



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Tape-recorded notes on Anna and Wayne  
Woelfer

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# Transcript

## Preface

### Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

### Volkersz Folk Art Interviews, Anna & Wayne Woelfer

### Tape-recorded Reading and Notes about Anna & Wayne Woelfer

### At "Eaglemount Rockeries" In Port Townsend, Washington

June 18, 1975

Willem Volkersz, Interviewer

#### Editor's Note:

This transcript is from a series of recordings made by Willem Volkersz over a number of years. They are not formal interviews, but rather records of conversations, often taped during photo-taking tours of the artist's studios or home collections.

The naive/visionary artists in these interviews have unique verbal mannerisms, many of which are difficult or impossible to transcribe accurately into written form. Thus, for grasping certain nuances of speech, researchers will find it advantageous to listen to the original tapes.

Our intent in transcribing these interviews was nonetheless to translate as accurately as possible the spoken word into a comprehensible written form, making changes to clarify but not to interpret. Thus the speaker's grammar is unedited. For example, "them" for "those," "theirselves," and "gotta" were all transcribed as heard. On the other hand, certain changes were made for clarity: "'cause," was transcribed as "because," "'fore" as "before," "'yo" as "your," etc.

Other editorial notations are as follows: Bracketed words are of two types. Those with "[—Ed.]" or "[—WV]" are inserted by the transcriber, editor, or Volkersz. Other bracketed words indicate uncertainty: Two or more words or phrases indicate possible alternatives; "[unintelligible]" and "\_\_\_\_" indicate words that are garbled or incomprehensible on the tape, the former being a much longer phrase than the latter; "[noise]" is self-explanatory.

The original format for this document is Microsoft Word 365 version 1908. Some formatting has been lost in web presentation.

#### Interview

WV: Willem Volkersz

#### [Tape 1, side A; Volkersz' No. W2-1]

#### [WV read from articles posted at the Woelfer's home garden/motel grounds, which they called "Eaglemount Rockeries"—Ed.]

Busy working on a new group of stone miniatures during the winter months is Mrs. Wayne Woelfer, who with her husband owns and operates Eaglemount Service and Cabins, 11 miles south of Port Townsend at the junction of state highways 9 and 9E. Mrs. Woelfer is trying something different this year than the castles and replicas which have become familiar landmarks on the lawn surrounding the motel. Her project is a crossroads and it will include a little gas station on one corner and three modern houses complete with tiny television antennas.

Mrs. Woelfer works on the miniatures in her kitchen. First, she makes the necessary forms out of cardboard cartons held together at the corners with masking tape. Then she begins the cement work. This year she is experimenting for the first time with colored cement, making red chimneys on the sides of the buildings. Eventually, sometime in the spring, she and her husband will move the completed structures to a spot on the lawn which she has already picked out between the store and the highway.

"I guess you'd call it a hobby," commented Mrs. Woelfer, who began making miniatures for her yard six years ago. "It is my wintertime diversion." Without any training—she hadn't even read any how-to-do-it magazine

articles—Mrs. Woelfer set out using the trial and error method. The first rocks which she used were out of the gravel for the cement foundation of their present home. At first she tried to build the walls up with no form underneath and they were crooked. Hidden from view in back of the house, she keeps one of these early originals, a church with stained glass windows. "I learned by trying, finding out what my mistakes were and doing better on the next ones."

Mrs. Woelfer remembers one lesson in particular. In making the form for the picturesque two-tier windmill in the corner of the yard, she used inverted barrel staves. "I know now never to use wood. It swells and cracks the cement." Built in three sections was the big castle in the accompanying picture. "Nobody was more surprised when the three parts fitted than I was, but they did. They went together very nicely," confessed Eaglemont's proprietress. "My husband built the base. I couldn't begin to lift some of the rocks in that."

The designs for her castles are determined by the number of cartons Mrs. Woelfer can find. She uses round ice cream cartons for the large turrets and cardboard linoleum rolls for the small ones. One whole winter was spent on the two castles on either side of the house. Little flags wave from the six turrets on one castle. The horses and armored riders were purchased at the ten cent store. "I had to wire them together so that the children staying in the cabins wouldn't play with them and lose them. That happened at first." She pointed to a riderless horse.

Mrs. Woelfer's first winter was spent working on the pool and the miniatures surrounding it directly in front of the house. That year she did the castle which sets out in the water and has a drawbridge of half-logs. The horseman is riding across the drawbridge. Also part of that particular project were the windmill with the large wings and the lighthouse which actually lights up.

Replicas of Independence Hall and Monticello kept her busy during one winter. Independence Hall is situated on one end of the pool. There is the familiar clock on four sides of the cupola and the weathervane. Besides the usual cardboard carton the ingenious housewife has used a tomato can and saltshaker as part of the form, and a saucer for the porch roof. Monticello was designed entirely from the picture on a two-dollar bill. "I think next winter I'll go back to doing replicas," she announced.

Between the store and the highway are a large church and a castle. "We nearly broke our backs carrying that castle," declared Mrs. Woelfer. It was built all in one piece. Used effectively on the tower were little squares of black tile. "That's one of the children's banks," she said, pointing to the church bell. "Years ago when my children were little— they're grown up now— the First National Bank of Port Townsend, which is now the First American National Bank, used to give away one of those banks with each child's account for one dollar."

Now she is no longer a novice; Mrs. Woelfer picks her rocks carefully. She gathers them from the beach during the summer and keeps them in buckets at the foot of the huge fir tree beside the house. She also has one box of special stones from Flathead Lake in Montana. In some are the imprints of fern and cedar fossils.

Mrs. Woelfer says that her husband, Wayne, made the stone bulkheads and all the buildings himself. He made the 15-foot fishing pole on top of the store with its huge reel and red-and-white lure. "We moved here from Port Townsend eight years ago. My husband was formerly with the Port Townsend Lumber Company."

In addition to the stone miniatures, there are in the yard lovely borders of nasturtiums and tuberous begonias and chrysanthemums. Framing the porch of the Woelfer home are the purple clematis, and hanging from one side of the roof is a huge anchor chain which, with rocks rusted to it, [was—Ed.] found on the beach.

The carriage lamps at either side of the front walk burn kerosene. They are from an old-fashioned carriage. "I light them at Christmas time."

Here and there on the upper terrace are rainbow wagon wheels with each spoke a different pastel color, cement toad stools, little dwarves and other decorative lawn ornaments. "Our children always send me things for the yard on Mother's Day," she explained.

Eaglemont acquired this name because of the eagles, which nested yearly on top of the snag on the brow of the hill directly across from the service station. "There used to be a post office called Eaglemont."

Visible from the quite delightful grounds of the little resort is a superb view of Discovery Bay. Sunsets across the bay are really beautiful.

[Interruption in taping]

#### **Reading from another article:**

"It began as a hobby to pass the time during the quieter winter months, but it was so much fun that I just kept

on going," says Mrs. Woelfer. After Mr. and Mrs. Woelfer built their store, their first landscaping project was to build a pool in the front yard.

**Reading from May 16, 1968, Port Townsend's festival edition :**

For eighteen years Wayne and Anna Woelfer have been receiving the highest reward for their patience and hard work— the expression of enjoyment on the faces of young and old as they view the cement creations at Eaglemont.

In 1948 the yard consisted of a small space in front of the house, and in an attempt to brighten it Mr. and Mrs. Woelfer bought some cement and installed the pools. "Still it seemed drab," they said, "as though something were missing." Anna Woelfer searched through Seattle and Tacoma in an effort to find just the right thing to complement the pool and when the search failed, she decided to try to build something herself. Thus, a hobby was born.

*[Interruption in taping]*

When I asked Mr. Woelfer about his Uncle Sam mailbox, he said that a truck had backed into it and he'd had to take it down, but he remembered that when he put it up somebody commented that it was April 15th and there was Uncle Sam with his hand out.

*[End of interview]*