture: huge, open spaces, very much like World's Fairs had been housed in for probably 20 or 30 years before. That is the basis of the National Museum. Well, the National Museum was certainly just that one building for many years. Then they started—I think the first to be developed was in the early 1900's, the Natural History Museum across the Mall at about Ninth and Constitution. And then in the 1960's what was to be called the Museum of History and Technology. Still both of those were the two components of the National Museum.

So when I arrived there in the mid-60's, the Museum of History and Technology had just opened and left several vacant halls in the Arts and Industries building. The only remaining exhibits there were really the planes and the other exhibits of what was to become the National Air and Space Museum. We knew that that was going to be moving out of that building, too. So Frank Taylor gave me as my principal responsibility the oversight of renovating the galleries in the Arts and Industries building and turning them into temporary exhibition spaces. His philosophy was that this would be a kunsthalle, a place where changing exhibits of all kinds could be presented, because the idea of having temporary exhibit halls was not yet commonplace in museums. Usually you'd have a museum, and you'd have permanent halls. They'd stay that way for decades.

MR. SMITH: But there was a permanent display of the collection from Philadelphia [Centennial Exhibition]?

MR. HERMAN: It started that way. But, you know, as then these other museums developed, the other buildings for what was the U.S. National Museum, the stuffed animals, of course, went over to the Natural History Museum and any mineral specimens and, of course, ethnographic objects, of which there were certainly quite a number from the Philadelphia Centennial, would have been in the Natural History Museum building as well. Then things dealing with American history were in the Museum of History and Technology which had everything from steam engines to First Ladies' dresses. Although I'm guessing that those probably came later; I really don't know.

Anyway, Mr. Taylor had in mind that the Arts and Industries building would be developed as this changing exhibit center to be known as the Smithsonian Exposition Hall and it could house exhibits that were pertinent to any of the museums' missions, because, as I said, they really didn't develop changing exhibition spaces for those buildings. So as we—even before the Air and Space exhibits moved out—because that building was just under construction, and the Hirshhorn Museum had not yet been built, my office was in one of the towers of the Arts and Industries building, overlooking what was the Medical Museum on the site that is now occupied by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

Anyway, I started working—as the galleries had been emptied of exhibits that went to the History and Technology building across the Mall—started working with the Exhibits Central as the principal exhibits office at the Smithsonian was called, under my boss's direction. I mean he was really over all the museum functions. So I had great support from him to redevelop these spaces. There are four large halls in that building and then two galleries in between each of the two halls. Some of them had held offices, but most of the offices were on an upper floor. So as we could clear out these galleries and halls, I started booking exhibits into them, very much as I had at the National Housing Center. Plus it was a great opportunity for the Smithsonian's Traveling Exhibition Service, also under my boss, to have a place that they could mount the shows that they were organizing to send out on the road and be able to troubleshoot them before they went out to other museums.

So I really kind of got involved in that. I think the first show that I really became involved with what was in it was one that William Katzenbach had organized for the American Federation of Arts called "Please Be Seated," that was about the history of the chair [catalog: Marvin D. Schwartz, *Please Be Seated; the Evolution of the Chair, 2000 BC–2000 AD.* New York: American Federation of Arts, 1968, an educational exhibition organized and circulated by the Decorative Arts Program of the American Federation of Arts in collaboration with the Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution.] Well, I got very interested in contemporary design, and I was very interested in adding more up-to-the-moment chairs to what he was circulating, which were—it was a very strong historical exhibition with chairs borrowed from a number of museums. But just at that time I think the Museum of Modern Art had shown this strange chair that looked like it was made out of Silly Putty or something. It was all kind of gloppy looking stuff in the form of a chair. I got really interested in things like that. So I thought, okay, well, let's do one of those. I don't even remember how that came about. But anyway, I added some things to that exhibit.

Paul, as you will remember, two shows that you had organized at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, the first one I think was "People Figures" [catalogue: *People Figures*, exhibition, Museum of Contemporary Crafts of the American Craftsmen's Council, November 19, 1966 to January 8, l967. New York : Museum of Contemporary

Crafts, ca. 1966], which we presented there as well. Then I think I met you in '68 at the time that we were showing a contemporary British craft exhibition. I was very interested in craft and design. Don Wilhelm and I had first gone to England in 1964. I was very enamored of the National Design Centre in London. I thought, gosh, this is really wonderful. I mean England had kind of embraced postwar modernity, and really the design council in Britain had gotten behind this design center.

So I got very interested in the idea of the decorative arts embracing contemporary design, the handmade, things from other cultures. I was interested in all of those avenues. You know, I was a novice. I had no educational background at all in any of that. But I was interested in it. I think that really is kind of tantamount to learning.

MR. SMITH: Was there any review committee? I mean how was the decision made for an exhibit?

MR. HERMAN: [Laughs] It seems unheard of today, that anyone could have had as much latitude as I had even in that first Smithsonian job. But my boss, although he had all these curators at these two buildings, Natural History and History and Technology under him, that he would ask a curator to review if it was an exhibit proposed from another museum or another source other than the Smithsonian, to see whether that was appropriate. But, you know, as I recall, I would just propose something to him, and there was never a question of how much is it going to cost? Or it was really more of a question whether it could be fitted into the schedule at Exhibit Central. Because Exhibit Central did all of the exhibits for both of those buildings, and they had very sophisticated plastic shops. They could make mounts for objects. It was really before exhibit production, as we know it today, was established in a lot of museums.

MR. SMITH: Sounds like a perfect situation: You had a complete support staff. You didn't have to raise money and you could just play— [Laughs]

MR. HERMAN: I had no idea how fortunate I was. [Laughs]

MR. SMITH: What was the public response in terms of interest and attendance? Did the press cover these shows?

MR. HERMAN: You know that's a really good question. Honestly I don't remember. I think probably because there was a public relations office at the Smithsonian, that really—it was before really every museum, every Smithsonian Museum, as they do now, had its own PR staff, its own fundraising, all of that. Everything at that point in the 60's was centralized. The Smithsonian really was one entity. I should interject here, though, that the National Gallery of Art, although technically part of the National Museum complex, had its own board of trustees and sort of only nominally reported to the Smithsonian. They had their own budget. It had really been established by Andrew Mellon as a separate entity. But everything else came under my boss.

With one slight exception, I guess, and that was the Freer Gallery of Art, which had been established earlier. Charles Lang Freer, who was a Detroit industrialist, collected Asian art primarily, but also he had a collection of James McNeil Whistler and some other American painters. He had established early in the twentieth century—I think maybe it was in the twenties, but I'm not sure—the Freer Gallery of Art. But it had peculiar strings in that during his lifetime only he could select art that would be part of that collection. After he died, only his handpicked trustees could make those choices. Nothing could be exhibited with his collection in its separate building on the Mall. Nor could anything be lent from that collection. I think that that lesson, that the Smithsonian accepted those conditions, governed every other decision for museums to come, in trying to accept gifts without strings. So my boss really was not—didn't have much oversight over the Freer or the National Gallery.

MR. SMITH: I have a question about the kind of hierarchical structure as Mr. Ripley was the Secretary, who had the overall responsibility and the vision to expand the Smithsonian at that time. What was the role of Mr. Taylor?

MR. HERMAN: Mm-hmm [Affirmative.] Well, yes, that probably really makes sense from the way that the institution has gone. Mr. Ripley was the Secretary. There was an Assistant Secretary, James Bradley [Special Consultant to S. Dillon Ripley] and actually Bradley, after I think Mr. Taylor had recommended me, I had to meet with Mr. Bradley to pass his judgment. So I guess if you think about Ripley being the kind of overall head of the Smithsonian—and he was a scientist. It was very traditional—he was the eighth Secretary of the Smithsonian. Ripley really was more of a renaissance man, though his background was in science. Frank Taylor had degrees in law and engineering. He was an interesting man because he was a native of Washington, D.C. He had started working at the Smithsonian as a janitor at age 15 and during the time that I worked for him, he retired after 50 years of service at age 65. [Laughs] Which was not unusual for people at the Smithsonian to work there a long time. But he was loved by everybody who worked for him and probably because my father died when I was in my teens, he was really a father-figure to me, too. A man I just admired immensely.

Anyway, to get back to your question: Probably in the way that a smaller museum would be structured today, with an executive director, Mr. Taylor would have performed as chief curator. That's probably how it grew. But after he held that job, during the time that I worked for him, they changed the title from Director of the National

Museum to Director General of Museums. Then that evolved into Assistant Secretary for Museums. I think the job now is maybe Assistant Secretary for History and Art and then there's an Assistant Secretary for Science. So they kind of divvied up the responsibilities in different ways after he retired.

MR. SMITH: Sounds to me like you were there at a very pivotal and exciting time in the Ripley era of the Smithsonian expansion. Then how did you get from that position to your involvement with the Renwick?

MR. HERMAN: I got very much involved with these exhibits in the Arts and Industries building, that then I would expand because we had the space and if you remember the show that you had organized and premiered in New York at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, "Plastic As Plastic" [catalog: *Plastic as Plastic,* exhibition, Nov. 23, 1968 to Jan. 12, 1969, under the sponsorship of the Hooker Chemical Corp., New York, 1968.] we presented in one of the four great halls of the Arts and Industries building. But we had the overhead space. I was able to borrow the first all-plastic airplane. We had an automobile with a body make out of plastic. We added a plastic vacation home. Then all of the things that you had selected, and we even did one of those foamed plastic structures that was made on the spot. That was where I really liked being involved in the—

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MR. HERMAN: —exhibition process and the selection of objects for exhibitions. Well, obviously my interest in the exhibitions that we had shown there dealt more with physical objects, decorative arts, folk art, contemporary crafts, industrial design. We did a show one year, all of the award winners from *Industrial Design* magazine. I really—that really kind of satisfied what I had been interested in but never had any education in. So Mr. Taylor was away on a trip to India, I believe. He was really part of the international museum world, too. As much as Ripley, he really represented the institution in professional museum functions. Ripley, after all, did not—he had museum experience, but Frank Taylor really was Mr. Museum for the Smithsonian.

Anyway, Mr. Taylor was away, I think, at a museums' conference in India. As his administrative officer— This was a small staff. He had a secretary; she had an assistant. There was me. But he had then all these other people in other offices in the other buildings. But this was his office staff, and as his administrative officer, I had to keep up with everything that he was involved in and know what he was involved in. So I read all the correspondence, incoming and outgoing and among the things that he was involved in was the Renwick Building Committee. The building that had been the U.S. Court of Claims building at Pennsylvania and Seventeenth Street, designed by James Renwick as the first Corcoran Gallery of Art in 1859—had been transferred to the Smithsonian in I believe 1964. It was already being restored pretty much to its appearance as it had been during the Corcoran years. They'd taken out all the fluorescent office fixtures and had uncovered the marble floors, and really had tried to bring it back to approximating its appearance when it opened as the Corcoran. But they didn't know what they were going to do with the building.

There had been an idea that Ripley had had that I'd read in print about having a kind of international gallery and there would be an international bookstore with staff that could speak several languages. [Laughs] Anyway, I was reading all this stuff from these minutes of the meetings that Mr. Taylor went to for the Renwick Committee. I thought, why couldn't that building have a program very similar to that that I was then responsible for at the Arts and Industries building, a program of changing exhibitions but devoted to craft, design and the decorative arts and folk arts? So while he was away, I wrote this six-page, single-spaced proposal for what I called the Renwick Design Centre. Even pretentiously spelled in the English way, C-E-N-T-R-E. Because I'd been very impressed by the British Design Centre. We had nothing like that. The Cooper-Hewitt [Cooper Hewitt Museum of Design, New York City] had not opened.

MR. SMITH: What year was this?

MR. HERMAN: This was in—I believe it was in about 1968. I'd written this proposal even with the idea that the Grand Salon, the principal period room on the second floor of the Renwick, would be a kind of an elegant tearoom where people could come in and have a selection of good pastries and maybe a sandwich or two and maybe a fresh soup they liked and enjoy tea in that really grand room. It would be a changing exhibition program very much like that in the Arts and Industries building. It would be also administered by the director of the National Museum. We would simply expand Exposition Hall programs to incorporate that building.

MR. SMITH: You're recommending to keep both?

MR. HERMAN: Keep both of them. At that point the National Collection of Fine Arts had not yet opened. They were getting ready to open, I think, at the end of '68. The Renwick—the role of the Renwick building—was kind of —it was going to be under their umbrella rather than under Mr. Taylor's. But I felt that since I was making this proposal to him, I really needed to propose it for his program, not for somebody else's.

Anyway, he came back from India, and my proposal was on his desk. Days went by [laughs]; he never said a thing. Never acknowledged it. I was really too timid to ask what he thought of it. I was very busy at that point.

Because of the restoration of the Arts and Industries building, we really felt that we needed to have some major exhibits there. We were even flirting with the idea, which was unheard of at that time, charging an admission for a special exhibition. I think the first major, one of the major shows that I had in the first of these large halls that we could devote to traveling exhibition use—was one called "The Concerned Photographer" [catalogue: *The Concerned Photographer*. Photographs by David Seymour, Robert Capa, Werner Bischof, André Kertész, Leonard Freed, and Dan Weiner, from the exhibition of 6 one-man shows created by the Fund for Concerned Photography, held in 1967 at the Riverside Museum of New York and in 1969 at the Smithsonian Institution.]

Cornell Capa, the photographer, had organized it. We presented it there, and we were going to do that as an admission exhibition; I don't remember if we did or not and then because Mr. Taylor was acquainted with Charles Eames, the designer, I became involved in working directly with Charles and Ray Eames on the design of a show that we were going to originate called "Photography and the City." Charles and his staff actually worked with curators in the Smithsonian to select photographs from collections, as well as doing a lot of other research. I spent a week at the Eames studio out in California working with them. It was just wonderful. I really was so enamored of Charles Eames and that whole family of creative people. I even started to talk with a hesitation like Charles did. Anyway, we were getting ready to open "Photography in the City" as a major exhibition, and then Robert Kennedy was assassinated, and our opening was to be that week. So we called it off, and we never had a proper opening.

At the time that my proposal resurfaced again, which I'm guessing would have been in late 1970, about two years later, Mr. Taylor came into my office one day and said he'd just had lunch with Robert Tyler Davis, who was the assistant director of the National Collection of Fine Arts [NCFA], and had given him my proposal. Mr. Davis was taking responsibility at the NCFA for the Renwick Building. Mr. Taylor suggested that I have lunch with Mr. Davis and talk about my ideas. Which I did. I came away from that really not at all interested in what Mr. Davis wanted to do. He was talking about, oh, a period room here, and maybe a case of porcelain or something here. It was a very kind of traditional and kind of ho-hum idea of presenting the decorative arts.

At that point I had picked up on something Mr. Taylor had said one day about the Philadelphia Centennial. For the Bicentennial of the American Revolution of '76, I had suggested that we delve into all the 43 cars full of stuff that had started the Smithsonian on its museum course, and recreate the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in the Arts and Industries building. Which by then would have been emptied of the Air and Space exhibits because that museum was opening also in '76. So I was really heavily involved in trying to find all this stuff in Smithsonian collections—really immersed in the Philadelphia Centennial project, when I had lunch with Davis. You know the Renwick Design Centre was really out of my mind.

Then a new director for the NCFA came in; David Scott, who had been director, retired. Joshua Taylor, a professor at the University of Chicago, was hired as director of the NCFA. He'd only been there a couple of months, and then Mr. Davis had a heart attack after I'd met with him, and Dr. Taylor—I always had to distinguish between Mr. Taylor, my first boss, and Dr. Taylor, my second one. Dr. Taylor found my then two-year-old proposal on a stack of papers on Davis's desk. He'd never heard of it. Liked what I'd written. Called me over for an interview and hired me to implement those ideas that I'd had since 1968 for the Renwick Design Centre.

MR. SMITH: Was that a year later then?

MR. HERMAN: That was like two years later. He hired me. I started work. I was transferred over to the National Collection of Fine Arts and started working February 1971 to plan the program for the Renwick Gallery, which was to open 11 months later.

MR. SMITH: I'm curious about "Objects:USA" that premiered in 1969. Did you see that exhibition?

MR. HERMAN: I did. I saw that—I'd met you earlier, Paul, and I'm sure I met you again at that opening when you were there with Lee Nordness. Of course all the artists and dignitaries. You had lot of people to say hello to. [Laughs] I think probably that David Scott was still director then. That was before Joshua Taylor had come. But I think everybody was quite aware of the importance of "Objects: USA." I can't help but think that that helped break the ground really for my proposal for the Renwick Gallery. Anyway, let's stop here for a minute.

[Audio Break.]

When Joshua Taylor hired me in February 1971, he gave me the title of Administrator, Renwick Gallery. The Renwick Gallery, I should explain, is to this day a curatorial department of what is now called the Smithsonian American Art Museum. There was an intermediate name between National Collection of Fine Arts and that was National Museum of American Art. The Smithsonian American Art Museum in its early years, as the National Collection of Fine Arts, had an identity problem. Before they opened in 1968 in the old Patent Office building, and were joined soon after on the other side of the building by the National Portrait Gallery, it really had only, at

the very beginning, galleries of paintings, I believe, in the old Smithsonian Castle. Then later one of the halls that had originally held stuffed animals, I suppose, in the Natural History Museum. Kind of an odd fit really. So finally for the first time they could get the collection out, which had European works, too; I mean it was not an American art museum collection. Because the National Gallery had opened with such prominence, the National Collection of Fine Arts, nobody had a clue what it was, let alone where it was. So I think there was a real effort to try to make the museum more important once they had their own space and were able to then begin to show what their holdings were.

Anyway, the Renwick Gallery was simply one of several curatorial departments. There were departments, I think, maybe of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century paintings; of twentieth century art, of prints and photographs, and then the Renwick Gallery. But I was given the title of administrator because I didn't have really a curatorial academic background at all. Remember I just had a bachelor's degree in speech and drama with a minor in education. So I was really hired because of my administrative ability in running an exhibition program in the Arts and Industries building.

Well, I started—I had to really hit the ground running because we had only 11 months. The building was being restored. Donald McClelland, who later went over to the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service, had done some work while at the NCFA in locating furnishings appropriate for the two period rooms; that had already been decided. That the Octagon Room, which had originally held the then scandalous statue of Hiram Powers's [*The*] *Greek Slave* [1844] when it was at the Corcoran Gallery of Art; and then the Grand Salon, which was the main painting gallery of the Corcoran, were going to be furnished as period rooms somewhat emulating their appearance in the nineteenth century. Don McClelland had done a lot of research already. They had already ordered draperies for the windows for those rooms. Some furniture had been found and reupholstered. I continued that. I went through Smithsonian storage. I found huge urns—I'd actually found them while researching the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition that had been exhibited in Philadelphia. We were really looking at the period of the Grand Salon as being the kind of 1870s – '90s period. The Octagon Room is more purely in the Renaissance Revival style.

So we had a gift of some major pieces of furniture from a grand house in Connecticut that had been in storage. In fact were in storage in the room opposite the room that was my office when I moved over to the Renwick Gallery when I was hired. The building, you know, still had patched walls they hadn't painted. The floors hadn't really been finished. It was really a work in progress when I and the secretary I was lent, Angela Margola, moved over there. We were the only occupants of that building except a custodian for quite a few months as work progressed.

The architect of the interior restoration was a Washington architect, Hugh Newell Jacobsen, and I really enjoyed working with him. He was a man I liked and admired. He was happy, he said, to finally have a client who could make day-to-day decisions. I can imagine working with the Smithsonian hierarchy [laughs] had its problems. Anyway, I was on the spot there. So if he wanted to know, well, should the door open this way or that? Or where should the light switch go? That, you know, I had an idea how we were going to use those spaces, where he could only guess at it.

We started right away, not only with making the final decisions about the period rooms. We had discovered that we could basically recreate the appearance of the Grand Salon walls hanging the same paintings that had hung there in the nineteenth century, borrowed from the Corcoran and hung exactly where they had hung then. So in a sense we were paying tribute to the Corcoran Gallery of Art by recreating that space. But, you know, you can only go so far with finding old furniture. It was my idea that bentwood chairs had been made and used as everyday chairs since the middle of the nineteenth century. We could buy those pretty cheaply in the same designs that had been made then and so we used those as casual seating in the Grand Salon. I had seen the chairs that David Rowland had designed in the Museum of Modern Art, the 40/4 chair, and we bought those to use as public seating for lectures in the Grand Salon. I was making choices about ropes and stanchions for crowd control and kind of dopey stuff.

MR. SMITH: I have a question about the formative development of the new museum—was there discussion about the mission of this program? What did you see as some of your priorities? On one hand you were trying to get the physical plant established; but then you also had to face the fact that you needed to present a public program there?

MR. HERMAN: True.

MR. SMITH: So as you were dealing with a lot of challenges it would be interesting to know a little bit more about how you were conceiving this, and what was the process of developing a new program.

MR. HERMAN: Yes. Well, of course, the exhibition program was really the foundation of the reason for the building as I saw it. But we really—because of my experience at the National Housing Center and the Arts and

Industries building, we certainly were keeping the public in mind, too. Even though it wasn't to be my idea of the tea salon, we did decide that the Grand Salon would be kind of a grand public living room near the White House in downtown Washington, that we would present public programs as a way to develop an audience to come in and see the exhibits. So from the very beginning, we were anticipating working with the Division of Performing Arts at the Smithsonian to have some of the concerts that they were already producing. Also with the Division of Musical Instruments in the American History Museum, which had already a program of performances using antique instruments. So that was always part of the plan, and that's the reason that we needed public seating for those programs. You know, getting sound equipment and projectors and things like that that we could bring out that wouldn't be too obtrusive. They wouldn't be there in those rooms

We also anticipated that we would have exhibit openings. So there was an area—and this was decided before I came; there would be a small kitchen, really kind of a catering kitchen, that a caterer could work out of to serve the kinds of hors d'oeuvres and things that you have at an opening and a bar. It was not big enough for that, of course, we soon realized after we started having events.

But I wanted to have a film program as well and we did all that as well as concerts. But it was really the exhibition program and lectures and programs allied to the exhibitions that interested me especially. The theme we came up with, I'm not sure that I can remember the exact words, but it was to express American creativity, I think, in all forms. I think we named craft, design, decorative arts, among them. But we also, because of the whole relationship with the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service, decided to devote two galleries on the upstairs floor for exhibitions that would be not only from SITES as a way of showcasing their exhibitions as we had in the A&I [Arts and Industries] building; but also from other sources and working closely with the embassies in a way to fulfill what Ripley had originally thought of as an international program.

SMITH: When you say "we," who else was involved?

HERMAN: Well, it was really—I met with Joshua Taylor, and I really, I didn't have to get any other approvals. I mean it was kind of like the way that I worked with Frank Taylor. I'd simply go in and discuss an idea. Joshua Taylor would say, "Sounds good. Let's do it." He never asked what it was going to cost or even questioned the logistics of how it would be done. But it was done.

SMITH: Again you had the same support system of the Smithsonian for covering costs as well as the installation help.

HERMAN: I certainly had— Let's just talk about the year that we were getting the building ready. I certainly had all eyes on getting that job done, to open. I don't even know why January of '72 was such an important date that we were going to open. But somehow that date had gotten set, and we were working toward that. So, as I said, we were working on finishing the restoration of the building, both the exterior and the interior. The exterior, during the time it had been the Corcoran Gallery of Art, on the 17th Street side of the building—it's on that corner at 17th and Pennsylvania—there were niches that held white marble sculptures of some of the world's great creative people. When it had been turned into the Court of Claims, all but two of those niches had been turned into windows.

In the two remaining niches we wanted to put back replicas of the statues that were originally there. Well, they were in two places: in a botanical garden in Richmond, Virginia, and the others in the Fine Arts Museum [Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia] there, as I recall. I went down to Richmond to look at the condition of these statues, in this garden park where they hadn't really been very well cared for; they were out in the weather. We managed to contract to have replicas made of them, which meant they had to be removed from that park, sent to a place where the molds could be made. Anyway, that was a kind of a weird wrinkle that doesn't add anything to the program, but it was all part of finishing the building.

Inside the decision was made that we would not go back to the original idea that James Renwick had had for the interior finishes, which was wood painted to look like white marble. By the time it finally opened after the being used for storage during the Civil War, styles had changed, so all the woodwork then was made to look like grained dark wood. So we opted to go for that look to try to carry out the late nineteenth century appearance of the building. I had great support because from Secretary Ripley on down, anything that I needed I could pretty much get and even I worked weekends.

We had identified that we needed a—we wanted a chandelier over the grand staircase. Mr. Ripley, on a trip to India, using blocked currency—U.S. funds that are given to countries for foreign aid; and then if they don't use it, you can use it for U.S. purposes. Ripley had bought a crystal chandelier from a maharajah's palace with blocked currency and it was somewhere between—we didn't quite know where this thing was. But we thought that sounds like just the thing we need for over the grand staircase in the Renwick Gallery. Well, we finally tracked where it was in transit. But we had no idea whether it had been electrified, whether it was going to arrive assembled, whether it would be in hundreds of crystals and chandelier parts. Anyway, I was having trouble

getting a chandelier expert ready to come and look at it when we finally did locate it, and it was going to arrive in Washington very soon and I'd gotten hold of the chandelier expert for the White House. He said, well, he didn't really want to work with the Smithsonian because it had taken him so long to get paid when he worked on the chandelier for the First Ladies Hall in the History and Technology Museum.

I was working at the Renwick one Saturday morning, and Ripley and Charles Blitzer, Assistant Secretary for History and Art [1968–1983], came by to see how things were going. I recounted that story to Ripley about how this chandelier guy wouldn't come and look at it because he'd had so much trouble getting paid promptly. Mr. Ripley said to Mr. Blitzer, "Charles, will you go and stand by every desk you need to to make sure that invoice is paid." [Laughs] That's really quite remarkable. Anyway, we never did get the White House person to do it because there was a—I think he was basically illiterate but a wonderful handyman who worked in the Smithsonian Castle in the furnishings collection there, named Gordon Dentry. When the chandelier arrived, Gordon unpacked it. Everything had to be assembled. It had never been electrified. These curved glass arms that supported the crystal drops and the candles all had to be drilled very carefully. Dentry did all that, assembled the chandelier, we got it installed. It looks wonderful on the stair to this day. So there were odd things like that that we were dealing with that had nothing to do with the exhibition program really, but were all part of the appearance and the whole visual experience that the Renwick would encompass.

I was very interested in showing the range of the programs that we anticipated showing at the Renwick as its program. I thought it was really important—and this maybe came from my public relations experience—that the launch really needed to make clear what the mission of the Renwick was and to present the kind of introductory exhibitions, to show the parameters of the gallery's program, we found a local architecture and design firm, Tasi Gelberg & Pesanelli. We took as the theme "Design is..." [exhibition, Renwick Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1972–1975]. Each exhibit case would fulfill a different aspect of what design encompasses. We wanted everything from industrial design to science to decorative arts to traditional crafts to Native American work and ethnic art to be showcased in these exhibits.

MR. SMITH: Was it international as well?

MR. HERMAN: I don't think so. I think that that was really—really we were focusing on American creativity except for the two galleries upstairs. I think even in our—we didn't call it a mission statement, but I think to this day it's maybe still posted on the outside fence of the Renwick Gallery what its purpose was. It was to showcase the creative achievements of Americans past and present in design, craft, and the decorative arts. Something like that. So we had everything from the ceramic nose cone from the space program; we bought from the fiber artist Kay Sekimachi a monofilament contemporary sculptural hanging that she had made. We had traditional crafts from other Smithsonian collections. We really tried to show the dimensions of "design" as we hoped to present it.

That took the two side galleries of the first floor, and for the large rear gallery I proposed to organize a contemporary craft exhibition that would be the kind of signature exhibition to showcase contemporary craft. I'm sure you remember, because you and I had become friends by then and I relied on your advice [laughs], because I was a novice in the craft field, and I'm the first to admit it. You had said, "Well, nobody's done a contemporary handmade furniture show for a while." I suspect because it's very expensive to do. Furniture's big and heavy to ship in. You suggested several names.

I talked to Joan Pearson Watkins, who'd been an early advisor to David Scott, the director of the National Collection of Fine Arts on the Renwick program. Her husband, [C.] Malcolm Watkins was a curator of material culture in the American History Museum. Joan Watkins suggested Arthur Espenet Carpenter, and you had suggested Wharton Esherick, George Nakashima, Wendell Castle, and Sam Maloof. Wharton Esherick had died I think about a year earlier. But I dealt with his heirs and visited all the others. Selected ten pieces by each.

George Nakashima was kind of cranky about it. When I visited his studio in New Hope, he said, "Oh, only ten pieces!? You know I had 50 pieces in the show that I had in India," or in Japan or something. I thought oh—Then he came by one day when the building was still unfinished and we were working in it. He'd graduated in architecture from the University of Washington, and so although we knew him primarily as a furniture designer and maker, he really was educated as an architect. Anyway, he came in with his son Kevin: "Oh, why do you want to restore an ugly building like this with all this excess ornament on it?" [Laughs] I was really getting a little fed up with his negative attitude.

Anyway, "Woodenworks" [catalog: Renwick Gallery, *Woodenworks; Furniture Objects by Five Contemporary Craftsmen: George Nakashima, Sam Maloof, Wharton Esherick, Arthur Espenet Carpenter, Wendell Castle*, St. Paul: Minnesota Museum of Art, 1972] was the title of that. We had hired Miriam Plotnikoff who became kind of my assistant on that project; and did all the kind of correspondence and the detail work after I'd made the selections. Helped with the catalog and all of that. I mean there was a lot of work to be done. Basically it was me and my secretary, Angela Margola. I hired Ellen Myette who was an assistant in the educational department. Ellen came over, and she started working as—I think the title she eventually had was—I can't remember whether

she was assistant curator or associate curator. We had always thought from the beginning that we probably would cover more traditional decorative arts. Because I was interested in contemporary work, we sought a decorative art historian and found one in a young man from Philadelphia, Arthur Feldman, who had published, and he was a respectable scholar but very young and untested. But we'd pretty much decided on all the programs by the time Arthur was hired. It became very clear the first year that traditional decorative arts, because we didn't have a collection, was not really what we needed a curator to do. I think his title was associate curator; because though I was the curator, the head of that curatorial department, I had the title of administrator. So Arthur really was in a sense the kind of more traditional curator of the Renwick Gallery. Ellen Myette then was junior to Arthur Feldman. But basically I had organized or gotten other people to organize all the exhibitions before Arthur was hired.

I covered the first floor, "Design Is...," and "Woodenworks." The second floor and the corridor of the first floor we also wanted to reflect the breadth of our interests. Paul V. Gardner, the curator in the Division of Ceramics and Glass in the American History Museum, though it was still the Museum of History and Technology at that point, was working on a book on Frederick Carter, the founder of the Steuben Glassworks. I saw that as the ideal opportunity to present historical aspect of one craft medium as we know it today. He was delighted to curate that exhibition because it accompanied his book. So we didn't have to do a catalog. That was already underway.

There was a young researcher working in the American Indian collections in the Natural History Museum. We engaged her to fulfill really her master's thesis work that she was doing on Zuni and Acoma Pueblo pottery, to organize an exhibition in that subject area. That really served us well to show a Native American aspect of contemporary craft. I think we probably need to conclude here. There are two more exhibitions: architectural photographs by Frank Roos, who was an architectural historian and photographer—to show our interest in architecture; and we showed illustrations from the *Index of American Design*, which is really a library of water color portraits of traditional decorative arts housed in the National Gallery but made as a WPA project. We had another photographic show called "James Renwick in Washington," that really dealt with the history of the gallery, the Smithsonian building, and his work in creating the original Corcoran Gallery of Art in William Wilson Corcoran's home.

MR. SMITH: In somewhat of a limited space in relation to Washington Place.

MR. HERMAN: And allowed the space for eight exhibitions. It was pretty remarkable that we were able to shoehorn all that in.

MR. SMITH: My impression is that your first exhibition gave a very good overview of what you were attempting to establish.

MR. HERMAN: I think it did. Looking back at it today, I think we had enough variety. But I think that it could be seen as a united whole.

[END OF DISC 2, TRACK 1.]

MR. SMITH: End of card one, session one.

[END OF DISC 2, TRACK 2.]

This is Paul Smith conducting an oral interview with Lloyd Herman for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, on Tuesday, September 21, in New York City. This is the second session, early afternoon, and this is card two.

Lloyd, to continue with the discussion about your involvement with the Renwick Inaugural exhibition. Could you now reflect on how you developed the program? I'm especially interested if it focused only on the United States, or did you have an international connection? Being in Washington in a very central spot was good for an audience not only from all over America but from all over the world. So I'll be interested in the direction the program took.

MR. HERMAN: Well, I think I said earlier that Dillon Ripley, the Secretary of the Smithsonian, had talked about some international aspect of the program. We always had thought that perhaps there would be exhibitions from other countries at the time that a state visit was scheduled by the head of that country. Well, it didn't really work out very well that way, because exhibition programs were then scheduled two years in advance, and state visits are often almost on the spur of the moment. So it didn't work quite that way. But we knew from the very beginning that we would have a continuing relationship to showcase exhibitions that were organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibitions Service, SITES. And almost right away I think I was invited to be involved with a selection of an exhibition that they were already committed to called "200 Years of Royal Copenhagen Porcelain" [catalogue: *200 Years of Royal Copenhagen Porcelain*; a retrospective exhibition circulated by The Smithsonian Institution 1974–1976, Copenhagen : Berlingske Bogtrykkeri, 1974]. So I was invited to go to Denmark, my first trip there, to review the selection that the curator of the Royal Copenhagen

Porcelain factory had put together as a proposal for the SITES show and then we would launch the tour.

So in a sense what I was doing was sort of bringing an American perspective to what a foreign curator's proposal would be for the American market. I still believe to this day that every country is exposed to different things that we had a sensitivity to what would be of interest to our audience. So that sort of began right away with a very close relationship with SITES and with foreign governments and that was really the first of three Danish exhibitions that I was involved with that eventually—I was quite surprised to be decorated by the queen of Denmark who actually did come to open one of the three Danish exhibitions which was on the architect and designer Arne Jakobson.

The other one that I was involved with in co-curating it with the director of the Decorative Arts Museum in Copenhagen [Denmark] was "Georg Jensen Silversmithy: 77 Artists, 75 Years" [catalogue: *Georg Jensen Silversmithy : 77 Artists, 75 Years*, Renwick Gallery of the National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. : Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980].

So I really enjoyed the opportunities to meet curators and see collections and to see other countries in the course of my professional work, and became kind of increasingly involved in working on some of those programs in other countries. Some of them were bigger than others. Some of them resulted in interesting exhibitions. At least one trip resulted in nothing. It was a very good relationship also that the Smithsonian was developing a series of festivals focused on a particular region or country. "Scandinavia Today" was one of them.

There was a "Festival of India" one year. In fact my first trip to India in 1983 with a group put together by Ken Shores, a professor of ceramics at Lewis and Clark College, in Oregon, was really focused on art and culture of India. But I was able to add my own investigation for a potential Renwick exhibition by meeting in conjunction with that trip with curators at both the National Museum in Delhi and with Jyotindra Jain who had planned a utensils museum in Ahemadabad, and later became the director of the craft museum in Delhi.

Nothing that I recall came out of that for the Renwick. But we did have a—I did end up going back to India several more times, both officially and then non-officially. I co-curated an exhibition called "Brazilian Baroque: Decorative and Religious Arts of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" with a curator in Sao Paolo [catalogue: *Brazilian Baroque: Decorative and Religious Objects of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century, from the Museum of Sacred Art of São Paulo, Brazil*, São Paulo: Secretaria de Cúltura, Esportes e Turismo do Estado de São Paulo, ca. 1972], and pretty much the same thing with making a selection of rya rugs from Finland for that program, that SITES then circulated. So that really worked well to keep those two galleries on the second floor pretty much booked with foreign exhibitions. But what was maybe a little more complicated was trying to put into place the exhibitions of the kind of breadth and variety that we felt we needed to represent the fairly wide spectrum dealing with craft, design, folk art, and traditional crafts in the main galleries on the first floor.

I already knew you, of course, and your museum was virtually the only other museum that produced craft exhibitions that could go to other places. The Craft and Folk Art Museum [Los Angeles, CA] in Los Angeles was in its infancy. I don't even remember whether it had opened, but I don't think it had opened when we opened the Renwick, but opened soon after. I started paying attention to whenever the National Endowment for the Arts gave grants to museums for exhibitions that they had proposed to develop that seemed to be on legitimate topics for our program, I would contact those museums to find out more about the exhibitions. We did get several exhibitions that way. Of course because we were part of the Smithsonian, often proposals would come in from other museums once the Renwick program became known to see whether we would be interested in participating in a tour. I also started going to museum conferences so that I could meet other museum directors and find out what they were planning and introduce our programs, so that they would think of us if they were working on an exhibition that might be right.

I think it was probably about my third year on the job when Dr. Taylor decided that I needed the title director rather than administrator, so that I could speak as an equal to other museum directors. Of course that was wonderful. It gave me certainly enhanced status and did help a lot I think in finding those exhibitions.

We also continued to develop exhibitions from within the Smithsonian collections. One, there was a collection of miniature tepees all decorated for a particular celebration that was in the Natural History Museum collections. Working with the curator there, John Ewens, we developed an exhibition called "Murals in the Round: Kiowa Tipis" I don't remember the full title of it. [catalog: John C. Ewers, *Murals in the round : painted tipis of the Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache Indians : an exhibition of tipi models made for James Mooney of the Smithsonian Institution during his field studies of Indian history and art in southwestern Oklahoma, 1891–1904*, 1978]. We also worked with another curator in Natural History, William Stuntevant, to do an exhibition of Northwest Coast carved and painted boxes and bowls. So we were very interested at that point in trying to show the Native American aspect of American crafts, as well as to develop a contemporary flavor as well. That was mostly my involvement was on the contemporary side because I didn't have any really historical background of my own. So I had to rely on

other curators.

MR. SMITH: I'd be interested to know, as you were part of a corporate museum structure and working in your own vignette, what kind of communication would be taking place to be sure that another division wasn't doing something similar? Was there any kind of coordinated planning so that everybody knew what you were doing and you knew what everybody else was doing?

MR. HERMAN: There really wasn't anything organized at all. But I really made it my business to become acquainted within the larger Smithsonian family. You know once we did a couple of those shows from the Native American collections, curators were often very interested in working with us because they might have been working on a master's thesis or something in those collections. Because it was a total thematic show that didn't necessarily relate to their ongoing permanent collection installations, it was a real opportunity for them to showcase works that they were interested in.

Some of these came about quite in that way in which there were curators working in a kind of a cross-disciplinary approach. Richard Ahlborn, who was a curator of material culture [curator of community life] in the American History Museum [National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.], I think approached this with an idea of an exhibition on the Western saddle, something I wouldn't have thought about. So we decided, well, let's broaden that a little bit to include Indian saddles as well as the Western saddle. So we turned that into a design exhibition [*Man Made Mobile*] and got the famous industrial designer George Nelson to write a contemporary essay about seating for mobility in dealing with automobiles and motorcycles and really dealing with more of a design approach.

Often other museums like the Corning Museum of Glass [Corning, New York] approached us to launch "New Glass," which was their big international survey in I believe 1979. We also exhibited "American Glass Now." [travelling exhibition organized by the Toledo Museum of Art, 1972, and the Museum of Contemporary Crafts of the American Crafts Council, as well as the Renwick Gallery, National Collection of Fine Arts, exhibition held at the Renwick Gallery, Oct. 13 to Dec. 1, 1973]. Of course they have a wonderful museum in Corning, New York. But it doesn't have quite the visibility that we would have—or that you would have in New York. So often we would be approached to be a major stop, for which the organizing museum might have felt they'd get more publicity than in their own museum. So that always worked to our benefit, too. I wasn't always involved in helping making the selections for those; we often just took them as a traveling show and that worked okay, too.

MR. SMITH: What about support staff, especially the need when you were curating exhibitions you would need help. Could you reflect on that?

MR. HERMAN: Well, I said that initially it was me, my secretary, Angela, and Ellen Myette and then Arthur Feldman. Well, it was probably within the first two years that we had realized that we didn't really need a traditional decorative arts historian. We needed someone with more of a contemporary sensibility. So Arthur resigned, and I started looking around for someone who might be a contemporary curator to replace him. I was always going through publications like *Craft Horizons* [The American Craft Council, 1941] and others to find out what was going on so I could keep up with what was going on in the field. Also to see what exhibitions were being presented. Although often by the time that one exhibition was already at a museum, we couldn't really plan to have it two years later.

But I saw an article in *Craft Horizons*—I think it was before it became *American Craft*—about an exhibition at the State University of New York, Oneonta campus, the gallery at SUNY-Oneonta, an exhibition that looked and sounded really interesting. It had mannequins suspended in the air and really an innovative-looking show. So I wrote to Director, Gallery, SUNY-Oneonta, to find out more about the exhibition, if there was a catalog. I got a letter back saying, "Yes, I organized the exhibition and designed the catalog and the poster," which were enclosed. "And by the way, do you have any jobs?" and it was signed "Michael Monroe, Gallery Director." Well, Michael, who has an M.F.A. in design from Cranbook [Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan], and clearly knew the craft field pretty well, too, seemed like he might really be a good candidate for that job.

So I arranged to meet Michael at the Rhinebeck Craft Fair [Rhinebeck, New York], which was one of the craft fairs—the biggest one really—sponsored by the American Craft Council in Rhinebeck, New York. Michael was pushing his young son in a stroller, and we sat down and talked. I really liked Michael and liked his ideas. So I arranged, when I got back to Washington, for Michael to come down and meet Joshua Taylor. Dr. Taylor liked him, too. So we hired Michael to be associate curator of the Renwick Gallery. He started in 1974.

Michael has a great eye and really designed some of the most wonderful museum installations that I think I've ever seen. So he was a tremendous asset to the program. I think the first show that we had for which Michael designed the installation, was "The Goldsmith" [catalog: *The Goldsmith : An Exhibition of Work by Contemporary Artists-Craftsmen of North America,* Minnesota Museum of Art, Saint Paul: The Museum, 1974, exhibition shown at the Renwick Gallery, May 17 to Aug. 18, 1974, and the Minnesota Museum of Art, Sept. 3 to Dec. 29, 1974],

which was a show developed by what was then the St. Paul Art Gallery, now the Minnesota Museum of Art [St. Paul, Minnesota] and was one in a series—or maybe it was the first of a series—of contemporary metalsmithing shows that Malcolm Lein, the director, organized. So we had a very close working relationship with him. In fact he had taken my initial curatorial show, "Woodenworks," for a second showing there. They had actually gotten some underwriting from, I think, the Weyerhaeuser Company for the catalogue of that. So we'd started out with a nice relationship there and certainly had others with other museums as the program developed.

I think probably the shows that focused on a single artist are of interest—I feel that they were important to do because you can have a lot of thematic shows, and we did that. I like those because we could show work by more than one person that way. Although with a single artist show, you can show that person's work in depth and how they developed and grew as they matured and their own work matured.

The first solo artist show that we presented—and clearly it was planned even before we'd opened the Renwick Gallery—was on Jack Lenor Larsen, the major weaver and textile designer. You know, we put in the dates, and we knew we were doing a Jack Larsen show. We had no idea what was going to be in it. There was no catalog. Until Jack Larsen arrived with Mildred Constantine, former curator of the Museum of Modern Art who had been his coauthor of the book *The Art Fabric* [*Beyond Craft: The Art Fabric*, Mildred Constantine and Jack Lenor Larsen, New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold Co.,1972] and *The Art Fabric: Mainstream* [Mildred Constantine and Jack Lenor Larsen, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1981]. Until they started unrolling fabrics and hanging them with the help of our exhibits people, we didn't know what was going to be in the show. [Laughs] So we had these huge lengths of fabric on these really tall walls, and we had hanging strips so that we could hang them pretty easily. But that was the first of those.

That kind of gets back to your question about support staff because we had then Michael Monroe, not that early but in 1974. We had just really a staff of four of us initially. We did hire an education assistant. But remember that we were part of a larger museum and relied, as every other curatorial department did, on the exhibitions department, on the public relations department, on the administrative office. Then overall the Smithsonian's personnel office, you know a lot of it in a big institution like that is centralized. Increasingly it has become more decentralized at each individual museum. They've all gotten much more autonomy since I retired in '86. So now every museum has its own fundraiser and its own PR office and all that.

MR. SMITH: Although you were director, you were really more of a chief curator because of that hierarchy and structure.

MR. HERMAN: Well, I was, yes, truly. It was because even though I devised the program and then asked approval for it, Dr. Taylor, Joshua Taylor, was so easy. I'd become aware one year that a lot of jewelers were not just using precious metals and gem stones in making contemporary jewelry. But were using wood and fiber and glass and found objects. So I probably had some slides or some kind of materials to show Dr. Taylor. I went in and said, "I would really like to organize an exhibition of this new jewelry that is other than silver and gold." I think he came up with the title "Good As Gold: Alternative Materials in American Jewelry," [catalog: *Good as Gold : Alternative Materials in American Jewelry,* Lloyd E. Herman, guest curator; Betty Teller, exhibition coordinator, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, 1981, travelled 1982–1984] and he'd just say, "Oh, let's do it." It was really quite amazing that I didn't have to present a budget or anything like that. I did that show, I think, for SITES. You know it was an odd relationship really because in a way, just as I'd worked with them overseeing the shows that they were going to bring from other countries that we included in our program, and maybe helping refine the contents so it really suited an American sensibility, it was a good relationship with them. So they were very interested in working with me on shows that I just originated.

At that point the Smithsonian museums were not circulating their own shows. So SITES often took shows from a lot of museum sources—as you know because you worked with them—and so they were really happy to have more Smithsonian input, because often museum exhibitors who would book SITES shows, were surprised that these weren't objects from Smithsonian collections because it was really an outgrowth of the Smithsonian program. So that really worked well with them. Also through working with SITES, several exhibitions that I organized went on to international tours through the US Information Agency because they also used SITES for the physical aspects of circulating their shows in foreign countries.

"American Porcelain: New Expressions in an Ancient Art," which I had proposed to organize in 1980, did go on a domestic tour [catalog: *American Porcelain: New Expressions in an Ancient Art*, Lloyd E. Herman. Forest Grove, Or: Timber Press, 1980, shown at Renwick Gallery, November 7, 1980 to August 16, 1981, followed by a national and international tour through 1984]. Then it was picked up by USIA [United States Information Agency] for a limited foreign tour. That was I think maybe the first show that went abroad that gave me an opportunity to travel and talk about American crafts in other national capitals. For that show I know I gave talks to the openings in Jakarta, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and someplace else—it slips from my mind right now—perhaps Singapore.

MR. SMITH: It went to Asia?

MR. HERMAN: Asia. It was an Asia tour. Then, of course, that worked very well for me later when I became an independent curator because I knew the people at US Information Agency, and they knew me. So we could work quite comfortably together.

But I guess the domestic shows, quite apart from American porcelain which was a big survey show, and I think my interest in that, came about in the same way that another show came about that resulted from a summer curatorial institute at the Winterthur Museum in Delaware [Wilmington] that I attended and even though these summer programs were designed for more traditional decorative arts curators, I was very interested in looking at historical material as an antecedent to what contemporary craftspeople were doing. So having a little bit better understanding, though not being an historian about what had happened in the past, enabled me to propose exhibitions that would have maybe an introductory historical component and then the rest of the show would all be contemporary work, some which related to history and some not.

So one of the shows that came out of my attending that summer institute was called "Paint on Wood: Decorated American Furniture— or "Two Hundred Years of Decorated American Furniture," I think it was. [*Paint on Wood: Decorated American Furniture since the 17th Century*, Lloyd E. Herman. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977.] My interest was primarily in eighteenth-century painted furniture and inlaid furniture. So I really refined that to include painted furniture, and we had a couple of interesting painted pieces that really showed the history of that and then really right-up-to-the-minute contemporary painted work. I don't remember that that show circulated because furniture shows were always a little bit difficult because humidity control was always a factor. We always solicited information and feedback about climate control and conditions suitable for exhibitions, including those that we sent out on tour.

The other one you will remember, Paul, that I think was a particularly good one, was "Objects for Preparing Food" [catalog: *Objects for Preparing Food*, organized by the Renwick Gallery and the Museum of Contemporary Crafts of the American Crafts Council. Washington: 1972, exhibition held at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York, Sept. 22, 1972 to Jan. 1, 1973, and the Renwick Gallery, Feb. 9 to Apr. 29, 1973] and I think you proposed that. Or I don't know how we really hatched that idea. But it was one that we shared. As I recall, you gathered information on the contemporary objects. I did research with Miriam Plotnikoff's help in Smithsonian collections. So we were finding early appliances like early toasters and mixers and things. Then we also then looked at the ethnic craft collections to find where there were sieves and strainers and stirrers and other things for the preparation of food in different cultures.

MR. SMITH: As you recall, it was structured by function.

MR. HERMAN: It was, yes.

MR. SMITH: Objects were organized by function: cutting, containing, storing, and included historical along with contemporary work. It was a very ambitious show, but I think it was a very nice collaboration.

MR. HERMAN: It was.

MR. SMITH: The resources of the Smithsonian were very, very valuable to amass the amount of historical material that was included.

MR. HERMAN: Well, the amazing thing is to me, even though Smithsonian curators would sometimes dig their heels in and say, "Oh, somebody's asking me to do something that takes me away from my research." Often I found that curators were very interested and are looking at their materials from a different perspective. As long as they were treated sympathetically and given the right context, I think curators were often very happy to have them shown from a design and craftsmanship perspective rather than objects of material cultural history.

MR. SMITH: The program that you're describing really was extremely broad, not only in terms of the breadth of content, historical, contemporary; but also the fact that you were really working with a vast network and had a great resource right at your fingertips in Washington. The Smithsonian itself plus other organizations.

MR. HERMAN: Foreign governments particularly because many governments had cultural funds to support exhibitions of their arts on tour in the US. Well, SITES was ready to work with them. I was sitting there ready to give them a showcase for their work in Washington. This really also supported Ripley's idea of the kind of international aspect of our program. Every year he would host a diplomats' dinner in the Grand Salon of the Renwick, to which ambassadors of all the nations in Washington would come together in the Renwick for dinner. Those were always interesting because I had interesting dinner companions. I sat by Clare Booth Luce at one dinner. [Laughs] People, you know, whose names I knew, but really admired. I had an opportunity to give Ronald Reagan a private tour of the Renwick before a dinner party, the night before his inauguration. So because we were across the street from the White House and next door to the Presidential guesthouse, Blair House, and some of that just sort of fell into my lap.

MR. SMITH: Well, you had a very prestigious Washington location.

MR. HERMAN: [Laughs] Yes.

MR. SMITH: When did you begin to develop a permanent collection? What was its focus?

MR. HERMAN: Well, the collection grew in kind of weird ways. You know just as I'd originally proposed no collection and we opened the gallery with that announcement, in fact the National Collection of Fine Arts already had acquired some things. Almost kind of serendipitously, the designer and wood turner, James Prestini, had given a collection of his turned wood bowls that had been accepted before the Renwick was even thought of. Other objects had been purchased through the Arts in America Program that was a US Information Agency Program.

But in fact the staffers of that program were headquartered at the National Collection of Fine Arts. So for their budgets, to do an exhibition that might be of Appalachian ceramics, they had money to buy all those objects. Well, when they were over, when the show was over, USIA didn't want them, so they would be then transferred to the National Collection of Fine Arts. So we inherited a kind of a spotty collection of odds and ends mostly from those shows, some historical material.

But as soon as the Renwick opened, people started approaching us and saying, "Oh, you've done this exhibition of Pueblo pottery. I have a bowl by Maria Martinez from the San Ildefonso Pueblo. Would you be interested in that?" So we would say, "Well, we're not collecting. But I'll see if other Smithsonian museums would be interested in that."

MR. SMITH: You're saying, actually, in the beginning you had made a conscious decision: We're not going to collect.

MR. HERMAN: Oh, no, we're not going to collect. We had announced that. That we would work with other Smithsonian museums. Well, what happened generally was whenever someone would approach us with a potential gift, if it was ceramic, glass, or textile, I would usually first offer it to the Museum of History and Technology because they had departments for ceramics, glass, and textiles. Well, I would get a response back saying, "We're not acquiring studio ceramics just now." I would approach the Cooper-Hewitt, which had recently joined the Smithsonian family, the collection from the Cooper-Union Museum—I can't remember what year that they opened in the Carnegie Mansion in New York. But they were still sorting through the collections and trying to figure out where things were and what they had. So they would usually say, "Well, we're not collecting right now because our collections are in storage, and we just can't deal with it."

I guess after the first few turndowns when we were offered objects and the other Smithsonian museums didn't accept them, Dr. Taylor said, "Well, yes, that's a very good Maria Martinez bowl. We'll acquire it. We'll accept it as a gift." So we gradually kind of piecemeal began to acquire objects. There was never any philosophy behind this at all. But then, as you recall, when "Objects: USA" [catalogue: Lee Nordness, *Objects: USA*, New York, Viking Press: 1970], which you had organized, ended its international tour after a fairly long domestic tour, as I recall, the Johnson's Wax Company, which had acquired all of those objects, started giving them to museums that had shown the exhibition during its domestic tour. Well, the National Collection of Fine Arts was given nine or ten objects. So that was really the beginning of the contemporary craft collection.

MR. SMITH: But they were housed at the National Collection? Or did they come with—

MR. HERMAN: Well, they were housed over there because we really didn't have collection storage space in the small Renwick Gallery building. It is really quite a small building. During the years that it was the Corcoran Gallery of Art, I think everything was on view. It was much later that museums began to see that they needed space for reserve and study collections.

We relied on the exhibitions department of the National Collection of Fine Arts. They had exhibitions in the main building. There were always exhibition changes being made there. We had to then dovetail our exhibitions with the changing shows over in that. Plus, you know, they'd be changing things in the permanent collection occasionally, too.

So what we devised for the Renwick was durations of roughly three months which would usually be traveling exhibitions we'd be getting on tour because typically a traveling exhibition would be made available for six weeks or three weeks in some cases in the early years. Where we wanted a double booking in order to have them up long enough and to kind of justify the labor to install and take it down. So we had some things that would be three months, some things six months for the most part that we would originate. Then other shows like "Design Is..." our index show, that would be up for as long as two years. So that was always the plan. We didn't have a permanent collection. But we could keep exhibitions that we organized up for a longer period of time—lenders permitting.

So that's really how that developed. I also felt that that gave us something changing every couple of months, if you think of the three months, six months, two year timetable. Or 18 months I think it was, maybe not two years. I always felt that we needed something to publicize. After all, we had only opened to the public in January 1972, and we had to build an audience. I didn't feel it was enough that people would come to Washington to "see the Smithsonian," because we weren't down on the Mall where most of the Smithsonian museums were. We were up by the White House and people coming to the White House wouldn't necessarily know that there's a craft museum across the street.

So what we started doing was, even though we didn't really have a collection, we would start bringing out these individual objects and have the "featured object" which would be in a little vitrine, a little glass-topped pedestal, outside the door of my office, which was right inside the main entrance of the Renwick Gallery. It was something that I'd learned from my first boss, Frank Taylor, who often was asked for advice by groups that wanted to start a museum. He often talked about if you don't have a very big collection, you can have an exhibition with a single object. You can put—let's say it's a teapot, a porcelain teapot made in Japan. You can talk about porcelain, how it's formed into objects, the history of porcelain, what it means in Japan, what the history of tea is, what the contemporary practice of drinking tea is, how teapots are made today. I mean there are a lot of stories you can tell with a single object. So we started the featured object with that in mind, that we would say as much as we could about one of these very few objects in the collection that were kind of suitable to display. As we started to be given more things, we'd keep putting them on view.

I think probably the big impetus to collecting came about in 1975. In the early 70's, the American Craft Council, besides the Rhinebeck Craft Fair, had started additional craft markets. Rhinebeck, as I recall, was initially only retail, but this got the ACC [American Craft Council] into the business of showcasing crafts that then buyers from department stores and gift stores and craft galleries could come into one central place and shop for stores just as they had been doing at other kind of trade shows.

Because emphasis in the craft field was shifting to sculptural or experimental, I felt that there's really not so much of a place anymore in museums to showcase dinnerware and glassware and furniture and functional objects, particularly those that are not one of a kind but may be made in series. Thinking back a little bit about the village potter, that kind of concept that came from England to America. Thinking that, well, there are still people, there are people who are making functional things, more than one of a kind. I really wanted to showcase those as sort of the other side of the coin to "Objects: USA." We decided to do that in a national competition that we called "Craft Multiples" [catalogue: *Craft Multiples*, Renwick Gallery, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1975, published on the occasion of an exhibition at the Renwick Gallery, July 4, 1975 to February 16, 1976, and circulating in the United States from March 1976 through March 1979]. We devised this idea that the definition of a craft multiple would be something that was made or intended to be made at least ten of the same design. If not made entirely by its designer-maker, supervised by that person. That the touch of the hand had to be apparent in the finished product.

We got a certain amount of flack when that was announced because I remember one writer who was a glass artist wrote in one of the periodicals where he had a column, "There is no such thing as a craft multiple. Everything made by hand is unique." Well, that is true. But there are things that are made in series that can be virtually identical.

Anyway, to get back to your question about how did we start collecting: We announced that this show was going to travel for three years to underserved towns of under 50,000 population that usually didn't get traveling national craft shows. I still think that was a great idea. We got support from an unexpected source quite out of the blue, as I recall. We got a letter from Timothy and Susan Mellon. He was one of the offspring of the Mellon Family of Pennsylvania, and she was a Mellon by marriage. They were among the younger generation, and they were very interested in that concept and gave us, as I recall, $40,000 to buy objects from that exhibition. Which we did. I can't really remember how many we did buy. But the exhibition itself was really very wide-ranging from carved bone—cow bone—crochet hooks that had little gargoyle ends, to an Amish buggy still used in Amish country as they were a century before. We had everything from a handmade basket for a hot-air balloon to very functional furniture, dinnerware, and toys. It was a very popular exhibition and that was really the foundation of our collection.

Well, once we decided that we were in fact a collecting institution, it was always my thought that even though there was a division of ceramics and glass in the Museum of History and Technology that did have studio-made objects, that we would try to complement what they had and build on it. Because, you know, they kept telling me they weren't acquiring. The Cooper-Hewitt was, at that point, dealing more with historical decorative arts and design, but really hadn't shown—had been able to show—much interest in contemporary yet. So we weren't really in competition with anyone. That was never in my mind. But rather that we would complement what they had already done by adding things with the perspective of an art museum. That we were really looking at these things not as documents of material culture or design history; we were looking at them from the standpoint of aesthetics and functionality.

So my thought was that we should really go first for the blue ribbon list. That we should get objects by major makers throughout the country that showed them at their prime. If they had a signature style—if they had matured and had a signature style—I really wanted to get the best example we could of that signature style. I didn't think we'd ever have room for probably more than one object by a single craftsman. So that was really how I was going about it.

MR. SMITH: These works were then stored at the National Collection?

MR. HERMAN: Yes, they were pretty much stored there because we really—we had storage for maybe some small objects downstairs. But when we started acquiring furniture, I think we acquired a Robert Whitley chair from "Craft Multiples." Then we had to begin to think about showing them. Then once we had enough in the permanent collection we could begin to make exhibitions. At one point we were able to get a grant for two craftsmen in residence. It was a CETA [Comprehensive Employement and Training Act, 1973] program. It was to be kind of a training program in museums for people from outside the field. So we were able to get two CETA temporary employees/interns. One of them a jeweler, Ellen Reiben who was a young jeweler in the D.C. area. Rebecca Stevens, who was a textile artist, and a weaver primarily.

Anyway, Rebecca was very interested in museum work and we got her involved with organizing an exhibition of these rather disparate objects that we owned called "Textile Techniques in Art," with the idea that we could show, you know, the Kay Sekimachi woven monofilament hanging from "Design In..."; we could show a Katherine Westphal quilt that she had given the museum. We had from "Objects: USA" Sheila Hicks's *The Principal Wife Goes On* [1969]. A Jan Michaels Paque piece all from "Objects: USA." And those things that we'd acquired since. We used that as a way to have almost like an extension of the single object exhibition because we used the single object to talk about the history of that technique and the process used in a contemporary work of art. So that was yet another way to begin to showcase these kind of unrelated things that we had acquired.

MR. SMITH: But it also was drawing attention to a focused educational program which you haven't spoken about.

MR. HERMAN: Yes, that's true.

MR. SMITH: I'd be interested in know more about the breadth of that as well. Because I know that you conducted lectures and a variety of programs. So could you say something about that?

MR. HERMAN: Yes. Well, there again, it really wasn't I guess education that made me think initially of lectures and public programs. It was developing an audience for the Renwick Gallery as a new entity. But we were able to get some money, I think from the Smithsonian Women's Committee for a series of master craftsmen lectures that we could advertise as a whole series. Well, that enabled us to really announce something in advance and have dates set for these series. That was very important to the program.

It wasn't long after we opened that we started talking about a docent program, and we had several volunteers who were very keen on becoming docents at the Renwick Gallery. They didn't want to become docents of the parent museum because they didn't want necessarily to know about history of painting or printmaking. They really cared about the crafts and really wanted to give tours and talks in the Renwick about the kinds of shows we did. So we developed a parallel docent program that didn't have the rigorous art history training that the parent museum insisted on. They would go over to those docent meetings. They were sort of like stepsisters and they really didn't really combine at all very well.

Well, we did get a kind of a curator of education who worked between the Renwick Gallery and the education office over at the parent museum. That was really important. Now Dr. Taylor, as a former professor, was very keen on education at all levels. So it was quite natural that we did this. But often, if we were doing an exhibition that had artists who could come and demonstrate or talk about their own work, we would almost always do that. Often, I remember that we—oh, we didn't pay a very high fee. I remember being criticized [laughs] by the glass artist Marvin Lipofsky about the outdated fee that we were offering speakers. I think that stirred me up to try to get a little more money for them.

It was interesting because at that time, in the early years of the Renwick program, the National Collection of Fine Arts also owned Barney Studio House at Sheridan Circle [Washington, D.C.]. Alice Pike Barney had been pretty much an amateur painter and patron of the arts. When she died, I think her heirs had given Studio House to the Smithsonian and artists in residence could be housed there and other events, sometimes dinners, took place there. They got rid of that property some years ago because it really—it wasn't a good fit to the program, and it had value. So as the Smithsonian started having to raise more money than Congress would give them, then I think they sold that property. But that worked really very well for our program so we could actually offer people a place to stay and not just an honorarium.

We also, to try to get the Renwick better known, worked closely with the Division of Performing Arts. Steve Reich, I think it was pretty early in his career that he performed one of the first concerts in the Grand Salon. And

then we had a full season of—it was the home base for the Emerson String Quarter for at least one season. Now those were all produced by the Division of Performing Arts and that worked really very well, too, because, you know, after Ripley came in as Secretary of the institution, he really wanted to make it as Thomas Hoving had made the Metropolitan and the Park System, really more open and filled with events and excitement.

What Ripley did was to start the annual Festival of American Folklife [Smithsonian Folklife Festival] on the Mall every summer. He bought an antique carousel and brought it to the Mall. It was kind of annoying in the summer because it was right outside my window in the Arts and Industries building before I came over to the Renwick. So he was very keen on the Division of Performing Arts, as well as the Office of Folklife programs in trying to create events and performances that also had educational content, although of a very different nature.

We did run into trouble one year. The education curator at the parent museum, which was by then known as the National Museum of American Art, Barbara Shissler Nosanow, had worked at another museum and had brought with her contacts in Russia. She wanted to pursue organizing an exhibition of Russian decorative arts. Of course the Renwick was the ideal place for that. It was a very ambitious undertaking. This was, of course, still in the Communist days, and Russia was the major part of the Soviet Union. So we were really dealing with aspects of censorship as well. We were relying on the Division of Performing Arts for the performance component of the education programs for that exhibition of Russian decorative arts and the Division of Performing Arts had mistakenly—I say mistakenly or inadvertently—contracted with a Russian soprano, Renata Babak, who it turned out had defected from the Soviet Union. Well, as soon as word got out that we had booked the soprano to sing in conjunction with this exhibition brought to us through the Soviet Embassy, they said, If that woman signs near our national treasures, we will close the show.

Well, the Smithsonian wasn't going to be involved in censorship. We wouldn't cancel that performance. I know the Division of Performing Arts offered her the larger Baird Auditorium in the Museum of National History. But she would have none of it. She was going to sing there or not at all. Well, they threatened to close the show, and the day after she sang in the Grand Salon, the show closed. I thought, you know, she was really kind of stupid. She really wanted Americans to know Russian culture. But she deprived them of two months' of seeing really wonderful works of decorative art from her motherland. So we couldn't censor her, but she made that decision. So we had a closed gallery for a couple of months.

Other shows: I think probably that I'm really pleased by the solo artists' shows because I think that often museums even today may not do as many of those retrospective exhibitions of an artist's career because they're very hard to market. If you're relying on a name that isn't Tiffany or Frank Lloyd Wright, both of which we showed at the Renwick Gallery, you're not going to get people in the door for the name of an artist they've never heard of. But we did one that at the time didn't attract much attention, but today we'd have crowds and that was Dale Chihuly. Because we gave him his first museum show in '78-'79—his first solo museum show; he certainly had been in other exhibitions. It's very interesting because he's now gone on to do major installations in museums and gardens all over the world, as well as, you know, chandeliers in every major museum building in the country, it seems—and sometimes the world, and for the audacity to hang 13 of his chandelier-like constructions along the Grand Canal in Venice, the world's most historic city for glass.

Anyway, he has always been someone that has liked to control the presentation of his work. When we did that show, he was still teaching at the Rhode Island School of Design [Providence, Rhode Island] where he'd set up the glass program. But it was customary—in fact it was required—of federal agencies, and the Smithsonian was certainly considered one because at that time it was still getting I think 60 or 70 percent of its operating costs from the federal government through Congressional appropriations. All Smithsonian museums were obliged to have any of their printing done through the Government Printing Office. There could be a waiver for fine arts catalogs where color reproduction quality maybe needed to be better than the Government Printing Office could provide.

So Chihuly said, well, he really wanted to have both the posters and the catalogue for his exhibition designed by his designer. So we explain the Government Printing Office thing. He said, "Well, if I can bring them in for no more than you would have to pay the Government Printing Office, can you get permission for me to do that?" and so we did. We were able to get permission. I saw posters for his exhibition in other cities before we even got a copy of it. In fact it was attractively done. We had approved all the text. So there was really nothing—no stunt he was pulling. He always liked to have his glass objects photographed against black glass or Plexiglas with a wonderful reflection. Because he said, "More people will see photographs of my work than will actually see the work." Well, I'm not sure that's true anymore because we seem to have endless television broadcasts of his work on Public Broadcasting, and he's in museums all over the world.

Anyway, that was one example of that. It was a good body of work. As a matter of fact, we began to get people who began to get interested in collecting. I remember a visit I think maybe when the Chihuly exhibition was on, by a collector couple from Washington, D.C., Paul and Elmerina Parkman, who had started collecting antique glass. Michael Monroe gave them very good advice, saying "you should buy the most important piece of glass

from any exhibition you can because that will be the museum piece" and they did.

I was also visited in my office one day, quite unexpectedly, by a couple from California, Dorothy and George Saxe, who were just beginning a glass collection. They were going around and meeting museum people to find out more about collecting and where to find the best works. So it was always flattering to be asked for advice. They became certainly among the foremost glass collectors in the country whose collection now is largely housed at the de Young Museum in San Francisco.

Because collecting was almost in its infancy when the Renwick started in '72, I think our programs and our relationship to collectors developed kind of along parallel lines. Early on, I think it was about '81, I was trying to raise money for public programs and was talking to Charles Gailis, who was a graphic designer who worked in the Internal Revenue Service. He and his wife, Anne, who was an attorney, were collectors. He'd been on the board of the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts [Deer Isle, Maine] and active in craft organizations. So we started talking about a support group of collectors in the Washington, D.C., area who might raise money to help support public programs and acquisitions. From those early meetings, he gathered together several other couples with whom we began to meet—oh, it seems like it was about once a month—in one or another couple's homes, and talk about collecting and what they could do to help the Renwick programs. We formed a group called The James Renwick Collectors' Alliance because—

MR. SMITH: What year was that?

MR. HERMAN: I think it was '81. I was looking through some of the literature that was in the book that Ken Trapp published called Skilled Work [*Skilled Work: American Craft in the Renwick Gallery*, essays by Kenneth R. Trapp and Howard Risatti, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998]. It has the dates in that, and I think it was maybe '81 that we started meeting. Then I think the first Smithsonian craft show was maybe '82. It was during that that we decided we would host a collectors' forum, during the Smithsonian craft show, which was then called the Washington Craft Show. I should maybe backtrack about that and how it started.

MR. SMITH: This concludes the second part on the afternoon of September 21st.

[END OF DISC 3.]

This is Paul Smith conducting an oral interview with Lloyd Herman for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art on Tuesday afternoon, September 21, here in New York City. We're now beginning on card three.

Lloyd, I'd like you to continue talking about the Renwick Alliance and how it developed and its importance to the program.

MR. HERMAN: I don't really know that I had a support group in mind when I first started meeting with Paul and Elmerina Parkman and Charlie and Anne Gailis and other couples in Washington, D.C. But others recall that it was because I was seeking money for a public program. I was thinking that originally I was really interested in raising money to buy one or two objects for the collection. But in any case, other museums seemed to be developing support groups. So we started meeting and then incorporated an organization not to exclusively support craft activities at the Renwick, but to have a broader educational role with the idea that several museums might be supported. I had recommended that we use the name James Renwick Collectors' Alliance because I didn't want the name Renwick Gallery or Smithsonian to be involved, because that would mean that the Smithsonian development office could take a cut of all of the money raised as, you know, their fees. I really wanted all the money that this group raised to go directly to the programs that we needed it for. So that was the name we chose. It wasn't really a membership organization, but rather a donor organization that would be governed by its board of trustees. Because Anne Powers Gailis was an attorney, she drew up the incorporation papers, and we began to ponder just what our activities would be.

The Smithsonian Women's Committee used to invite me – and other directors – to meet with them periodically to review what activities we were engaged in. Just as I used to meet with other bureau directors with the Smithsonian Associates to plan what education programs they might want to offer in conjunction with what we were going to do. Even though I wasn't a bureau director, I was sort of a—I had the autonomy of a little bureau and was given that latitude. So the Women's Committee used to invite me also to review what they were doing because their whole purpose was to really raise money to support projects throughout the institution, which was growing bigger and bigger with each year after I started working there. If you think about the things that were added after I came to work there, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Cooper-Hewitt National Museum of Design and then later the Sackler Gallery [Washington, D.C.] and National Museum of African Art [Washington, D.C.].

But at that time there were fewer requests for their support, and they tried to raise money, which they did generally at a ball in the National History Museum, which was nicknamed the "Elephant Ball" because it took place around a stuffed elephant in that rotunda of that building. I had just been involved I guess the previous

year as a juror for the Philadelphia Craft Show, which was a fundraising project started by the Women's Committee of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. At one of these meetings with the Smithsonian Women's Committee, which was chaired by Mary Ripley, Dillon Ripley's wife—maybe she wasn't the chair, but she was certainly a very active voice, as you might guess—I told them what the Philadelphia Women's Committee was doing, and suggested that they might want to consider organizing a craft show which would both help our programs and extend what people knew about craft, and also raise money. They took that under advisement, seemed interested in it, and I'm not sure whether it was the next year or—it was '82 I think; It must have been about the next year—that they sponsored the first Washington Craft Show because they didn't have permission to use the Smithsonian name. I think the Smithsonian was still skeptical just what this event was going to be, and they didn't want their name used. Now of course it is known as the Smithsonian Craft Show.

MR. SMITH: Where was it held?

MR. HERMAN: It was held in the Departmental Auditorium, which was a rather, I think, kind of a glamorous painted and gilded kind of an eighteenth-century style interior, but a very large ballroom-like space.

MR. SMITH: Was it by invitation, or did they have an open competition?

MR. HERMAN: It was organized as a juried competition, as the Philadelphia show was. In fact I think that they may have even had Nancy McNeil and her sister or sister-in-law, Mary Lou Lowery, consult with them on how they did it. I don't think those ladies saw it was competition. In fact both those shows are held at different times in the year. So they never have been really and that first year the James Renwick Collectors' Alliance decided that we would have a collectors' forum, as we elected to call it, and to bring together several speakers in one day of lectures really about collecting in different media. I think we had Jack Lenor Larsen talking about fiber. Robert Pfannebecker, a considerable and experienced collector in Philadelphia—or in the Pennsylvania area—talking about collecting across the board as he did. Joan Mondale, who was the wife of the Vice President at that time, was certainly a great ceramic advocate and amateur potter; and she spoke at that although I don't remember about what. Anyway, we had really kind of a blue-ribbon list of speakers. There may have been a dinner or some other event. But I don't remember that first year that we visited collectors' homes because at that point really there weren't very many. [Laughs]

Anyway, I think that was a great success for the Women's Committee, although they made some missteps that first year in not treating the craftspeople with a great deal of respect. In fact I remember these well-meaning volunteers who weren't necessarily in support of only art museums. But if you think of the breadth of volunteers and support groups across the Smithsonian, it includes the National Zoo and the History and Technology and the Natural History museums. So anyway, I remember chafing when I found out that one well-meaning but misguided lady was telling craftspeople to get back in their booths; they weren't supposed to eat the food at the opening reception. [Laughs]

MR. SMITH: Both the Renwick Alliance and the Women's Committee have really conducted a very impressive program over the years and have made a very important contribution, not only financial support, but also setting a status association for the Renwick program. Am I correct about this?

MR. HERMAN: It really is. I'm proud of both the Women's Committee and the James Renwick Alliance. Many people felt they weren't collectors; they were appreciators and maybe collectors-to-be, but not yet really identified themselves as collectors. But the Women's Committee has raised significant funds for projects all over the Smithsonian. It's been a very good venue for top-quality craftspeople to be juried into a prestigious national show. Philadelphia continues to be a prestige show. But then after the Smithsonian show joined it, several others started in other cities.

MR. SMITH: Did some of the funding from the craft show come to the Renwick?

MR. HERMAN: I think the Renwick has to apply for it like every other bureau, even though it is a craft show. I think for a couple of years maybe in the first years there was a special gift made to the Renwick. I think the curator of the Renwick has always been a member of the jury, either for selection of exhibitors or for award selection. I've certainly done that, both while I was there and since.

MR. SMITH: But the Renwick Alliance was solely contributing to the Renwick programs?

MR. HERMAN: The Renwick Alliance was devoted, as I said, initially to a much broader program than just the Renwick. But I think in fact very little if any money has gone to other institutions. But they've continued to raise money not only— Well, they now, after the Craft Weekend, as it became known, held the same weekend as the Smithsonian craft show, started out with a day of visits to collectors' homes and artists' studios. They then added an upper-echelon membership called Craft Leaders Caucus that I think is both initially and still $1,000 per person, not quite doubling that for a couple. Then there's been a gala benefit auction and dinner. There's been a patrons' dinner. I mean they've added a number of different events during Craft Weekend that were all

fundraising events.

Because eventually, even though it was an informal connection with the Renwick Gallery and the Smithsonian initially, after I retired they did forge a more concrete and official alliance, including a contract that specified what they would agree to raise every year for the Renwick Gallery's acquisitions and programs. I think for many years it has been $100,000 a year. That's been significant money, but the money hasn't always been spent just on acquisitions. It was always intended to be spent on acquisitions or educational programs. They have certainly sponsored a number of lectures and lecture demonstrations by visiting craftspeople, other experts in the field.

They have extended their educational outreach to organizing trips. First it started out just driving trips for a day to Philadelphia or New York or someplace nearby, maybe Baltimore, to visit studios and collections in those places. Then they started venturing farther afield. So this year I think they're going to Kansas City. They've done programs on the West Coast, in Portland, in Seattle—a number of different places and have even started doing programs abroad. That's all been very beneficial, I think, to try to develop and keep more interest in the program by people who may not even live near Washington or get to the Renwick very frequently. But they can participate in these education programs and further their own personal education in the crafts by participating.

MR. SMITH: Am I correct it started out as a local—

MR. HERMAN: It was. It was entirely.

MR. SMITH: And then it became a national—

MR. HERMAN: Entirely. I don't know really who's on the board now. I'm on their honorary board. But I think that the board members are all pretty much in the Washington, D.C., area. They make decisions about what's going to be offered to, well, we call them members, but they really aren't members that pay set dues for the most part. So their activities have continued. The Women's Committee has continued to do the show. They've expanded it beyond the space they first had, which would only allow for 100 maximum exhibitors, which they realized was not cost-effective. Then they moved it to the Pension Building where the National Building Museum is housed, which is a much larger space. Wonderful historic space that was used for one of Lincoln's inaugural balls. An important public building in Washington. So that's continued. The Alliance continues to raise money to support programs. Although I know there's always a little concern about if they are providing the money to the Smithsonian without strings; they simply don't want to do that. They don't want it to be used for new carpeting or for maintenance or guards or things that don't pertain to their principal interest in the collection and in education programs.

MR. SMITH: So far in this interview you have portrayed the founding and the development of the Renwick program to a very established and prestigious national and international recognized program and covered a good many different aspects of association with it. Are there any other things that you would like to speak about as we begin to sort of sum up your association with the Renwick?

MR. HERMAN: Well, you know, it's—I was simply in the right place at the right time with the right idea and the right person who read my proposal. I came to the job without really very much knowledge of the crafts field, and yet I was heading something that quickly became nationally known, partly by design. I really wanted to get it on the map. Almost immediately because it was part of a national museum complex, I started getting invitations to jury craft competitions and fairs and exhibitions. I learned on the job really my job as a curator. I always accepted those invitations. I would go anywhere, and I would learn from other jurors. I hope I didn't make too many missteps. [Laughs] But anyway, it was something I always enjoyed. I've always enjoyed meeting people. I've always enjoyed getting to know artists and see their work and find what's behind it—and what their problems are. I guess probably that that's been really important to me, too. I'll get into a little bit too about how hard I worked to keep visible after I left the Renwick. Because to remain active in the field, you've got let people know you're there.

One thing that there wasn't really a place to touch on except maybe in the context of the National Craft Collection, as I like to call it, because to call it the Renwick Collection is sort of a misnomer. The Renwick Gallery is only a place that that particular collection in the Smithsonian American Art Museum is presented. But we've always thought of it as the National Craft Collection.

Originally when the building opened and we had a museum shop that was to be primarily a bookstore, we started doing little sales exhibitions in the vestibule as simply a way to show and sell some of the objects that we were behind. But I had found these elevator grills in storage that were designed by the architect Louis Sullivan for I believe the Guaranty Trust Building in Buffalo, New York. They had been acquired, but they were simply in storage. I said, can we borrow those and use those as the entrance to the museum store? The director of the American History Museum said sure. That'd be fine. So he lent them and then when he saw how good they looked at the Renwick, he decided as they were redoing their museum store, he wanted them back. Well, this was only about a year or a year or two into after we had opened. So Dr. Taylor and I talked about that and

decided that rather than look for another pair of historic gates, we would commission a pair and really put our effort behind the contemporary craft movement.

So I asked around and got some advice on craftspeople that might come up with designs that we could be proud of. It was kind of good timing because in 1970 Professor Brent Kington at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale had sponsored a workshop at his school to introduce traditional blacksmithing techniques to a group that I think was entirely composed of contemporary jewelers. It was really to introduce to them the idea of working on a larger-scale with forged steel. Well, a number of people came out of that workshop and really began to try to use that in their own work. We invited four people to submit proposals for the Renwick museum shop gates. Brent Kington himself, and he had done significant metalwork and produced a quite beautiful drawing that we liked. Albert Paley, who in that time was a young jeweler doing somewhat abstract designs in metals and sometimes ivory—usually not gemstones. John Fix who was kind of an unknown but was a silversmith in West Virginia, as I recall, and Ronald Hayes Pearson who was a significant metalsmith who had made forged candelabras and other things previously.

We didn't really have a jury to select a maker. Dr. Taylor and I met, and we decided on Albert Paley, who had presented a design that was sort of vaguely art nouveau, very sinuous, complex design. He had never done anything of that scale before. He had no idea, nor did we, how much it would weigh when it was completed. So when it was finally delivered, we realized that the framing of that doorway would have to be reinforced up into the building in order to support these gates. [Laughs] But it was worth it. They really are one of the significant things that I think that we did to support contemporary metalsmithing, and certainly led to a number of further and increasingly ambitious commissions for Paley.

MR. SMITH: I wanted to ask about the Art and Industries program you started.

MR. HERMAN: Oh, the Art and Industries Building, yes.

MR. SMITH: Originally when the Renwick opened, it was going to be part of that exhibition program. How did that evolve?

MR. HERMAN: Well, you know, when my proposal was for the Renwick Design Centre was handed over to the National Collection of Fine Arts, at that time it was not with the idea that it would remain part of the Smithsonian Exposition Hall programs. But we would be managed by the art museum. In fact that Arts and Industries building continued to be used for changing exhibitions in a rather haphazard fashion. I think that there have been a number of programs that were launched there that really were kind of freestanding. I think maybe the Traveling Exhibition Service occasionally used it. I think there was a butterfly zoo in there once. It's just been an assortment of things. It didn't have any programmatic cohesion at all. Now in the last few years the building has been condemned because of its roof failure.

But before that happened, I saw an idea to perhaps make real my hope that eventually the Renwick's program could be made autonomous and apart from the Smithsonian American Art Museum. So I started thinking more out loud about calling it the National Craft Collection at Renwick Gallery and periodically, you know, I would hear—this was after I left of course—that the Renwick Gallery was going to be closed for two years to renovation. Just as its parent museum was for a period of time. So I saw what I thought might be a possibility and that was proposing to Elizabeth Broun, the director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, that she try to get the Arts and Industries building, the four major halls, for a temporary exhibition, up to two years, or as long as the Renwick would be closed, for a temporary exhibition of the National Craft Collection. She wrote back saying that's a very interesting idea, but unfortunately the National Museum of African American [History] Art [and Culture] , that was being proposed, would probably have their first home there just as the other Smithsonian museums had started. Then soon after that the roof collapsed, and clearly nothing was going to go in it. So that idea was sort of dead in the water. [Laughs] I'd always hoped because the craft collection has been not entirely related to movements in other aspects of contemporary visual art. And yet I do feel that today that art museums that previously ignored work in clay, glass, wood, fiber, and metals are now looking with a fresh eye at the increasingly sculptural work in those materials for their collections.

MR. SMITH: In 1986 you surprised everybody after 20 years of involvement by saying that you were retiring. What motivated you to leave the Renwick and return to the West Coast?

MR. HERMAN: Well, after Joshua Taylor died in '81 I think it was, really abruptly with an aneurism that had ruptured in his leg on a trip back to Mexico where he had a house. Harry Lowe, who had been deputy director then became acting director for I think about a year and continued things pretty much as they had been. I still had pretty much the same autonomy. Harry and I always got along together. He was interviewed about me when the ASID [American Society of Interior Designers] chapter, the Potomac Chapter in Washington, D.C., in I think '79 honored me with their Potomac Award for "contributions to the design field." Harry, when he was interviewed about me for an article on the *Washington Post* said, "Lloyd Herman spends every nickel twice." But

he said that in a flattering way, or at least I took it was flattery because I have always been very cost-conscious.

But what happened after, they hired a new director, Charles C. Eldredge, the young director of the Spencer Museum at the University of Kansas. Charlie Eldredge came in, a very likable guy, but he decided that since the name of the museum had been changed to National Museum of American Art, the programs of the Renwick Gallery should exclusively support American craft exhibitions. That we would no longer have the foreign shows. Well, that was disappointing, but it was understandable. By that time we had enough objects that we had acquired in the permanent collection that we could begin to occasionally put an installation of the permanent collection on view.

Eldridge, though, had brought in with him colleagues from the Spencer Museum. Elizabeth Broun became deputy director. Then there was another layer of assistant directors over different program areas. So where I had had Dr. Taylor's ear directly, who would simply say "let's go for it," I now had to present exhibition proposals and proposals for acquisitions for the collection through committees that would then recommend to the director. It was, you know, a level of Washington bureaucracy that up to that point I'd never really had to deal with. So it was a little odd, someone coming from the Midwest and imposing that kind of bureaucracy on what I had to do.

But I felt constrained by having to do that. I found it then more difficult to have to come up with budgets and justify what particular exhibition should be done. It just simply wasn't as much as fun as it used to be. I realized that I was turning 50 in March of 1986. Because I had had 20 years at the Smithsonian and two years in the Navy, that I was eligible for minimum early retirement at age 50 with 20 years of service. If I'd gone to 55, I would've had a full retirement, but I took a reduction so that I could retire early. The catch was that to retire early, my job would have to be abolished. I thought, well, this certainly plays right into what Charlie Eldredge wanted to do, and that was to bring the Renwick more in line with the other curatorial departments and quite honestly, I felt that he wanted to make his museum known, and in fact the Renwick, by virtue of our programs and our efforts at trying to develop an audience and succeeding at it, had become better known than our parent museum. I thought, too, there are a lot of exhibitions that I'm still interested in organizing. It used to be that Michael Monroe and I each would organize an exhibition about every two years. So we would alternate. We would always have at least one major exhibition that would be originated at the Renwick, that either he or I would curate. I thought there are a lot of shows I want to do.

But unfortunately a lot of them didn't have the sort of scholarship that Charlie Eldredge and Betsy Broun really were now requiring of Renwick shows. I was not a scholar. I'd never pretended to be. Dr. Taylor used to talk about the shows that I organized as "taste exhibitions," something that I maybe should have been offended by. But oddly enough I'd also served on a product development advisory committee at the Smithsonian for its business office to recommend objects from the Smithsonian collections that could be adapted or replicated tastefully by commercial companies. This included Stieff Silver and Bates Bedspreads and Cannon Towels. It was called the Taste Committee. [Laughs]

MR. SMITH: So when you officially left, your position was abolished.

MR. HERMAN: I was the only person who ever held the title of Director of Renwick Gallery.

MR. SMITH: Then a new governing structure was developing in real life. Am I correct that you're saying that the —so that the replacement of you, was that Michael Monroe?

MR. HERMAN: Michael Monroe succeeded me.

MR. SMITH: What was his title?

MR. HERMAN: Curator-in-charge was the new title. That seemed to be a perfectly descriptive one because, you know, being a curator and running the Renwick Gallery is very different from simply being a curator where you have collections to study and deal with. We had a building. We had public programs. We dealt with Secret Service whenever a dignitary was staying next door at Blair House. I dealt with custodial staff. You know it was really more like running a small independent museum, even though a lot of what we depended on was done over in the main museum. So curator-in-charge, I think, was an apt title. Michael realized and certainly testified that the role became more complicated in some ways after I left because the James Renwick Alliance was beginning to be a very powerful and important body in terms of its support to the acquisition program. Michael continued to build on the permanent collection with a somewhat different point of view than I had brought. My goal, as I said, was to get a single significant object of an artist's mature style and go for the blue ribbon group, the major makers. Michael didn't care if we already had that person represented if that artist had moved into a different style and created another great work. So there are several artists that represented I can't say in depth, but with more than a single example.

Then when Michael retired, his successor, Ken Trapp, further broadened the collecting strategy to include significant objects sometimes by artists who were not at all well- known; and sometimes they were Native

American works. Or he tried to embrace the spectrum of ethnic and native crafts as well as mainstream contemporary expression.

MR. SMITH: Just to backtrack a bit: During your 20 years at the Renwick—

MR. HERMAN: Fifteen at the Renwick, 20 at the Smithsonian all together.

MR. SMITH: Okay, 15 as director of the Renwick. In addition to the daily responsibilities which you have spoken about very eloquently, you also had many other associations. You already spoke about lecturing and doing shows and how important that was. But you were also involved with other projects. Could you speak about ones that were especially important to you?

MR. HERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yes. Dr. Taylor had very good connections that he brought with him when he came from the University of Chicago [Chicago, Illinois]. Those continued, including one with the American Friends of Art in the Vatican that had sponsored a couple of seminars at the Vatican in Rome. One year, I think because Nancy McNeil, who had started the Philadelphia Craft Show and was a great patron of the arts, particularly the crafts in Philadelphia, was part of that Friends group; they decided one year to devote their seminar to craft, art, and religion. I was invited to give a paper on the history of American craft in the 20th century. So I really undertook a lot of research on that. But they also wanted me to organize an exhibition that would be at the Vatican of—if not religious—spiritually-related crafts. So I invited you, Paul, and Elena Canavier, who had been the craft coordinator at the National Endowment for the Arts, and at that time was Joan Mondale's arts advisor. You each then presented talks and helped me choose artists who were then invited for that exhibition. Some of whose works were acquired by the Vatican.

MR. SMITH: That was a very memorable event.

MR. HERMAN: It was. Fun as well as important.

MR. SMITH: To have a first exhibition and the symposium focused on contemporary craft, taking place right in the Vatican with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church present along with a very distinguished American group, was very exciting.

MR. HERMAN: Absolutely. You know other things like the World Crafts Council. I'd gone to a World Crft Conference in Kyoto, Japan, that was part of a trip put together by Michael Scott, the founder, publisher, and editor of *The Crafts Report* [1975] that then continued on to the People's Republic of China in 1978, one of the earliest trips to China which had only just recently just opened up at all to the West. The World Crafts Council was a very important avenue to make international connections for the Renwick. Then after I left the Renwick, I continued to do that. I went to the conference in Vienna in 1980 and exhibitions for the Renwick program came out of meeting other people at those international conferences. One of them Australian ceramics and another one from Ecuador, "Fiesta of Corpus Christi: Costumes and Musical Instruments" out of Quito. So that was a very enriching experience.

Then after I retired, John Vedel-Rieper, who was then Secretary General of the World Crafts Council, invited me to be an advisor to the secretariat. This was after I'd left, as I said. I was very flattered and honored to be invited; because John was my escort on my very first trip to Copenhagen when I was looking at the Royal Copenhagen china and he took me all around the country to craft exhibitions and to meet craft artists.

MR. SMITH: So we've come to the end of your Washington era. Now let's go to a new chapter when you decided to move back to the West Coast. Was that a very focused decision, that you felt you wanted to go back to the West?

MR. HERMAN: Well, when I left the Renwick, it was not really something I even thought of actively at first. But, you know, there were several exhibitions that I wanted to organize that I knew I wouldn't be able to at the Renwick. So I started almost right away—I retired in May 1986—and I really kind of hit the ground running. I sent out proposals for exhibitions I wanted to organize. I think I got opportunities to do three of them that first year. One of them was for the Gallery Association of New York State called "Contemporary Enamels: Color and Image," that had contemporary enamel art, not only jewelry but big wall plaques and panels. Another one called "Art That Works: The Decorative Art of the Eighties, Crafted in America" [catalog: Lloyd E. Herman, *Art That Works: The Decorative Arts of the Eighties, Crafted in America*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990] which was a very ambitious undertaking, looking at functional furniture and decorative objects for the domestic sphere that was done for Art Services International. In fact, oddly enough, I was able to see it and give talks when it came to Vancouver after I had gone to work there. The third was one for US Information Agency called "Thread Works"—or "Threads" ["Threadworks: Miniature Textile Art," 1988] I can't remember which one; I did two exhibitions for them.

MR. SMITH: As you've mentioned Vancouver, I know that you went to one of the first events at the new craft

museum in Vancouver. Could you talk about that?

MR. HERMAN: Thanks to you. You'd come back from a trip making a talk in Vancouver for the Cartwright Gallery, which was a nonprofit craft gallery. I'd heard of it through Steven Inglis, who was a curator—though he had come from Vancouver where the Cartwright's located—from the National Museum of Civilization in Ottawa in Hull, Ontario, and you'd called me and said that they were planning to become the Canadian Craft Museum and were looking for a director. I thought, this is perfect. My mother was Canadian. We often traveled from Oregon when I was a kid to visit her girlhood friends who lived in Surrey in the Vancouver suburbs and in Victoria. I loved Vancouver. I'd been there also for their World's Fair in '86, I believe it was when we had a Crafts Report editorial advisory committee meeting there. I thought, I'm going to apply for that, and I did. I sent a letter to Julie Molnar, who was the president of the board. I think probably I was in Seattle meeting with the editorial staff at the University of Washington Press, because they were publishing *Art That Works: The Decorative Art of the Eighties, Crafted in America* (1990). My first book, and I've always thought of it as an exhibition catalog, and they said, "No, Lloyd, it's a book."

I went up to meet with the Cartwright board on that trip. Actually I knew a couple of them. I got on well with them. We proceeded from that meeting to negotiate the terms of my employment. I wanted a trial period before relocating back to the West Coast, because I looked upon this as really a significant move and a new job opportunity. I wanted to make sure that I was a good fit with them, so asked for a six-month trial contract with the idea that they would provide a furnished two-bedroom apartment. My partner since 1974, Dick Wilson, had already retired and was going to move out with our cats with me. I proposed to would work 16 four-day weeks a year. I didn't want less time off from work than I had finally accumulated with 20 years in the federal government. I wanted extra time. I wanted a three-day weekend every week to continue working on other curatorial projects, American craft projects. They understood that and agreed to those terms.

So on July 2, 1988, we landed in Vancouver—or really landed in Seattle—and then our rental car with the cat litter box and two cats came across the border to Vancouver. I began work the next day really. The Cartwright Gallery was a small gallery on Granville Island in English Bay in downtown Vancouver that had done some interesting exhibitions. They had even organized exhibitions that had traveled to other Canadian galleries, as art museums are often called in Canada and elsewhere in former British colonies. It was my goal to upscale their program, to really gear it up over a four-year period to the point at which when they moved into the new building, which was going to be constructed downtown, that our programs would be up to speed and our budget up to what we would need to really support and sustain a professional museum program.

So probably about the first month or two, I presented a kind of a four-year plan, in which the budget would virtually double every year. My goal, in order to make good on the name "Canadian Craft Museum," which many in other parts of Canada just laughed at, saying who is this upstart group in Vancouver, pretending to be the National Craft Museum. So I knew that I had that to contend with. But I wanted to get out there and meet people and make good on it, and hopefully make friends for the museum.

Well, the board approved my four-year plan. Then I presented a more detailed first-year plan. My goal was to organize a significant exhibition with a catalog every year and circulate it across Canada, to get the museum better known as really a significant player not only in Canada, but internationally. I went to Canadian Crafts Council meetings in other cities. I traveled to meet with people at Canada Council. I really tried to get out there and meet the movers and shakers across Canada, as much as our meager little budget would permit and did go to the World Crafts Council conference in Sydney, Australia, where I was able to meet more Canadians, particularly those who were involved internationally and that was all very helpful.

We had a staff of only three people: I was the director and curator. Anne Alexander kind of handled promotion, and Jackie Demchuk was the secretary. We were it. Not only did I select works for the exhibitions, I changed the light bulbs and hung the shows. I didn't sweep the gallery; we did have a service that came in and did that. It was only like a 1200-square-foot building with the little offices tucked in back. The exhibition space was fine. It was very neutral. It had big show windows so we could be seen from the street. There was a lot of tourist traffic on Granville Island. But the first thing I wanted to do was not only have the title of the exhibition seen prominently when people entered; but also a paragraph describing what it is. They usually didn't have any kind of didactic material about the exhibitions. Usually not a catalog or a checklist or a handout. So I started doing all that. We did start organizing a few exhibitions that did travel and often took exhibitions from such as the Saskatchewan Craft Council or, you know, others. Some were already in the pipeline. But for the most part, when I inherited that job, there were great gaps in the schedule.

Some of them really turned lemons into lemonade. I remember there was an exhibition scheduled from one of the provincial craft councils that was only going to cost the gallery $500. Kind of an unheard of amount even for shipping, and it was cancelled. So okay, we've got this hole in the schedule. What are we going to do? I'd been approached by Barbara Heller, one of a handful of contemporary tapestry artists in Vancouver about a show. I said, "Barbara, you know we're probably not going to do solo shows. We really will do more group shows that we

can attract a bigger audience for." But I said, "If you come back to me with a proposal to include your work with that of other artists whose work relates to yours—it doesn't have to be tapestry, it could be figurative clay or whatever—that I'd consider a group show."

Well, as soon as I heard this cancellation, I found Barbara and said, "Well, the time might be right. Bring—" and she had already said she had a group of I think of four tapestry artists that could combine to make an exhibition. So I said, "Come in. We've got $500." [Laughs] They were all local. They could bring their work in. We agreed that we would present this exhibition with each of the four of them represented. They were all really very good and we were going to call it "Tapestry from the Western Edge: [Four] British Columbia Artists" [traveling exhibition 1989–1991].

What they agreed to do—I said, you know, "We have only this $500. I would like to have a catalog or something that records this exhibition." I said, "We have an option. We can do a kind of a foldout two, three panel thing that you can each have some colored pictures. Or we could do a postcard set in which you each have postcards of your work and we could package that up and then sell it. They agreed to do the research on postcard firms that could gang-print postcards that we could then package together as the kind of postcard catalog of the show. They would buy, they would pay a portion of the costs because they—you had to get a minimum of 25,000 or something. It was a huge number, and we had a membership of 600, I think, and a mailing list maybe of a thousand. So they agreed to share the cost of this and every postcard that had a picture of their work—it would say: "Untitled by Barbara Heller in 'Tapestry from the Western Edge' at Cartwright Gallery, Vancouver, BC," for example, with these dates. So every time they sent these cards out to their clients, it advertised our show and the gallery. Then we packaged up sets of the cards and sold those for $10 each and sold out. [Laughs]

MR. SMITH: I'm curious, as you were talking about the early days of the Renwick, and after 15 years retired from that to be free and do independent projects, it seems like you were starting over. In retrospect, how did that feel?

MR. HERMAN: Well, the Cartright Gallery job was actually starting where I should have begun. Because I was really starting at the grassroots, where I'd come from a fairly high level with all this support staff, and now I was the support staff.

MR. SMITH: So it was the catch-up of what you'd missed—

MR. HERMAN: It was, but, you know, I really enjoyed it. Anne and Jackie were wonderful to work with. I had a supportive board, although even though they agreed that fundraising was their role, and I didn't know Vancouver, I didn't know sources of funding; I certainly knew about Canada Council. But the fact is that personal philanthropy that we're so accustomed to in the United States is not at all developed in Canada where people expect the government is going to provide grants and so it was really tough going. The Cartwright board then really just wore themselves out with fundraising events most all through the year.

MR. SMITH: How long were you there then?

MR. HERMAN: I was there two and a half years.

MR. SMITH: But you were not actually living in Vancouver.

MR. HERMAN: No, no. Because even before the six months' trial period was up, Dick and I had bought a house in Bellingham, Washington, about 50 miles away over the Canadian border in Washington State, the most significant northerly city in Washington State. We bought a house there, and he'd gone back to move all of our belongings from Arlington, Virginia.

MR. SMITH: So you commuted from Bellingham.

MR. HERMAN: I commuted from Bellingham—no, I didn't commute from Bellingham except after my six-month use of a two-bedroom apartment ended, when I rented a studio apartment in another apartment building right across the waterway from Granville Island. I would stay there four nights a week when I was in Vancouver, even though it was a short commuting distance from Bellingham. The tourist traffic in summer—and this was even before high-security stuff at the border went into effect—could take as long as two hours. I simply couldn't do that daily. So I would commute back and forth from my three-day weekend in Bellingham, and then my four-day work week in Vancouver. I really enjoyed Vancouver life because I had an apartment virtually across the street from the Vancouver Aquatic Center where I could swim every morning and then take a little 12-passenger ferry across the waterway to Granville Island. It was like a ride rather than commuting. It was fun.

MR. SMITH: That was like '89 to—?

MR. HERMAN: Eighty-eight to '91 and that was before the building was completed. I worked very closely with

Paul Merrick, the architect, on space planning and building usage. I initiated something like a Percent for Art program for which we got grant money, and then requested proposals from Canadian craftspeople for a reception desk. I think we had a stained-glass window. We had several other places that art could be incorporated, including the washrooms. So we were able to do that and that was really bringing an American model to Canada. That really worked well.

I ended my term there because I got disenchanted with the head of the board. Well, first of all, the board was not entirely functional, and partly because the president of the board, Julie Molnar, was married to a major developer. She was often involved in interior design and into the things that he had developed. She often was second guessing my decisions with the architect of what to be done, even where the office space was to be located and the museum shop. I eventually just threw up my hands and said, "You know I don't know why you're paying me because you're not really taking my thoughts seriously." I didn't resign in a huff. The presidency had turned over to another woman I really got along well with. But I thought, you know, I think I've done what I can here. It can then be turned over to someone else to continue.

MR. SMITH: So at that point you moved back to Seattle.

MR. HERMAN: No. Well, I lived in Bellingham for eight years and, you know, continued to work on these other exhibitions. The first exhibition I'd organized for the Whatcom Museum of History and Art [Bellingham, Washington] was called "From the Woods: Washington Wood Artists" [1992].

MR. SMITH: And that's located in Bellingham?

MR. HERMAN: That's located in Bellingham; it's a long established museum. I had known the deputy director, John Olbrantz, when he had been director of the Bellevue Art Museum [Bellevue, Washington] a few years before. So I had a ready ear when I got reacquainted with him. I organized that show which traveled in Washington State to several other museums. Then he asked my interest in organizing an exhibition to celebrate the Pilchuck Glass School's 25th anniversary, which I was very happy to do. It was a little ironic that all the years I'd worked at the Renwick, I had never organized a glass exhibition. Michael Monroe really worked with Dale Chihuly on his first solo show and the other glass shows were sort of ready-made shows that came to us. But suddenly I really found myself doing historical research on the Pilchuck Glass School [Stanwood, Washington], interviewing the founders of it and interviewing former directors. Basically what I wrote as the exhibition catalog was the first published history of the Pilchuk Glass School [*Clearly Art, Pilchuck's Glass Legacy*, introduction by Dale Chihuly, Bellingham, WA: Whatcom Museum of History and Art, 1992].

The Whatcom Museum was really important to me after *Art That Works* was published by the University of Washington Press, not only to get my name in print to keep active and visible in the field, but to get distribution of the books. I mean a book that's published and sits in a museum closet is not really helping the artists in it or certainly the author or authors. So the Whatcom Museum couldn't come to terms with the University of Washington Press simply to distribute the catalogs of the shows that I had curated for them and they did very nice catalogs. But they gave me permission to buy at run-on prices, catalogs after the initial printing has been paid for. So it's a lower cost. I could buy a thousand copies at run-on prices and have a hard cover put on and then distribute the hardcover edition which I owned through the University of Washington Press.

I did that with *Clearly Art*. It sold out the first year. Although I never expected to make money, I didn't want to lose much money. But it was done really more as public relations to keep visible in the field. But the University of Washington Press said you can expect to make back about one third what the retail price is of the books that we distribute for you. I thought, okay, well, that's maybe a close to be break-even position. I made $238 [laughs] on a thousand copies. So I did okay.

Then *Trashformations: Recycled Materials in Contemporary American Art and Design* [Bellingham, Washington: Whatcom Museum of History and Art; distributed by University of Washington Press, 1998] they produced for me and again I had a thousand hardcover copies distributed by the University of Washington Press. There was a glass exhibition catalogue that I did for SITES that they distributed, but I had no ownership of it and another exhibition that Matthew Kangas and I co-curated for Craft Alliance in St. Louis for the Year of American Craft in 1993 called *Tales and Traditions: Storytelling in Twentieth-Century American Craft*, introduction by John Perreault. Saint Louis, Mo.: Craft Alliance; distributed by University of Washington Press, 1993]. They distributed it, too. I think they had good distribution.

But at the time—I never really felt connected to the arts community in Bellingham, which I think is largely centered around the faculty at Western Washington University [Bellingham] there. But I was the chairman of the Municipal Arts commission for the year before I left. Which kind of is astonishing considering that I didn't feel very connected there. But I did persevere in trying to get a Percent for Art program started there when they built a new swimming pool. But I had the opportunity to move to Seattle which began to make more sense.

MR. SMITH: What year was that?

MR. HERMAN: That was, oh, let's see. It was '94. I was driving down to Seattle regularly because the exhibitions I was working on either involved Seattle craftspeople or Seattle galleries. Dick and I were subscribing to the Seattle Repertory Theater. We were coming down for other things. Finally it just didn't make sense to remain living in Bellingham when we were really more focused on Seattle and that was a terrific move because Seattle to this day, I feel, is where I was meant to be. It has not only a terrific visual arts community and support system; but it's tops in performing arts, too. In fact Seattle is third only after New York and Los Angeles for the largest number of professional employed actors. A lot of theater companies. So even though I don't perform on stage, I subscribe to seven theater seasons.

MR. SMITH: Yes, I would say you have a bit of an obsession with theatre.

MR. HERMAN: But, Paul, you always think that travel is my obsession. In fact [they laugh]—You know as a country kid, I never had any opportunities to travel as a kid other than to Vancouver, BC, or down to California. With opportunities to work on these exhibitions that were sponsored by embassies, I really did get interested in other places and other cultures. When I left the Smithsonian, I realized that I would have to pay for that travel myself. But, you know, I really enjoy travel. I've always pretty much traveled on a budget. I am frugal. So I've continued to travel, and that really led quite accidentally into leading groups on craft trips to other countries. I'd been on that first trip to India, as I mentioned, with Ken Shores's group from Portland.

MR. SMITH: That was to India.

MR. HERMAN: To India, looking at the possibilities for Indian exhibitions for the Indian festival in Washington, and then I was invited back the year I retired to speak at a craft museums' conference in Delhi. Both of those trips, my travel was subsidized by the Indo-US Sub-Commission on Education and Culture. Because I was working on Smithsonian business in the first and the second, I gave talks on American crafts at American centers in both Bombay and Calcutta. So that was a very good relationship for me, plus speaking at this craft museums' conference, did acquaint me with still other people. I had the opportunity to include a couple of people from the Smithsonian to come and speak at that conference, too.

So then Dick Wilson and I made two subsequent trips to India that Malathi Ramaswamy organized. She was the travel agent who had organized craft trips for both Michael Scott, when he was at *The Craft Report*, and Ramona Solberg, a jeweler in Seattle who often led craft trips to other countries. So we got her to organize two trips for us just with a car and driver, which was still very affordable in India at that time. This was in the late '80s and 1990 I think.

[END OF DISC 4.]

MR. HERMAN: On the last evening of that fourth trip, we were at Malathi's dinner table with her husband, Rama, and I said, "Malathi, you know, I think I know enough about Indian crafts now to interest other Americans to come and explore them, too." At her dinner table, we plotted out the itinerary of the trip that we took the next year. I came home. I wrote 40 letters. I filled the trip with I think 20 people. We had a wonderful group. It included some of the people I knew from Vancouver, some of the people I'd known from the US, and others that got word of it. It was such a success that we planned another one that was equally successful to South India two years later. I had realized after putting the itinerary together with Malathi that I was in way over my head. That I couldn't deal as a private contractor with organizing air fare and visas. So I told Malathi that I would need a stateside travel agent to handle all those details. She put me in touch with Gwen Erwood at Travel Concepts International, who had organized trips with Malathi and others for the League of Women Voters and Gwen put all the details of that trip together and has been wonderful to work with. So after the second one to South India, she asked me if I would like to lead a craft trip to Iran, and I said, "Gwen, I've never been to Iran." But then I realized that virtually no one in the US had since the Islamic Revolution and the hostage crisis of 1979. She had a really good guide that she's used on League of Women Voters trips. So I said, "Yes." She said, "He can put it all together." Again, we had repeats from the first two India trips, plus additional people and that kind of led to more craft trips: to Vietnam, to Bhutan, and another part of India, to Morocco and Jordan, and it was something I never expected to happen. I've enjoyed the camaraderie of other craft travelers on those trips and hope to do at least one more.

MR. SMITH: As I said to you, I don't know of anybody who has traveled around the world more than you have. I'm sure it's difficult to have a favorite. But I sense India was one of your prime passions?

MR. HERMAN: Absolutely. I made my ninth trip there earlier this year, again with a small group. I think there were only nine of us and with Malathi who is now in her upper 70's. So she only will do maybe one trip a year. But she loves the craft groups, and she cares passionately about the crafts of India and their survival and is now putting together a book of essays by those of us who have gone on the India craft trips with me. I've already submitted my manuscript, which is on cold tile making—non-ceramic tiles that are made in India, and pith work, which are both processes and materials that are unknown in the United States, and she's going to publish this

book.

MR. SMITH: On these repeat trips to some of these countries, you've obviously seen enormous change.

MR. HERMAN: In India particularly. Absolutely; in fact what I've written about for Malathi's book is really a recollection stemming from my very first trip. When I returned from it, I read an article that said that India is simultaneously entering the industrial age and the post-industrial age. [They laugh.] I said, "And evidence is certainly true of that today." What we're seeing as the demise of some crafts in India that parallels what we talk about as the buggy-whip syndrome, in which some crafts will no longer be made because there's no functional need for them and what we see surviving in India particularly are those that have spiritual or traditional uses that have not declined. It's very interesting. I don't know enough about the crafts of elsewhere in the world. I'm a student on these trips. I'm not a lecturer. I try to put into context what we see in other countries and parallel that with the processes that I know in American crafts.

MR. SMITH: But I would expect over time it's been extremely interesting to observe physical changes and not just in the arts, but also in the way of living.

MR. HERMAN: Oh, absolutely.

MR. SMITH: And economic changes in such a relatively short time. I mean—

MR. HERMAN: Incredible. You know the trips that Dick and I have made with a car and driver would last a month and we would do it each for about $2500—everything. For this trip we were going to organize this last year, the Oberoi Grand Hotel, one of the great five-star hotels, and we stayed in many in India, even on these trips that weren't expensive. The Oberoi Grand in Calcutta now is $700 a night per room. My craft groups, the people I want to travel with, the working craftspeople and teachers can't afford to stay in those places. So I don't think that probably that's going to happen in the same way. If at all anymore. But I still would like to return to India at least one more time.

MR. SMITH: As you've received many awards and honors, could you just highlight a few that have meant a lot to you.

MR. HERMAN: Well, you know, I guess probably they've all sort of been surprises because I still in a way consider myself a novice in the field. I mean I certainly stand in your shadow and some others who've really worked in the craft field a lot longer, although I've learned a lot. Now when the University of Washington Press published *Art That Works*, they described me as "one of the foremost authorities on contemporary craft movement in America." But the first honor really was the William A. Jump Award for Public Administration for the successful launching of the Renwick Gallery, which was a total surprise. I didn't know that I guess Dr. Taylor had nominated me for it and as a result of those three exhibitions I've mentioned in Denmark, I was decorated by Queen Margrethe. There was also a Belgian festival, too. I'd organized an exhibition of traditional Belgian marionettes; and I was decorated by the king of Belgium, too. It's probably just a formality that these embassies do. But it was very flattering. I loved it. But, you know, I never go anyplace with a white tie and tails outfit, which is the only way you can sort of traditionally wear those medals.

Other than that, I think being made an Honorary Fellow of the American Craft Council probably meant more to me because that was sort of recognition within the field I'd come to think of my own. Really, you know, my being hired for the Renwick Gallery job gave me an occupation for the rest of my life and an interest and friends and, you know, friendships and associations that I cherish to this day.

MR. SMITH: Now coming back to the subject of change as you have spent several decades of involvement with the field, it's difficult perhaps to simplify. But I would be interested in hearing your thoughts about how you have seen the change take place, specifically in the studio craft movement where you were at a very formative state. Today we have a very different environment. I've always said that really change is just part of the creative process and therefore, there should be change. I would be interested in your kind of overview of what you have seen that has changed both positively and negatively.

MR. HERMAN: Well, it's interesting. You know I think there has been certain incremental change in a way that's been almost unnoticeable in the 70's and maybe into the eighties. But I never really started to think about it until the Mint Museum of Craft and Design's Founders' Circle asked me to give a talk in receiving their Founder's Award a couple of years ago and that kind of forced me to develop a new talk because I really relied so much on talks that I've given over the years that I, you know, change a bit, but they're still basically the same and I had to look back at the period in which I'd worked in the field and I started tabulating some of the movements that you and I have both seen. You know the surface design movement in which patterning of manufactured fabrics became as important as weaving fabrics, whether it was by dyeing or painting or direct printing or rubberstamping or embellishing with beads. The wearable art movement which was somewhat related to that in that it dealt with some of these fabrics and some of the same people.

There's been a whole contemporary art quilt movement come about that has brought quilts from the bed to hang them on the wall. I mentioned the introduction of blacksmithing techniques in 1970. The beginnings of the Pilchuck Glass School in 1973 followed on really the workshops that Harvey Littleton and Dominic Labino staged at the Toledo Museum of Art in 1962 and in subsequent places that brought the studio glass movement to fruition. To the point that within ten years after that, by the time the Renwick had opened, there were 50 hot glass programs all over the country.

So we've seen the basic craft processes and materials change and kind of morph into new objects as well as being added to by refractory metals first developed in the space program, for plastics as you showcased early on; "Plastic as Plastic," but they've come into the mainstream of crafts, whether they're resin inlays in furniture or they're plastic beads or other aspects of jewelry.

We've seen education change in recent years, too, as universities have begun to drop their fiber art and metalsmithing programs; and for those programs that remain—clay usually—kind of merged them into sculpture programs. So we've seen craft education changing and not being as medium-specific. Now in competitions that are juried in recent years where clay and fiber used to be the biggest categories, mixed-media is often the big category because education's changed to the point that you don't go and study only clay or only glass or fiber weaving. And so we now begin to see art education taking place in a more cross-media approach. Just as we're seeing more fine arts museums collecting sculptural works that may be largely of clay, but they may have other materials.

We've also seen other movements that seem to hark back to traditional forms. Like the turned-wood bowl movement from the eighties and the basketry revival movement started out looking at fairly traditional forms. Now they've morphed into these incredible sculptural objects that bear very little resemblance to traditional turned bowls or baskets.

MR. SMITH: Do you think that the studio craft focus as a specialized area of the arts is relevant today?

MR. HERMAN: You know that's a very tricky question; because I still find in objects that I see today the roots in things that we all knew in the '70s, '80s, and maybe even into the 9'0s. I think to study these new objects, we need to be able to study their antecedents. We need to understand what the history of craft has been in this country—and in the other cultures who have come to this country and merged into this large kind of more amorphous culture. But, you know, just as we've seen education change and the first fine arts programs or weaving programs moved out of home economics maybe into the art departments, and then universities sold their looms, and now they may not even teach weaving except to have students understand woven structures.

We've also seen a lot of new activities coming about that pertained to crafts. If you think that since the Renwick joined the Museum of Contemporary Crafts—now the Museum of Art and Design—we've had craft museums open in Los Angeles, although there was Museum West for a short time in San Francisco. There are now two craft museums in San Francisco: the Museum of Craft and Folk Art and the Contemporary Craft Museum. The Mint Museum of Art added the Mint Museum of Craft + Design [Charlotte, North Carolina]. The Racine Art Museum [Wisconsin] forged a new role really as craft as a major component of their visual arts collection. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts [Boston, Massachusetts], the Rhode Island School of Design's [Providence, Rhode Island] museum. The de Young Museum in San Francisco, the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston [Texas], now all have significant craft collections. Tacoma Art Museum [Tacoma, Washington], near where I live, now has established a significant art jewelry collection. Finally the Seattle Art Museum has awakened to establish a glass gallery after 30-some years of the prominence of the Pilchuck Glass School and the largest concentration of glass artists in the Puget Sound area anywhere in the world.

So what we're seeing now is museums responding, mainstream visual arts proponents recognizing that some of this new work really is truly art. We don't have to demean it by putting the "craft" label on it, which was done so many years: "Well, it's only craft." So I think we're seeing our labors in trying to make visible some of the best work coming out of this field in the last 30 or more years finally come to fruition. Now we have the Fuller Craft Museum in Massachusetts, the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. It's amazing to me that now we really have a craft museum community just at the time that crafts are becoming accepted in the mainstream of the arts.

MR. SMITH: I realize it's complicated to try to summarize. But it is interesting, I think, to observe change.

MR. HERMAN: Ah, but, then there's another spin of the wheel and that just as the people who were for the most part in the studio crafts movement, trained in art schools and universities and highly skilled and often make very refined and beautiful objects—though sometimes kind of eccentric and off-the-wall and truly innovative—we're now seeing come up from the bottom the Etsy movement or so-called cyber crafters who—

MR. SMITH: You mean DIY.

MR. HERMAN: DIY. Yes, Etsy is the website where many sell their work. Well, cyber crafters, but it is DIY, Do It Yourself and for the most part they don't come from a technical craft educational background, but have learned a few processes that have enabled them to make a few objects that are often very trendy and often very likable and attractive.

MR. SMITH: Do you think it's any different from the hobby craft in the '60s with the "Back to Earth" movement?

MR. HERMAN: There's a certainly a similarity when in the social turmoil of the late '60s, some would-be craftsmen were dropping out of society and moving into the woods to grow their own vegetables and maybe weave simple things. This has elements of that but with the power of the Internet and even though from that DIY movement in the 1960s, there have emerged significant artists like Josh Simpson in glass. I'm not sure that I could describe Thomas Mann as part of that, but he's related to it, I think. It's going to be very interesting to see now that even the craft museums are embracing one way or another the DIY movement. Because for the most part, the people in that movement have no knowledge or recognition of the studio craft movement that we know. They're operating almost in a parallel universe, thinking that they're inventing this stuff. Consequently I think if we can make a link for those who are innovative and creative and clearly have ideas to link to the technology and refinement of the people we know who are capable of doing wonderful, more complex things, we'll maybe see another spin of that wheel. I'm just not sure at this point where it's going. But I think it's something that has to be acknowledged, that it's another movement coming up from the grassroots again.

MR. SMITH: Well, it's obviously difficult to predict it.

MR. HERMAN: No, we can't. No. We're living in its midst; we don't know what it will be.

MR. SMITH: One of the things that I wanted to speak about is that recently or a couple of years ago, I don't know what year it was, you pledged a generous grant to the Smithsonian to endow a Lloyd Herman Curator of Craft at the Renwick. Could you comment on that decision and what motivated it?

MR. HERMAN: It's almost a little embarrassing because as thrifty as people know that I am, and that I really do travel a lot, I travel for the most part on the cheap. Getting trips paid for if I lead a group. But I went on a cruise a few years ago from Capetown to Sydney and on that cruise, a woman who had just published a financial planning book was holding a series of I think 11 financial planning seminars called Funding Your Dreams. Well, she started out introducing the first of these seminars saying that I'm going to give to one of you—I'll draw a name out of a hat—one of you who attends all of my seminars a copy of my book. So about the third of the seminars, she was beginning to recognize us regulars. She said, "Well, Lloyd, are you going to buy a copy of my book?" I said, "No, I'm going to win it," and I did [laughs].

But what she was teaching for mature people of my age in their 60s, 70s, sometimes 80s, was that many of them plan to take that major trip or want to buy a second home. They want to send their grandchildren to college—whatever their dream is that they think is beyond their reach. I thought, well, I don't have any heirs that need any money. I don't have any dependents. What do I care about? I thought what I care about is that the program that I was involved with at the Smithsonian continues to be important and seriously studied and taken seriously. I knew from what Betsy Broun, who is an endowed director—named endowed director—of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, that she had been told that she needed to get all of her curator positions endowed. It wasn't with the idea that my name would be on it. I thought maybe it would be the James Renwick Alliance Curator because I really didn't know where the money would come from.

But at this financial planning seminar, I first thought, well, could I afford $500,000? I had probably at the time, before the market dropped and eroded, maybe total assets close to two million, including my house and car. And, you know, Dick and I have one house. We share one car which is an economical Prius. I'm a bargain-hunter. So I thought, I have a couple of annuities that I've bought over the years that will mature, the first one when I'm 75 and another one when I'm 80. I thought, you know, I have these assets. I have, though it was a reduced retirement annuity from the Smithsonian. I get a little Social Security. I still get speaking fees occasionally. I thought, you know, I live pretty much on my income without touching my assets. I think that over a four-year period, I could give $800,000--$200,000 a year—to the Smithsonian, and they would match it with 1.2 million to endow a permanent curator of American Crafts, that would assure the continuity that this field would be studied.

So I put that in place with the idea that I had mutual fund shares that I'd had since the '60s that had appreciated and if I sold them, I'd be paying capital gains. But I thought I could simply transfer ownership of those to the Smithsonian. They would have the full value of them— and then the market dropped. So it's been a bit of a struggle. I'm more than halfway there, and it has to be completed next year. It's just that right now at this time of 2010 those assets have lost a great deal of their value. I'm just not quite sure how I'm going to do it, but I will do it and it will happen.

MR. SMITH: Yes. Sure.

MR. HERMAN: The Smithsonian American Art Museum is more than halfway there with what they've got to raise. So I think it will happen and then the Board of Regents at the Smithsonian was asked to approve naming it for me. So I'm incredibly flattered that I will be remembered in that way for the years I treasured at the Smithsonian.

MR. SMITH: Well, I think it's a very intelligent and I think responsible solution that you are to be commended for.

MR. HERMAN: Well, it's kind of surprising—and it surprised a lot of people. I'm not wealthy. I've never lived like a wealthy person. That's the reason I have figured out how I can do it.

MR. SMITH: As we are nearing the end of this very rich session of the interview, I was wondering if there are any additional comments you wanted to make or any summary you'd like to give.

MR. HERMAN: I'd have to think a few minutes [laughs] about that. I guess probably, as I've tried to put together for that talk I mentioned in the things that I've seen happen in the time I've worked in the field, that I do recognize now with the DIY movement that craft will continue. Just as we've seen things like knitting and crocheting that were my mother's hobby crafts come to the fore in making significant objects and contemporary wearable art, I'm sure we'll continue to see more new materials enter the vocabulary of makers and that they will be combined or not combined to make surprising new objects that, just as you and I have experienced many changes, that will continue without us.

MR. SMITH: Yes. I think one has to be positive about the craft field. Craft has taken on many different meanings over centuries and it has been part of every civilization. The fact is that it is continuous and an important aspect of today's society.

MR. HERMAN: Yeah. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MR. SMITH: I think we both had a wonderful opportunity to be associated with this.

MR. HERMAN: Absolutely. Yes.

MR. SMITH: I want to thank you for sharing all this information; because even though I've known you for all these years, one always learns something. It was wonderful to get insight to your days at the Smithsonian and some of the things that I had not known about it. I think that's why these interviews are so important because they reveal things that are not in print, and hopefully will enrich the future documentation of the 20th century studio craft movement.

MR. HERMAN: I agree. Thank you, Archives of American Art, and your sponsors for these interviews.

MR. SMITH: Yes, I agree. So thank you.

MR. HERMAN: You're welcome.

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