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Oral history interview with S. Lane Faison, 1981 December 14

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with S. Lane Faison on 14 Dec. 1981. The interview was conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose. This is a rough transcription that may include typographical errors.

Interview

ROBERT BROWN: December 14, 1981. Lane Faison in Williamstown, Massachusetts, Bob Brown, interviewing. Perhaps we could begin talking about from the time you became Chairman of the Department of Art here at Williams College. That was what, 1940?

S. LANE FAISON: Um-hm.

MR. BROWN: How did that come about, because you were very newly onboard. I think you said something of it last time.

MR. FAISON: Well, are we on?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: I came up here in the fall of '36 from Yale, as assistant professor. And I was promoted to--put on tenure, I think in 1940. It's in the book, you know. My predecessor, Karl Weston, decided to retire. And that's why there was the vacancy. And he retired in 1940. And I took over as chairman, which had been the understanding when I first came if it all worked out.

Then that continues until the war breaks open. And then the whole department went into the Navy or something else, and everything shut down. That takes place during the end of 1942.

MR. BROWN: So for about two years you--

MR. FAISON: So I had about two years running the department.

MR. BROWN: What were you trying to do, just sort of a holding operation, knowing that war was imminent?

MR. FAISON: No. But it didn't quite seem that way yet. There was a great deal of feeling, I know in college circles, that we had no business going into this thing. And there were people who signed peace petitions and all that business.

First thing I did was to change the name of the department, from Fine Arts to Art. I thought--I had the strong feeling that studio belonged here, the practice of art--never had been at all. And I thought "fine arts" precluded that and sounded a little fancy. And it put us in the front of the alphabet, and other such silly reasons. And that went through.

Then I had a--then I had a long-range battle, if you want to call it that--I mean there was opposition to introducing studio.

MR. BROWN: There was, huh?

MR. FAISON: Learning by doing.

MR. BROWN: You merely had sort of a laboratory experience earlier, is that right?

MR. FAISON: No.

MR. BROWN: Not even that?

MR. FAISON: No. It was entirely history of art. And nothing of that sort at all. So we brought in William Pearson, whom you've heard of. And he at that time was a graduated painter from the Yale School of Art, who had shifted somewhat into Art History and gotten a degree at New York University. And he did a kind of laboratory thing in the basement required for seniors. That's the way it all started, very, very simple little operation.

MR. BROWN: Mainly techniques?

MR. FAISON: Mainly techniques, demonstrations. Everybody made--it was based on what they did at Wellesley, somewhat. And to some extent at the Fine Arts course that Artie Pope gave at Harvard. I mean, that influenced it, you see. But it was a very modest operation. And when it came to fresco, Bill made them a fresco. I mean, you know, that dramatic thing of a one-day operation--we saw it done. He copied a head of Michelangelo.

But they made various things and learned something, bits and drawings.

MR. BROWN: Did it have some effect, do you think?

MR. FAISON: I know it did. Yes, it did. And we began to see that it quickened the response, the critical response, to works of art immediately. We could see this happening. Well, then comes the war, and this all collapses. No art taught. I mean, bang, we're a Naval Flight Preparatory School.

MR. BROWN: Oh, you mean that took over practically the whole school?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yeah, practically. I mean, there were a few students here that were 4Fs.

MR. BROWN: The remainder were--

MR. FAISON: A skeleton faculty. So--

MR. BROWN: You hadn't, by the way, gotten--there wasn't a museum underway at this point, was there?

MR. FAISON: Yes. That started in 1926 when Mr. Weston saved Lawrence Hall from probable destruction, because it was being used as an extra dormitory and things like that. There was a new library, you see. Lawrence Hall had been the college library since 1846. A new library was built, and the books--it took a couple of years to move things over to the library.

But in something like the fall of '26, the front part of it, the Rotunda and the wings, were opened up with whatever he could find to put in it. We had--we found three Assyrian reliefs in the basement that had been languishing there all those--

MR. BROWN: Had been given to the college years and years--

MR. FAISON: Since 1850. And they were brought over. And, you know, some pictures had been given to the library by Mr. and Mrs. Field of Philadelphia, all nineteenth century things. A few of them were rather good. And he owned a few things, and then he began to beg, and then some gifts gradually began to come in. So that's when that started. And by 1936–40, it was beginning to be rather decent.

MR. BROWN: And what was the college's attitude toward it?

MR. FAISON: Not much interested, but no particular concern. And then gradually, shows were put on. And he got seven straight $1000 grants from the Carnegie Corporation, each time saying, "This is the last one." But he spent it so intelligently that they said, "Oh, well, once more." And the seventh time they said, "This is the last, and we won't give it to you unless $1000 is put in the college budget for the museum--$1000."

MR. BROWN: For acquisition?

MR. FAISON: No, for shows. To put things on. And so that is where we really started.

MR. BROWN: You persuaded him to put something in the budget?

MR. FAISON: He did. He did.

MR. BROWN: Just before you came on?

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: Karl Weston did.

MR. FAISON: So we had $1000 to play with. Now, in '42 when we all departed, one after the other, Mr. Weston came back into harness and finished out some courses as far as he could. I mean, this is in the middle of courses. I think--well, the end of the fall term of '42, and possibly the spring of '43--I'm not sure about that.

MR. BROWN: He was pretty effective, was he?

MR. FAISON: Oh, he was marvelous.

MR. BROWN: He could pinch-hit pretty easily?

MR. FAISON: Oh, beautifully, beautifully. Then when we all came back, and I had not yet been given the museum, you see. I'm not yet director of the museum.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MR. FAISON: He continues as director of the museum until 1948. Well, now, not very much was done. But on the other hand, the treasures of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts were stored in Williamstown because of fear of submarines bombarding Boston, German submarines. And virtually everything of real value that was portable was brought up here. And one room in Lawrence Hall became storage for great paintings. The entire basement of the chapel, the entire basement of the huge Chapin Hall, assembly hall, were simply choked with things from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Well, this kept him quite busy. And Mr. Edgell, who was then director, respected him and vice-versa. And something like '44, I think we came in '42. And something like '44, the danger seemed to be over and things went back. And just before I went to Europe on the things we're going to talk about, the OSF, he had a show that Mr. Edgell agreed to. He said, "Won't you leave one roomful of gorgeous pictures, without frames, and let me put them up as a show?" And he did.

So I mean, my God, we had the big Gauguin, we had the Renoir, we had everything--the great El Greco, et cetera, et cetera, one incredible room. Without frames, and they all looked very well indeed. And then that was the last shipment back. I mean, everything else had gone. Well, that took a lot of energy.

Then he began to realize he was going to retire. And there was no such thing as a current catalog. He kept a scrapbook of all documents, news items, and so forth. And when I came back, he said, "You're going to get the museum, but I'm going to spend the year making this card catalog," which he did. And he presented me with a card catalog and the office, which was about three feet by four, at the top of an old staircase. And he said, "It's yours." So that's the way that starts in '48, I having returned in March '46, having been away since November '42.

And I came back as full professor for that time. They decided. So I'm now chairman, professor, and director, as of--

MR. BROWN: Forty-eight.

MR. FAISON: Yeah. I'm chairman and professor as of '46, and I'm director of the Lawrence Art Museum, it's still called, in '48. In '62, various people advised us that it would be smart to change the name to Williams College Museum of Art. There were a number of very good reasons. One was, we kept getting mail missent to Lawrence, Massachusetts. Another was that every time that when people wanted to give us something, we had to go through all kinds of legal maneuvers to demonstrate that the Lawrence Art Museum was, in fact, a part of Williams College, therefore a gift--see, all of this was unnecessary.

And when we lent something, which we were beginning to do, Williams College got nothing out of it because it just said "Lawrence Art Museum." Well, what's that? So we changed the name in '62, which of course, was--Smith College had just done the same thing. It was the Triune Gallery, and for the same reason. So that's that background.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: Now, where are we?

MR. BROWN: Well, we want to talk about you and World War II. Then in the fall of '42, you left teaching? Or you already had, and enlisted?

MR. FAISON: Well, I volunteered for the Navy, and I got in the Naval Air Force.

MR. BROWN: Really? Did you--

MR. FAISON: I had land duty only, but I was to be a teacher of recognition of aircraft and ships. And they needed a teacher, and it was dreary work, you know. Seven times a day, I think it was, these classes, and five days a week, I think it was.

MR. BROWN: Where did you report?

MR. FAISON: Well, first I had--I became one of these Naval wonders in 60 days at Ohio State University. I became a Naval officer and a teacher of recognition, whatever that means. And my first duty was in

Greencastle, Indiana, DePauw University, which of course had closed down pretty much, although--it was co-ed, so the girls were there.

And the Naval Flight Preparatory School was there. And so we were teaching pilots, you see. Plane is coming, do you shoot or don't you? If you don't, and it's enemy, you may get shot first. And if you do, you might have shot your own fellow down. All right? So the psychologists had invented this system with--it was great improvement over the English one, which was called WEFT--wing, engine, fuselage, tail. You looked for those four things.

MR. BROWN: That was the English system?

MR. FAISON: By the time you'd made up your mind, you were shot down, you see. But this was based on Gestalt psychology, the whole thing. Why did kids on the street know like this it's a Ford and not a Chevrolet, you see? They had the sense of the whole. So we trained them to sense the whole by showing them lots and lots of pictures of the airplane.

And then we had little diagrams, too, just the front view, just the side view, rear view, photographs, all sorts of things. And then you would show these at one second. Well, by that time you should get it. And then we speeded it up to one-tenth of a second, and then one-fiftieth of a second, and finally one-seventy-fifth of a second. And they'd get it, you see? They'd get it.

MR. BROWN: Most of them--hardly any washed out? Most of them were able to get it?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. And then we did the same thing with ships. That didn't have to be so instantaneous. That was a little--you know, it was always silhouettes on the horizon and so forth. That was worse. However, American aircraft had bombed the hell out of the American destroyers. I mean, they did make mistakes. And it was perfectly awful. And right after Pearl Harbor, a whole crowd of planes came from California and were shot down by American gunners. You see, they thought it was more Japanese. That's what started this stuff. And there was another ghastly mistake in Italy, in South Italy.

MR. BROWN: A bit later?

MR. FAISON: Yes.

MR. BROWN: You were partly impelled by patriotism, and most people were caught up in the danger of the moment and the need for the country to get its act together?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. That's right. Well, Bill Pearson was early on in this whole kind of thing. And he got both of us, Whitney Stoddard, who's in our department, and me made into recognition officers, you see. And that's how this--

MR. BROWN: Well, did you have family that you took with you?

MR. FAISON: Yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: And you were out in Indiana?

MR. FAISON: Indiana from early--the beginning of '43 for about a year, a little over a year. Then Bill Pearson transferred me out of this--I mean, the boredom was considerable because you couldn't do much. You just repeated yourself. It was a routine.

MR. BROWN: The main thing was to go through the same hoops.

MR. FAISON: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: With class after class after class.

MR. FAISON: Well, Bill by this time had moved into CIC, Combat Information Center, which was the great thing--radar and so forth. And everything was centered in the big ships, all the way down to destroyers. And they had teams of men and officers and everything else. And that training operation was one of the great achievements of--technical achievements of World War II.

And the final center on the West Coast was outside Atlantic City at Brigantine [New Jersey] in an old hotel that was right on the coast. And from Naval Air Station Atlantic City, they would send out a target plane, you see. And then we would train other planes to the target, you see, using radar and radio and so forth. And teams from--this was the last training before the shakedown cruise of all battleships--this was East Coast--all battleships, all carriers, all cruisers light and heavy, and all destroyers.

The teams came in--destroyers once a week, carriers spent three weeks. Battleships, I think, spent three weeks.

MR. BROWN: This was to train them in recognition of enemy planes?

MR. FAISON: No. This was--no, no. They've been trained in that already. No, no. This was--report comes in on the blip that here comes--here's a plane. What is it? So you send the--

MR. BROWN: Interceptors?

MR. FAISON: Interceptors out. And they're supposed--when they see it, they're supposed to know whether it's--you presumably know that it shouldn't be there anyway and that it's enemy. But even so. So that was my--and I was the training officer. I didn't know anything about radar at all. But I was the teacher. And part of this was--there was a great deal of teaching that went on. And I was--I had one half stripe over the teachers. And I would just sit in their courses, not understanding a word. But I could tell whether it was good teaching, and I could find out if a man understood it, you see.

And they knew more than I did, but still, they'd say, "No, we don't get it." And then I could say, "Look. They're not getting it. You should write things on the board. Make it clear. You're not talking fast--you're talking too fast." And then I would write a training report for the staff when this team finished, and this went to the headquarters in Washington, and that they're doing fine or they're not doing fine.

One case we recommended that the commanding officer of this unit on a carrier be thrown out. No, this was a cruiser--be thrown out. He was terrible.

MR. BROWN: He wasn't--

MR. FAISON: The morale was awful, and they sacked him.

MR. BROWN: He couldn't coordinate things?

MR. FAISON: No, he couldn't coordinate things. They sacked him. Well, then suddenly, I got a phone call from a captain in Washington, in OSS [Office of Strategic Services] and I visualized four gold stripes and "Yes, sir, yes, sir." He said, "Would you be interested in duty involving knowledge of art and duty in Europe?" I said, "Very much, sir."

MR. BROWN: How had they gotten hold of your information about you?

MR. FAISON: Francis Henry Taylor, Director of the Metropolitan [Museum of Art], was a friend of mine. And he and others in this country realized that, all these art people going up as close to the front as they could to save buildings and to keep artillery from shooting down cathedrals--you know that whole service [Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives branch of the United States Army]--but nobody had time to ask any questions to see what had really happened, particularly in the way of looted art and that kind of thing, German art collecting.

MR. BROWN: I see. They already had that, monuments were already in place.

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MR. FAISON: But they didn't have time to do anything like that. So he invented this thing of just three people [the Art Looting Investigation Unit, or ALIU, which was formed and administered by the OSS, the office of Strategic Service]. Ted [Theodore] Russo, who later became number two for the Metropolitan, Jim [James] Plaut, who was head of the contemporary art thing in Boston.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MR. FAISON: And a very able fellow--and he was our boss of the three. I was the third man. The other two were already members. And we had to be trained to be acceptable to OSS. We were put in to OSS to give us total freedom of movement. And we had, first of all, to go through the training that everybody did and to get to be OSS, learning lock picking and code work and all that stuff, none of which had anything to do with what we were going to do.

MR. BROWN: That was standard skullduggery?

MR. FAISON: That was standard procedure. Then, beyond that, we were put in the hyper-secret top-echelon thing called the X2 [counterintelligence branch of the OSS]. And X2 was very special indeed. And we had to be trained in London as members of X2. That was some more training.

The theory there was that the Nazis were shipping great works of art out of Germany into Switzerland.

MR. BROWN: When was this, about?

MR. FAISON: Well, '44. I arrived on the first of June '45, myself, shortly after the fighting stopped, you see.

MR. BROWN: But you were being trained in France, too?

MR. FAISON: I was trained in Washington.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. FAISON: And then further training in London. And I joined Russo and Plaut in Berchtesgaden, as it happened, and from there back into Austria, in July '45.

MR. BROWN: Now, but X2 in London, what kind of training was that?

MR. FAISON: Well, they graded you more by cryptography and the Russian spy system and all this kind of business.

MR. BROWN: Because they were quite aware that the Russians were getting pretty active?

MR. FAISON: Yes, yes. Now, all of this was camouflage, really, to give us a Jeep, and the most marvelous orders you ever saw in your life. We were under the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, because we all three were Naval officers. The Commander-in-Chief of all Naval Forces in Europe was centered in London. And our orders said that we were to have--says, "Travel to the following cities"--and there were 15 of them. And it then said that any of these cities could be omitted and any others could be substituted. And there was no limit of time. Those were our orders.

So we could move around any way we saw fit, following leads. We did find some hidden art. I mean, some of the people there had stashed stuff away, and we had documents that they had it. And we said, "Where is it?" And it was to their advantage to 'fess up. And we would then take a trip to the hiding place and get the stuff and turn it over to the nearest American authorities, you see.

MR. BROWN: You first went onto the Continent in July?

MR. FAISON: They had been there about a month. I was the last one.

MR. BROWN: There in Berchtesgaden.

MR. FAISON: No. Altaussee, A-u-s-s-e-e, which is in the Salzkammergut, over a great mountain pass, about an hour-and-a-half drive southeast from Salzburg, the reason being that that is where the great salt mine was.

MR. BROWN: And they'd already--

MR. FAISON: Where everything collected at Munich was moved to.

MR. BROWN: You knew all that?

MR. FAISON: We knew all that.

MR. BROWN: What was it like when you arrived in July, for you?

MR. FAISON: What was it like? Well, it was unbelievable. We had a beautiful summer house. This was summer, but some barbed wire around it, and we had a little military garden. And each guest had a private room. We didn't let them talk to each other. They could exercise out in the garden.

MR. BROWN: By "guests," what do you mean? People?

MR. FAISON: The people who were active in the art-looting or collecting. It was dealers. It was Nazi functionaries.

MR. BROWN: So these were people being called in for interrogation?

MR. FAISON: That's right. They'd been captured, or turned themselves in. And as soon as it was found out they were art people, they were sent to us, along with trunk loads of documents, most of which were carbon copies of what we already had. And the Germans were no good at destroying evidence because there were always 10 or 11 signed carbon copies. And they couldn't get rid of all of them.

MR. BROWN: Now, could I ask at this point, what was your mandate? What were you--after you assembled, recovered art, what were you to do with it?

MR. FAISON: Well, recovering of art was on the side. We didn't do very much of that, but we did a little. The mandate was to write an official history, as far as we could put it together, of how Adolf Hitler's art collection was formed. That was my job. How Hermann Goering's art collection was formed; that was Russo's job. What was the whole Nazi policy in art looting, because there was one? And that was Plaut's job.

In addition, we were to write individual reports on each person and give an opinion as to whether they were perfectly decent people and were okay, in our opinion, or very much not, with recommendations.

MR. BROWN: And was the purpose of the former things, your history of how--was that for history or how to--

MR. FAISON: No, it was--it was for history, yes. But everything we did was taken by us to Nuremberg. This was before the trial started. And though it was very much a minor facet of the trials, this, for instance happened. Plaut and I were allowed to be present at an interrogation of Hans Frank, the Butcher of Poland, who had declared that there was no art looted.

Well, the worst art looting of all was Poland, because they even made an exception to their very sensible rule that applied everywhere else. Art belonging to Jews or other enemies of the state, okay. But stay away from public and church property. But in Poland, they were trying to eradicate the whole Polish nation, and everything was fair game.

And [Kajetan] Mühlmann, who was the chief man for collecting art, grabbing art, getting art, who had done all the work in Vienna to start off with, had moved to Holland and done all the work there, then went to Poland, or perhaps it was from Poland to Holland. He was a very big figure. And we had him. And we had under his signature exactly what happened so that Hans Frank could be told he was just plain telling a lie.

MR. BROWN: How did that go, the interrogation of Frank?

MR. FAISON: To our--not to our satisfaction because the American rule was that all interrogation had to take place in English, through translation, with interpreters. And Hans Frank, of course, was a very bright man. And he pretended he didn't understand English. Of course, he did. And he had all this time to arrange his thoughts, you see. And Jim Plaut spoke beautiful German; I don't. But if Jim could just have asked him a question--but no way. No, no. You had to ask it in English, then it was translated. And then Hans Frank answered in German, it was translated back into English.

MR. BROWN: There was no chance--did Plaut try to abrogate that rule?

MR. FAISON: He tried. No way, no way, no way. Fixed American policy.

MR. BROWN: Why was the policy?

MR. FAISON: I don't know. I don't know. At any rate, we had some contribution that way. And then all these documents also went to the State Department and had something to do with making sure that this really lousy person doesn't get into our country all that fast.

MR. BROWN: But the aim was, in terms of art, to restore it to the country of origin?

MR. FAISON: Yes. I mean, the United States policy, which was a brand-new policy, as far as I know, in the history of the world, instead of "finders-keepers" in the Napoleon sense--I mean, the Louvre collection is largely what Napoleon pulled out of Italy, after all. None of that. We were going to return to the country of origin anything that came out of it, as long as it had come out of it during the occupation. And there was an official date when the occupation started.

So even if it had been legitimately purchased--and in many cases, it had been--we returned everything to that nation, to Paris, to Vienna, whatever. And then the individual involved would make his case, and either get it back from the government or not. If he was declared a collaborator, he didn't get it back.

MR. BROWN: Well, you gave me the example earlier of the Czernin family.

MR. FAISON: Yes. That was the most sensational example. Of course, that came out of the salt mine. And Hitler had bought it, and paid a figure, which I can't remember. It was something like 1.5 million dollars, something like that. The Czernins had turned down a higher offer years before from Andrew Melon. And it was their great possession.

MR. BROWN: The Vermeers?

MR. FAISON: This is Vermeer's, *The Artist in the Studio*, perhaps the finest, most famous of all Vermeers. It turned out that they claimed--the Czernins claimed--that they had sold this under duress and they received, the money they received, as I said, was far less than what they had turned down earlier when there was no duress. How this worked out legally, I don't know. But there was enormous correspondence which surfaced. All we had--our problem was simply to return it, and it was returned.

After huge legal process, it was declared state property and it's now in the Kuntshistoriches Institute in Vienna.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: The Czernins didn't get it back. I would have thought they should have. That was what--I could be wrong. I don't understand the decision; let's put it that way.

MR. BROWN: Do you recall some of the dealers or collectors that you interrogated and met with?

MR. FAISON: Oh, certainly. Certainly. His first name was--Haberstock, Hans [Karl] Haberstock. I'm not sure about Hans. But Haberstock was a great, a big Berlin dealer. And he supplied Hitler and Goering with a great many things, particularly Hitler. Of course, like everybody but one person, he stated that he had nothing to do with the Nazis. We found out he had one of the earliest numbered cards of the party. And well, he just sold stuff and made a big profit, and that was that. But he was not opposed to Nazi policies or anything of that sort.

MR. BROWN: Was he fairly frank when you talked to him?

MR. FAISON: No. No, he was difficult.

MR. BROWN: How did he get--during wartime or during Nazi time, he could practically sequester things?

MR. FAISON: That's right, you see. And sequestered things and hid all these things--what happens, well, I'd better tell you what happened and how the dealers got things. The dealers, you see, could go in and get things because people were poverty stricken, and the last possessions--they'd give him something--and they'd take it. And then they would sell it at enormous profit to Hitler. And in many cases, this was sometimes before occupation, in which case it was German property. I mean, it doesn't go back to Paris. It was done before that magical date.

But, for instance, in Paris, and the same thing in other places, a central collecting point was set up. For Paris, this was the Jeu de Paume, or the Place de la Concord. And the looted art or the acquired art, whichever--mostly looted--was brought in. They had shows, big exhibitions. And Hitler's man and Goering's man, everybody else's man, came and looked at them. And Hitler's supposedly came first. Goering sometimes got in there ahead. There was quite a bit of rivalry in there.

And then the shipments were made, you see, and off they go.

MR. BROWN: These men were dealers, people like Haverstock at the time?

MR. FAISON: No, they were Nazi--art historians and critics of Nazi persuasion. No, Haberstock's had nothing to do with that. He was a straight dealer, and he had a stock. And he got--he was--had the high ground for dealers to get stuff.

MR. BROWN: I see.

MR. FAISON: And after the occupation, more and more and more, you see.

MR. BROWN: People were not only poverty stricken, but if they were considered undesirable people.

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: Easy to pressure them.

MR. FAISON: That's right. That's right. So well, then I have to add--but one of the people at the center, the collecting point in Paris was named Rose Valland. And she's a very great woman, recently died. And she pretended to be a collaborator. And every night she would go underground and report everything she could remember, as a result of which we already had, in Washington, the most magnificent card catalog of works of art that were gone from Paris. And to what place they had been shipped, because Altaussee was not really part of the picture yet. Neuschwanstein Castle and Transmünster [phonetic] in Austria and all kinds of places, repositories.

And then a copy of this was in our office in London. We had one there, a small one. And other copies were in

the possession of the Dutch and the Austrians and the Poles and so forth. So that was the way information was acquired, through such people as Rose Valland, whose life was very difficult indeed. And then after the war, all the people that she had turned in because she told which dealers were collaborating and all that kind of thing--so she had a tough life. But she was a strong and wonderful woman. We got to know her well.

And in Munich after the war, when the reverse process was set up, you see, and we had a central collecting point for things being returned in the American zone south, another one in Wiesbaden and others around, you see. And representatives of the government who knew their art were always present. And they would find out what they could. And when a poor dealer from Paris arrived, hoping he could find something, they were helpful. We wouldn't let the dealer see anything. He'd have to describe it ahead of time. And then we would say, "Well, maybe so."

But you couldn't let them in and say, "Did you own any of this stuff?" No, you couldn't do that.

MR. BROWN: But Rose Valland's records helped you there?

MR. FAISON: Enormously. Of course.

MR. BROWN: You might not even bother with that dealer unless you were indicated that things had been taken from him?

MR. FAISON: That's right. That's right. In any case, we didn't give it to him. But he could say, "Now, yes, this is mine." And when it goes back to Paris, he has a very strong case.

MR. BROWN: With the French government?

MR. FAISON: With the French government.

MR. BROWN: After the war.

MR. FAISON: That's right. Particularly a dealer named Bacre whose entire stock was looted, taken, sent to Neuschwanstein. And some of it somehow got separated. The train on which it was sent back to Paris caught on fire. It was one of the great sadnesses. And everything was destroyed, burned up, on its way back to France after the war. But a few things somehow weren't. And he--I don't know why he knew that, but he did. And he described a Flemish picture, made a drawing in our presence. And it was perfectly clear. And so we put our heads together and got out the photograph and said, "This is it?" He said, "Yes, that's it." This is it. We did have that picture. So he got that back eventually. But that's very rare.

MR. BROWN: What about the dealers such as Wildenstein, the other--the large ones in Paris?

MR. FAISON: They were Aryanized. The Wildensteins themselves--Wildensteins, I guess we should say--were not in France. They'd left. I think they were in this country or England. I don't know. And non-Jewish people, I think, already members of the firm were running a business that was called "Aryanizing the firm" so that it--there was some feeling about this. But they remained in business.

MR. BROWN: They weren't particularly looted?

MR. FAISON: No, they were not. They were Aryanized.

MR. BROWN: Some of these other dealers weren't.

MR. FAISON: That's right. Barcrey [phonetic] was Jewish and very effective. Took the whole works, the entire stock.

MR. BROWN: How long were you then at Altaussee?

MR. FAISON: From July until the end of--into October. I was the last one to leave. I closed the place up, went back to London, wrote my report during the fall and winter. A cable came in something like December that a whole shaft of documents concerning the Czernin picture had arrived from Berlin. So I went back to Munich, read all these documents. And there was other information, so I wrote a supplement to the report rather than trying to mix it in.

And I came home about the first of February '46, was mustered out as of March, and came back here.

MR. BROWN: In your report, do you feel you'd gotten on top of most of what was being assembled for Hitler?

MR. FAISON: Yes.

MR. BROWN: These were things being assembled for the museum in Linz?

MR. FAISON: That's right. That's right.

MR. BROWN: Did you bother with, say, furnishings that were at Berchtesgaden or up in Berlin?

MR. FAISON: Well, furnishings was another problem in Munich. It was--the collecting point was the party building in the Königsplatz in Munich. There were two identical Nazi buildings. One of them was the Führerbau, and the other was a Verwaltungsbau. And that is the party building. And it was vast, vast building. And it had been used for processing works that were sent to Austria to the salt mine, and elsewhere.

So this was a reverse process. And I was sent back in '50–51 to complete this thing. So it was a six-year operation trying to return. Well, one of the saddest problems was acres, I think you might say, of furniture just went on and on and on, piled up to the ceiling, you know. And chairs, tables, household things, everything you could think of, known to have come from Jewish sources. But what do you do? And if somebody lost six Louis XV chairs, which ones were they? And did we have them? There was no way--you can't identify such things.

MR. BROWN: They weren't the sort that were so well identified as the paintings.

MR. FAISON: That's right. You could identify paintings and sculpture. And so the outstanding probability was that most of this furniture was--I mean, it came from Jewish sources, they were probably all dead.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

MR. FAISON: So at the very end, a decision was made by a higher authority that I always felt was very wise indeed, because there was absolutely no way of identifying it, it was all shipped to Israel. I think that was an excellent solution. Lots of it, not only Munich, but from Nuremberg, all sorts of places, a huge shipment of furniture and household goods. But not works of art.

MR. BROWN: What would you do in the case of a work of art where the family was known to have been annihilated?

MR. FAISON: Not our problem. If it came from France, it went to the French government. I do not know the answer.

MR. BROWN: One other thing--now this was the American forces. How did the French, the British, and the Russians act in this same area we've just been talking about?

MR. FAISON: Well, we had a French representative. And we had a British person around most of the time. We had a Dutch fellow around. I hesitate to tell you how the French behaved. I don't think they were quite as altruistic as we were, and I could understand it if they weren't. But I'm not going to get into that.

MR. BROWN: The British would have been the outside because--

MR. FAISON: Yeah. They cooperated.

MR. BROWN: Not in their zone of occupation.

MR. FAISON: I think they operated on the same basis we did; yes, I do think so.

MR. BROWN: What about the Russians?

MR. FAISON: Oh, one didn't know.

MR. BROWN: It's hard to know whether they had a policy, huh?

MR. FAISON: One knew that they broke into the mint, the coin collection of the Berlin Museum and dumped whole cases of coins into gunnysacks, and off they went, with labels and everything else. It takes years to reconstruct the place. It was money, you see. The entire Mashada Frieze [phonetic], one of the great Near Eastern things, a huge architectural thing, went to Moscow. The--good God, the--oh, that huge altar from Pergamon, that went to Moscow. The entire painting collection of Dresden went to Moscow. Well, enough--and they said they didn't know anything about anything.

But years later, Dresden got their pictures back. There was a big exhibition, they made a great deal, big to-do about it. And of course, the huge Pergamon altar stuff, that all went back. There were some losses, though, because the paintings of the Berlin Gallery, they were put in a lesser north German salt mine. But some things were just too big. And one kind of air raid tower was full of big paintings and sculpture. And it was destroyed

by--I mean, it burned up. I don't know whose fault it was. And the great Caravaggio was lost, a lot of Donatello's sculpture, and things of that sort.

A few things were lost in Dresden, but for the most part, no.

MR. BROWN: But did Russians come down to Altaussee?

MR. FAISON: No.

MR. BROWN: There was no liaison?

MR. FAISON: No liaison whatever.

MR. BROWN: What could the Poles do? You mentioned earlier [inaudible] policy of Pole, living in Poland? [Inaudible]

MR. FAISON: Poland? Let's see now. Where are we? In 1950? What was Poland?

MR. BROWN: Well, or even '45 you weren't able to do much.

MR. FAISON: Poland hadn't been reestablished yet. It doesn't exist yet. There was one man, however, who was looking for the great altar by Veit Stoss from Krakow Cathedral. And he was very persistent, something of a nuisance, but it was a great Polish treasure.

MR. BROWN: This was in '46, '45, or in '50?

MR. FAISON: Forty-six.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: And I think it was solved by '50. It was found in Nuremberg. I think I'm right--and was eventually shipped back. But we didn't hear much from Poland. Poland was occupied by Russians. And--

MR. BROWN: There wasn't much concern?

MR. FAISON: No, no, no.

MR. BROWN: When you closed up or wound down the central collection point in 1950–51, were you there off for about a year or so?

MR. FAISON: Yes. A year.

MR. BROWN: And you'd been away, but the records--you could get right into the records and you knew just what you had to do?

MR. FAISON: That's right. That's right.

MR. BROWN: And what was it mainly to do?

MR. FAISON: Preside over, and there was a German staff that was hardworking, and you know they keep documents awfully well. And they had been vetted as to their political sympathies. And people would come in, and they'd lost so-and-so. And we'd try to help them out if we could. And sometimes we decided--I was called upon by Frau Emmy Goering once, who put on quite a show and pretended she couldn't speak English and made me speak my bad German.

But she wanted something that--a Rogier van der Weyden painting had been given to her by the City of Cologne. And we had it. But I said, in the first place, my jurisdiction is entirely over the Hitler thing. I have nothing to do with that. And I think we had the thing right in the building. But I said, "I can't help you--no possibility. But I must say that it seems to me that the city that gave it to you not really personally, but because you were the wife of Goering."

At any rate, it was nothing I could do. She put on quite a show.

MR. BROWN: She was really wanting to have that?

MR. FAISON: Oh, very much.

MR. BROWN: Quite unrepentant?

MR. FAISON: She was living in a small apartment. Yeah, that's right.

MR. BROWN: So who was handling the Goering things and all? Russo had done it, hadn't he?

MR. FAISON: He had written the report.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: I can't answer that. I'd have to look it up.

MR. BROWN: But by '50–51, these were mostly just the residue?

MR. FAISON: That's right. That's right.

MR. BROWN: Did you feel it was closed down? Were you pretty satisfied with the way it--

MR. FAISON: On the whole, yes. I think so. I think so.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Gosh, one other byproduct must have been your chance to see a tremendous number of fine things.

MR. FAISON: Of course. Oh, my heavens, it was an education, a terrific one. And a great many not-so-fine things, you know. The artist of the forged Vermeers, which were bought in some quantity, you know--and the artist, he was, you know the story, that he was in prison for collaborating, and he said, "Well, yes, I sold works of art to the Nazis, but it was not our heritage. I painted these myself." And that's when that all broke open. And he painted one in jail, and that was a terrible to-do, because lots of people, rich Dutch people, had bought these things. The great one that was in the Rotterdam Museum, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, oh, dear.

Well, I don't know that you want much more of this stuff.

One of the nice things about living in London in the fall--no--well, it was just as the first [inaudible] came. We'll make it November 1944. I was in London from November, December, January, came home about the first of February. And at this time, pictures were coming back to The National Gallery. They had been out in bunkers somewhere, no glass on them. And every time you went there would be a different display. It was perfectly wonderful. That was all very exciting.

I was present at Myra Hess's last public concert at The National Gallery. I mean, she played--it was a noontime concert. She had done them all through the war. This was the very last one. And she played the *Sonata Passionata* to end off with. And everybody simply burst into tears. There was shattered glass in the room. I mean, the place was a shambles. It was an unoccupied room, in an otherwise unoccupied room.

All right. That was a great excitement. And then one met a lot of interesting people. And for me, particularly, Dennis Sutton, who later acquired and published, edited--still does--the *Apollo* magazine. And he said there is a nice publishing firm named Ron Humphries [phonetic] is doing little paperbound things, monographs, on particular paintings. And, "Wouldn't you like to do one?"

And I was interested particularly in Daumier. So it was agreed I would do the *Third ClassRailway Carriage* by Daumier in the Metropolitan Museum. Of course, I did this after I came home. But that was my first publishing effort, other than scholarly articles in the art world and that sort of thing.

MR. BROWN: You were intrigued to do something that would be somewhat popular?

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: Why do you think you were?

MR. FAISON: Well, I think because I began to think I enjoyed writing, which had been a strain for me and a struggle. But I think that was--yes, because I met Dan Thompson. We've talked about this last time. And he opened up a world of writing to me. And in the process of refining one of those *Art Bulletin* articles--I think that's why.

And I got to know James Rorimer before and after the war. And I published something in the Morgan collection on thirteenth century enamel and dross silver gilts, objects, which was Flemish, in a Belgian magazine. Those were the early efforts.

MR. BROWN: Now, after the war, was your attitude toward art history the same as it had been? I mean, after this work in Central Europe? Were you interested in popularizing?

MR. FAISON: I think I was probably--well, I'd left Yale and graduate teaching. And the reason I left it is, as I think I told you, was that there was going to be no future for me as an undergraduate teacher for 10 years. And I was really more interested in undergraduate teaching. I enjoyed it. And yes, the aspect of writing shifted rather away from hyper-scholarly articles towards the broader canvas. And nothing could have been more broadening than the array of art that I was tangling with in Europe, plus, you know, sightseeing. One saw a lot of things. I visited a lot of buildings. I had my first in 1950s when I got excited about German Baroque art, which was my chief interest then.

MR. BROWN: I was going to ask you about that.

MR. FAISON: That started in 1951, thanks to Wolfgang Luntz, who recently died.

MR. BROWN: You met him when you were in Munich?

MR. FAISON: When I was in Munich.

MR. BROWN: What was he doing at that point?

MR. FAISON: He was starving, doing a little teaching on the side, very poor.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: I had 16-cents-a-gallon gasoline in the car. And he said, "You ought to see some of these places." So he was my guide.

MR. BROWN: So he just sort of got caught up in the war himself.

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: He was just must be trying to begin.

MR. FAISON: That's right. I was helpful in getting him over to this country, to Vassar.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: Then New York University.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: And then when he left New York University, he became Director of the Hertziana Library in Rome, and died just a few months ago, recently.

Gadheimer [phonetic] was in Munich. Heidenreich [phonetic] was in Munich--all kinds of wonderful people.

MR. BROWN: It was exciting.

MR. FAISON: And then that very fine, wonderful man who was director of all the German art collections, palaces, and everything else in South Germany, Erberhardt Harmsdingem [phonetic], who was director of the [inaudible], among other things. Marvelous. And his daughter Erica, who was a scholar of the Assums [phonetic] and their architecture and sculpture.

MR. BROWN: So these people, by their--

MR. FAISON: So it was very exciting, very exciting.

MR. BROWN: Did you find, though, wasn't it--was there any difficulty for you--here this had been wartime. There was all sorts of ruin and horrors that had gone on.

MR. FAISON: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Was it difficult to draw back into the studies, so to speak, or just to look at things purely as visual delights?

MR. FAISON: Well, it would have been, but there was a transition. When I was in London, of course, somebody made me read John Mason Brown's *Many a Watchful Night*, written for Americans coming to London. When you arrive in London, don't say, "Oh, I thought things were destroyed here," because probably the façade you are standing in front of has nothing behind it. And when I came back from Germany, I almost said that. Because in Germany there was a--the old part of Nuremberg, as I think I told you earlier, I remembered virtually nothing

higher than my waist, other than the shells of churches.

Yes. It was a transition. London, in a funny way, was part of it. But, you know, writing a report, and I was no longer in Germany. And then I came back to a funny situation. The department was large anyway, when I left, larger--large for the size of the college, I mean. The first course had gotten up to something like 150 in those days. And when I came back, art history hadn't been taught at all, you see, since '42. Mr. Weston couldn't keep teaching; there weren't any students.

There were 19 people that showed up that were interested in starting in the history of art. And I sat--we all sat around a table, and I said, "You know, I've been away. Well, haven't you got any thoughts? What would you like?" Somebody said, "I'd like to have a history course taught backwards." I said, "What an interesting idea." So I did. And when it was over, I said, "Now, what did you think of that?" And they said, "Most confusing thing ever in my life." I said, "I thought so, too, so I won't do it again."

The result was that they got a great deal at about the end of the course, because you always run out of time, and not very much at the very beginning. But working backwards was a gimmick that simply didn't work. That was an interesting--but you could do it because they were all veterans, you know, and they were intelligent, and older, and mature, and so forth.

MR. BROWN: It was suggested that you and they were yet to get into a mold.

MR. FAISON: Very, very decidedly.

MR. BROWN: You had been discombobulated for several years.

MR. FAISON: That's right. So we started with 19. And of course, terms were, people were graduating every three months. It was all crazy, you know. But we started with 19, and today the course has 325 in it. So here we are.

MR. BROWN: You then took on the museum as well, in '48?

MR. FAISON: In '48 I took on the museum. I came back in '46.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. FAISON: And Mr. Weston spent all of '47 making--

MR. BROWN: During the--

MR. FAISON:--that indispensable card catalog. And then I thought, well, we really ought to have a registry book. You know, I wasn't trained as a museum person, but that was all right. But there was nothing, no book to say when things would come in. You had to go to the scrapbook and piece it all out.

MR. BROWN: This card file didn't indicate all that?

MR. FAISON: Yes. The card file had the information, but still, the papers should be available. And so I pulled all the documents out of the scrapbook and put them--and filed them, you see, in some kind of alphabetical order so you could get at them. And his numbering system was, for example, a PA1, Painting American, the first one that he numbered, I guess, or the first one that turned up. PA2, you see. Well, I changed that system--didn't change his, but from there on in I would say 1948 number1, you know, those changes.

But there was a half-time secretary for the department and museum, for years. And that's the way we operated.

MR. BROWN: Did you like this? Was this like a relief?

MR. FAISON: I adored it. I adored it. You see, I'd been working with objects. And I felt that need all the way through, anyway. Oh, well, and I'd introduced studio, which comes back in now and begins to grow. Why? Because you have the sense of the physical object. And this was not characteristic of our history teaching in the East. We were somewhat different.

MR. BROWN: You brought in, what, a number of full-time people? I mean, Bill Pearson was back, part-time?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. Yeah. And then Bill decided he didn't want to do this anymore. He wanted to be full-time art history and architectural history. So we brought in another person who combined. See, we have to do things by stages. We couldn't--and it wasn't until 1955 that we were allowed to have a full-time artist.

MR. BROWN: Were you glad to come back to Williams?

MR. FAISON: Very much so.

MR. BROWN: It seemed like they had a commitment to what you wanted to do?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes.

MR. BROWN: What about budget in terms of the art museum? Did that stay at 1000 a year?

MR. FAISON: No, it gradually increased. Mr. Weston didn't like to spend money. And I picked up the same habits. It was run on a very modest basis.

MR. BROWN: Is that clever buying and getting people to give things?

MR. FAISON: Well, let's say early buying. You know, we bought a Winslow Homer watercolor, signed and dated 1874, eight inches by four, for $650. And it was recently appraised, five years ago, it was insured--I mean, the Whitney Museum borrowed it. And they appraised it at $85,000 and paid the insurance thereupon. So it was mostly, as I think I wrote in my--as I did write in the handbook that I did three or four years ago of the collection, the only way to have an art museum now is to have had one. It's impossible now. I just don't know what people do except gifts. It's awful.

MR. BROWN: Was there much competition in those days, in the late '40s, when you started acquiring things?

MR. FAISON: You mean from other colleges?

MR. BROWN: From other colleges, other museums, generally?

MR. FAISON: It didn't seem so, as long as you stayed away from big names and big dealers. Harry Sperling, whom I met in Munich, he was the grandson of Kleinberger. And the firm name is Kleinberger, East 57th Street, very distinguished firm. But he had closed down for the war, and he was in Radio Free Europe. Radio--that's right, isn't it, Radio Free Europe?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: But I learned a great deal from him. And he operated on a somewhat modest basis. And his big money was representing the Metropolitan at such places, at great auctions, that kind of thing. But he sold, for the most part, to smaller museums and had a real interest in college museums. And I bought quite a lot from him at very modest prices. And when everything got over $10,000, we were finished. And he died about then.

MR. BROWN: About when would that have been, in the '60s?

MR. FAISON: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Also, did you become quite active in the college art association?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. I'd always been active in the sense--yes, I'd been on the board at least one tour. I lectured a couple of times, gave papers, that sort of thing.

MR. BROWN: You would go to its meetings quite regularly?

MR. FAISON: Very much so. And then to my utter surprise, when I went to one of them, it was announced that I was--they were going to run me for president. And it was Russell Hitchcock's fault, apparently. And they all greeted me, and I said, "What?" And I said, "My God." And they said, "No, no, you're in." So somehow, we did this with--the job wasn't anything like what it is now, of course. But I tried to get the artists' side of the college art into the picture more, make it more interesting and, you know, get--

MR. BROWN: There were quite a few artists who were general members?

MR. FAISON: Yes, yes, there were a few. They were sort of second-class citizens.

MR. BROWN: These were artists who taught in schools and colleges?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes.

MR. BROWN: Solely?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes, solely. But now the College Art Association of America, which was always its name, not the College Art History Association, is in truth a mixture, for better or for worse, of everybody who teaches art, practice or history, in colleges in the United States.

MR. BROWN: But then the art historians were dominant at that time?

MR. FAISON: Oh, totally, but totally.

MR. BROWN: And what was their attitude toward the artisans?

MR. FAISON: Not much interested. But I did--I opened some doors.

MR. BROWN: Do you remember some things you did?

MR. FAISON: Well, I know that I--I didn't appoint. But I was why my successor was who he was, who was Lamar Dodd, who was an artist down in Georgia. And Lamar has his good points and his bad points, but he really took the ball. And that was the whole idea, that he should.

MR. BROWN: When you came in as president, or even earlier, what did the College Art Association think its mandate was? What were its activities? I know in the '30s it--

MR. FAISON: It published the *Art Bulletin*.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: It published a kind of news sheet called *Parnassus*, which later became a college art journal. And now it's called the *Art Journal*. It was the job market. It had its annual meetings, at which distinguished scholars spoke, and also beginners, still in or just emerging from graduate school. And you could see a candidate in action, you see. And there was--oh, that's nice. It wasn't very active in exhibitions. You surprise me. I guess--

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MR. FAISON: No, it wasn't.

MR. BROWN: That did not seem to carry on after the war?

MR. FAISON: No. No. Because the Federation of Arts, the Museum of Modern Art was the big chief.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: And the Federation of Arts--package shows, that's how we existed here. And then they got so expensive it was ridiculous.

MR. BROWN: The College Art Association didn't have to carry on that.

MR. FAISON: No. That's right.

MR. BROWN: So it thought of itself as a way of sharing ideas through publications and at the meetings?

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: And as a means of--

MR. FAISON: The chief thing was the *Art Bulletin* and probably still is.

MR. BROWN: Was it a vehicle for very highly specialized articles?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yeah. Oh, certainly. It's the most distinguished in this country and one of the most distinguished in the world, even though everything is written so badly and drives me up the wall that they don't write so good.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: But once in awhile somebody can write. I mean, when Hyerd Mayer [phonetic] did one, you--it was distinguished writing.

MR. BROWN: Was there every any thought given in the *Art Bulletin* to having less than specialized? Or they have a broader piece?

MR. FAISON: Anything like that went into the other magazine.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: And contemporary art had a hard time getting in there, too. That always was in the other magazine. But it's beginning to. You know, Harvard wouldn't let Alfred Byer do a piece on Matisse, you know. They finally did it with [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: But the *Art Bulletin* was traditionally to be for people who were outstanding, or of an era.

MR. FAISON: Or under the auspices of. I mean, of the Princeton contingent of graduate students and [inaudible] course, you see. But it was edited and sponsored by Charles Rufus Morey [phonetic]. And my say on [inaudible] that was sponsored by--it doesn't matter now. That kind of thing. I don't think they would publish--they wouldn't get published--they wouldn't have published my article without that sponsorship.

MR. BROWN: With your background, do you think that the quality of writing should have been insisted on; the improvement been insisted on? Because a great deal as difficult of access--even if you're a specialist. And so many of the articles are so highly specialized.

MR. FAISON: Of course I think so. But who is it that's going to do it? Because everybody is against you. Pinarsky [phonetic] wrote like a dream and I hope had some influence on people. But the people running the show wouldn't sense this. That isn't always true, but by and large.

MR. BROWN: But at least they got new information out.

MR. FAISON: Oh, of course, of course, of course. No, it was new discoveries.

MR. BROWN: Do you feel, by and large, the College Art Association has been a good vehicle for improving or widening the teaching of art history, the research?

MR. FAISON: Well, those are two different things.

MR. BROWN: They are, yeah. Yeah.

MR. FAISON: Let's take one and then the other. Certainly research--indispensable. I mean, it's the core; really, it is. Now, as to teaching--I don't think there's much interest, you see. Teaching is something else. Either you--well, it's similar to Benny Goodman and the clarinet. You can't put it in any words. You feel it. You got it, or you don't have it. They asked him. He was tongue-tied. I've heard it. It was funny. It must have been mostly gestures.

[Laughter]

MR. FAISON: Frank Mather was a marvelous teacher, and he recognized that I was going to be a good teacher, if that helped. I knew I was going to be a good teacher. I couldn't wait. And I was not--I figured that my chief contribution would not be scholarship, but more on the teaching side. But by golly, you won't stay--you won't keep on being a good teacher if you don't keep your own scholarship alive. I'm just as great on that as anything.

MR. BROWN: But the College of Art and the other organizations seemed to tend toward research. I mean, that's what--

MR. FAISON: Oh, totally.

MR. BROWN: The prestige lies there.

MR. FAISON: And I can't imagine classes in how to teach.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: I mean, at this point we gained probably exclusive--no. But somehow some good teachers come out of this mess, and some bad ones do. And it tends to be--I mean, it depends on the place. Williams, for instance, and Amherst, places like that, insist on good teaching. And you just aren't going to stay if you're not a good teacher. I can pretty well tell you that.

Now, there is room in a great university, with money behind it, to subsidize a scholar to get to work out and give him some very advanced students who don't need oratory and refinements of teaching, to do likewise.

MR. BROWN: All right. Writing is something, as you say, you got greatly interested in. And you were sort of the art critic of *The Nation* in the early '50s.

MR. FAISON: Yes. This came about. We didn't go through this last time. No, we couldn't have. I met Clement Greenberg by the sheerest accident. I didn't know him from second base because I really wasn't that much

interested in the contemporary scene. Of course, I'd heard of him. We had a liberal conference here. It must have been 1950 or something like that.

MR. BROWN: Liberal? What do you mean?

MR. FAISON: Liberal politics, the liberal point of view--very important. And we had all sorts of political people and economists. We had Roper, the political opinion, he was up here. And a very bright student in poli-sci who was also interested in art was doing an honors thing on the Renaissance with me, Renaissance art, named Norman Fiernbound [phonetic], who now is a full professor of sociology at the Amherst College.

Said, "This is ridiculous. We've got to have art represented." And he was on the committee, and he got Clement Greenberg on the committee, whom I had never met. And Clement and I--we couldn't be more different--just hit it off. I thought he was great, and he seemed to think I was great. And he said, "The trouble with you is, though, you don't know anything about what's going on now in New York." I said, "You're right. I don't." And he said, "Well, come on down. I'll show you."

So I went down a couple of weekends, and I met Pollock and all these people, Mercedes Maher, and De Kooning--ended up at a bar with him. And I didn't drink as much as he did, so I listened. I can remember what he said. And this was a whole new world.

MR. BROWN: These were people you hardly knew of?

MR. FAISON: Well, I began to find out, another world.

MR. BROWN: But you weren't in awe of them at that time?

MR. FAISON: No. And then he said, "Look. I'm as you"--as I found out, he wrote for *The Nation*. So in *The Nation* I began reading him, you see. He said, "I'm getting out of this. I'm going over to *Commentary* magazine. I think you should"--oh, first of all he got me to write book reviews, which I did for quite awhile. And as Margaret Marshall, who is a wonderful, wonderful person, was the literary editor. And all this activity was her part of *The Nation*, not the front part. And she liked my reviews. And she had agreed with him that, when he left, I would be invited to be his successor.

And so this happened about--I don't know whether I was still president of the College of Art. I think it overlapped somewhat.

MR. BROWN: Yes, it does.

MR. FAISON: I think it does. And I was a busy boy. I was teaching full-time, running things there, and once a month going to New York for a long weekend and scurrying around town and deciding what I was going to write about, which I did for a couple of years. And so finally I just couldn't keep it up. That's how it all started.

MR. BROWN: What kind of a magazine was *The Nation*? Was it still--

MR. FAISON: Very much what it is now, rather left-wing. And then--oh, the editorship changed. And Frieda Kirshway came in. And Margaret Marshall said, "I don't know about this." And she and Frieda Kirshway began to do this. And then finally Margaret Marshall said, "I can't take it anymore. It's too red for me." And she resigned. And I said, "I guess I'd better, too." And she said, "No, don't, because there are hardly any art critics in the country." That was true. *The New York Times* at that time was not awfully interesting.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Still had Howard Debrie [phonetic] and--

MR. FAISON: Yeah. He was a very nice man. I was very fond of him. But really, it was not very good criticist [sic]. And what magazines had art critics? *The New Yorker*, in case you don't know, didn't have an art critic, unless you called Colts one. He was a novelist. He wrote well, but he didn't know anything about art. So it was outrageous. That marvelous magazine had absolute zilch as far as the visual arts were concerned. Theater? Sure. Music.

MR. BROWN: The specialized arts magazines wouldn't be read by any--

MR. FAISON: That's right. That's right.

MR. BROWN: And you were interested in this broad spectrum of information.

MR. FAISON: That's right. And I got mail, fan mail and fan mail that I was fascinated to. And people still--once in awhile, somebody says, "By God, didn't you used to write for *The Nation*?" Even today--I can't believe it. So I enjoyed all of that. It was very--

MR. BROWN: How did that strike you, as left-wing yourself perhaps?

MR. FAISON: No. Well, could have, I mean, I don't know. But finally, Frieda Kirshway took me to lunch and began to tell me what she would like me to write about. And that's when I got--

MR. BROWN: A certain emphasis on it?

MR. FAISON: Certain emphases, and I didn't like it. I said, "Sorry. I can't write"--I was losing my steam. I mean, it was getting just too much anyway. But I got the sense I was going to be--

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MR. FAISON: Yeah. But of course, the back part was absolutely independent of the front part and, I think, very distinguished, very distinguished.

MR. BROWN: What did you attempt to review, mainly contemporary work or a spectrum?

MR. FAISON: Oh, entirely.

MR. BROWN: Contemporary?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. I limited it to that. But I picked my people, you see.

MR. BROWN: Did you ever go to the interview with them or go talk with them?

MR. FAISON: No, no.

MR. BROWN: Just went to the shows?

MR. FAISON: Just went to the show, just went to the show.

MR. BROWN: So it was mostly just visual reaction, because there wasn't much biography on many of them at that point.

MR. FAISON: Well, I'm interested in biography.

MR. BROWN: Would it be formal analysis or--what was your--

MR. FAISON: Generally, it was an attempt to verbalize what the picture said to me. That's what I think criticism should be. Well, if it was Hans Hofmann and we knew he came from Germany, yes. There was a German element in it, all right. That's fair game.

MR. BROWN: But you would mainly try to say, "This painting"--

MR. FAISON: I'd pick out particular paintings.

MR. BROWN: "And this does this to me, and this is why," probably.

MR. FAISON: Right.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: Criticism. Not biography.

MR. BROWN: Were you becoming more and more involved in more gothic art? This lasted awhile, full-time teaching?

MR. FAISON: The full-time teaching was moving more and more towards nineteenth and twentieth century, because I started with the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

MR. BROWN: Why was that happening?

MR. FAISON: Well, I was trained in Middle Ages and Renaissance, but I was--well, you see what was happening. This is why.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Were you introducing for the first time some of these contemporary courses here?

MR. FAISON: Certainly, certainly. But this was years after Alfred Barr started the whole thing at Wellesley. He was it there.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, yeah. But I mean, but here.

MR. FAISON: That's right. Oh, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Were the students--you were getting a new kind of student by the mid-50s.

MR. FAISON: That's right. That's all part of the picture.

MR. BROWN: You were getting ones who were curious about their times.

MR. FAISON: That's right. Right.

MR. BROWN: Not the sort of historicity of the earlier--that generation earlier.

MR. FAISON: Yeah. Well, Karl Weston in the '20s was being rather courageous, for the United States, of taking Paul Cézanne very seriously--very seriously. That was the big push, and the ventures into the unknown. Well, he died in 1906, but still. And here I was, pushing living artists, saying that I really believed that they were very important. And I still think I'm right, was right. I mean, I think De Kooning and Pollock are very, very important adventurous spirits, influential, whatever you want to say.

MR. BROWN: Were you able to exhibit them or some aspects of their work in the '50s?

MR. FAISON: Yes. We had here--Bennington College was always active in exhibiting contemporary art, you see, and they had a little money, too. And whoever was in charge up there, all of us said, "Hey, we're going to have the first Pollock retrospective; don't you want to share expenses?" And I said, "oh boy." And he'll come to both openings. And he did. So this was in 1952, and no Pollock's retrospective of any kind had ever happened. It was only the most recent work, you know. Betty Parson's gallery and the shifting over to Coops, wasn't it? I think. And was it Sidney Janis? Janis, it was.

And this didn't go all the way back to the Thomas Benton period, but we could [inaudible] as friendly '42 is [inaudible], which at the moment is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art on the loan. Hope they buy it.

MR. BROWN: These years later?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. These years later. So it was about 10 years of work. That was the first retrospective. It opened at Banks and came here. He came to both. There was one very large painting, about 10 feet long, about 3 feet high, called *Number 30* [*Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)*, 1950], of 1950. And I could have bought it for $5000. I didn't have $5000 and if I had had and had spent it, I think I would have been thrown out of Williamstown.

MR. BROWN: What was the reaction to having this man here, or his work?

MR. FAISON: Well, pretty exciting. But in a small group.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: Small group--pretty exciting. Do you know where that painting is now? It's in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and it's called *Autumn River*. The title came later, which fascinates me. It was Number 30 of 1950--for $5000. That is still larger and still more important than the *Blue Poles* [*Blue Poles (Number 11)*, 1952] that were bought in the Australia a couple of years ago for two million.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: Well, your community--the core of you, they all backed you, right, on your--

MR. FAISON: Oh, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Including your administration?

MR. FAISON: No. The president was not interested at all. He didn't--

MR. BROWN: He was taller?

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: In this area, some other things, you have a lot of sophisticated, wealthy people who retired here or summered here or whatever.

MR. FAISON: More now than then.

MR. BROWN: Not so many then?

MR. FAISON: Not so many then.

MR. BROWN: They were still sort of an outer group of potential support and interest?

MR. FAISON: That's right. Although they tended to be very old and very conservative and generous in pastime, that kind of thing. But Lawrence Bodell emerges after the war, you see. And I didn't know he was this interested. But he had not joined his father's lumber business, and there was tension. And he didn't have very much money. And then because of his own war record, there was a reconciliation with his father. And suddenly, he has lots of money.

And he came to me. He said, "Now, I'm going to do what I want. I'm want to buy a Hopper. And I may buy some more pictures, but I want a Hopper. Will you come to New York with me?" Saw that great wonderful nude that we now own, *Morning in the City* [1944]. There it was. And I said, "Yeah. Good Hopper. No problem." He said, "I like it." So that was the first purchase. That all starts. Now that is--bought this Hopper in 1954 from the Rain Gallery.

And that started him off, and he decided it would be American art, mostly contemporary. Then he--a little bit later, he said, "I think I'm going to be buying more pictures. Can I come to your course?" I gave a course on twentieth century art.

MR. BROWN: Had he had a prior connection with Williams? He had gone to Williams?

MR. FAISON: Oh, he went to Williams and remembered Karl Weston very well indeed. And he's a very sophisticated man with a very sophisticated wife and knew his way around. And all of a sudden he had lots of money. And so, this is one thing he decides to do. And they got an apartment in New York so he could go back and forth a great deal. He went to galleries all the time and got interested in the Whitney Museum and so forth.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]

MR. FAISON:--galleries all the time and got interested in the Whitney Museum and so forth.

Well, the following year or so, he came to my course. He was rather deaf, probably war damage to his ears. He sat in the front row. And the students all liked him very much. And he was terribly nice to them, invited them out to the house, and they saw what he collected, what he was beginning to collect. That was all very interesting.

And then one day, he said--oh, I wanted to stick how he got--wanted to put him into the course. I had bought at the Coops [phonetic] Gallery, a little Herbert Ferber, which was a maquette of the big sculpture that is in Buffalo called *Green Form* [*Green Sculpture II*, 1954]--green something. And it's a little thing. And it was on the table. And he said, "Why did you get that?" And I said, "Because I like it." And he said, "Well, that's not sculpture." And I said, "Why not?" And he said, "Well, sculpture is something you carve, wood, stone." I said, "Sculpture is a three-dimensional art, and this is metal put together and soldered and so forth. Sure it's sculpture. Why not? Who says it's got to be carved?" He said, "Well, then, can I come into your course?" I said, "Sure." He's not that much older, you know, six years older than I.

So it was all a complete delight, from my point of view. And one day he said, "Come on out the house, I've got something to show you. I've made quite a purchase." And it was this enormous wall sculpture by Herbert Ferber, derived from the huge thing he did in the Milburn, New Jersey, synagogue—*And the bush was not consumed* [1951]. It was that kind of thing, called wall sculpture. And there it was erected out on his terrace. And I said, "My God, how marvelous," because I'm very fond of Herbert Ferber's work, particularly of that period, of the '50s.

Herbert Ferber, as a result of all this, gave me this little one that you see in the hall, and the drawing that goes with it. He said, "I'd like to give you something." Well, that is how that all started. And there's a summer person who really wasn't a summer person. He'd been working in a library here for years and years, and then he retired, when he went into the war, and then he didn't go back to it.

But as a result of all that, he got more and more interested. And he came in one day and said--made an appointment. I said, "You don't have to make an appointment." He said, "Well, I want to make sure you're there." I said, "Okay." He came in. I said, "What's on your mind?" He said, "You need some money." I said, "Uh-huh. What did you have in mind?" He said, "Well, I want to give you some money in memory of Karl Weston. And you are to spend the income from it for purchases and for no other thing. And anything you want,

and don't ask my opinion." And it turned out to be a quarter-of-a-million dollars. And that's when--this is about 1957 or so. And that's when we really got started. This is a nice story.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. FAISON: Now we'd better turn it off.

MR. BROWN: So Lawrence Bodell became a very major friend of the gallery?

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: That certainly put you on an entirely new plateau in '57 when he made his gift. You mentioned there were other people then who came into this area who gave things?

MR. FAISON: Yes, once in awhile. Perhaps the most interesting, from a personal point of view, is Cole Porter, who came up here and bought a big house and tore it down, unfortunately, because it was a beautiful house--after his wife died. She lived in it first. Once she died, he tore the house down and moved his studio, a little white-frame studio, onto the foundations of the big house because it had a magnificent garden.

And he was very much interested in the college theater and the music. And when he died, he left an enormous collection of musical manuscripts and things of that sort. And she in turn had left us a great many art books, which she liked to collect. She had a few quite precious works of art that I would store all winter long and be allowed to show. But she took them all back. And they are, I think, still in the Waldorf-Astoria apartment, which he willed to his alma mater, Yale University. I think it's their pied-a-terre. They had a rather elegant pied-a-terre in New York. And I think those few nice things she owned are probably in it.

But he left us a Grant Wood painting called *Death on the Ridge Road* [1935], curiously mentioned by John Marquand in one of his novels. And several other pictures--there was a rather decent Diego Rivera [*Hombre Fumando*, 1937]. The rest of it was not so good. But, you know, what--he gave them to us.

MR. BROWN: So he became fairly involved with the museum?

MR. FAISON: No, he never was. But he said, "I'm leaving you these pictures."

MR. BROWN: Oh, I see. You were just sort of--he liked what you were doing?

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: In a general way?

MR. FAISON: In a general way. She was much more interested. But unfortunately--she was a remarkable woman, quite a bit older than he.

MR. BROWN: In what way was she remarkable?

MR. FAISON: Great intelligence, great beauty in her youth, famous beauty from Kentucky. And, you know, way-out fashion, society and the like. And if she hadn't died, I think things might have happened. Too bad.

MR. BROWN: There were several such things.

MR. FAISON: There were several things of that sort.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: I want to get back for a minute, maybe to begin with your writing. In 1953, is it Abrams?--published your book on Manet [*Manet*, 1954].

MR. FAISON: I think so. Small book, and small sales.

MR. BROWN: How did that come about?

MR. FAISON: I suppose because of the column I was writing in *The Nation*. I think that's it. I didn't know anybody at Abrams, did I? No. Well, Milton Fox was the editor, and he used to turn up at the College Art, and probably the Navy. That had something to do with it. Because he was always looking for scholars. Of course, it was a skin game. They paid you $350 for the book and no royalties. Now, it wasn't a very big book, but still, you worked your eyes out.

MR. BROWN: No wonder they did very well.

MR. FAISON: And they're still selling it. Once in awhile I still see this book. They keep--and they made a pocket-sized edition and a slightly larger edition with prints suitable for framing and all that. And they're still kicking around. I got $350 for it. But that started me off.

MR. BROWN: What did you attempt to do in that book?

MR. FAISON: I picked out--you were limited to 12, weren't you--12 pictures in color. And I picked out 12 knockouts and wrote my heart out, because he's my favorite painter. And I don't regret anything I wrote about that one. I love that book. It's small. It didn't say anything new, except maybe the--well, it was criticism, but it was a response to the pictures.

MR. BROWN: Did this lead to other writing immediately?

MR. FAISON: Well, I did another one for him called *Great Paintings of the Nude* [1955], in which they were all naked, but they're good pictures. That was more of a commercial venture, I guess, another $350. But then I guess the next one is a sudden invitation from Harcourt Brace in the form of none other than Margaret Marshall.

MR. BROWN: Your erstwhile editor--

MR. FAISON: Erstwhile editor of *The Nation*. And she said, "Wouldn't you like to write a book?" I said, "Yeah, I'm getting more and more interested now." And she said, "Well, Harcourt Brace, I've persuaded them, they want a book on all the art museums of the United States." And I said, "Margaret, how many years of my salary are you prepared to pay? All the big art museums of the United States? Come on. And I don't want to write such a book. Why don't we limit it to New England, because I know those museums already and they know me. And this is feasible. And then if they like that, we can do another section. We can talk about that later."

So that was agreed to, and that's how that happened.

MR. BROWN: What was she like to work with?

MR. FAISON: Just an absolute delight. Straight shooter, brilliant. Old-maid motherly somehow, just a charmer, much older, of course. Just a sweetheart and very bright. She wrote beautifully, and she was a literary person.

MR. BROWN: She was able to persuade Harcourt Brace to go with this more limited book?

MR. FAISON: That's right. And the book came out. They went through two printings. I think the finances of this are interesting in retrospect. I was given a 500-dollar advance against royalties. And I spent exactly 500 dollars traveling around. And plus, most of the places gave me the photographs. Otherwise, we were out. But it was publicity for them. And it was a new kind of venture, you see.

And either she or somebody at Harcourt Brace had the bright idea of making it of the size it would go into the glove compartment of the car, from the days when the glove compartments were--and so that was the size, and it was portable. And it was not just a [inaudible] listing. I mean, it was criticism. It was writing.

MR. BROWN: What did you intend to do with it? Or by it? What was your--

MR. FAISON: Well, I visualized it as a kind of left-handed way of writing a history of art, just limiting it to all the riches of New England. For instance, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is a miniature history of art. You read that first. And then it occurred to me that you could, instead of just talking about this particular Degas in Boston, you would relate it to the Degas' elsewhere in New England that you had selected. Of course, it was highly selective. Everything discussed was illustrated. There were 400 pictures, 400 objects, sculpture and painting, some drawings--no furniture, no decorative arts, no multiples. Everything was unique, with the exception of the very few prints that were super-duper.

And this was--I don't know whether you would say it was a success justime [phonetic] or a flat failure, but they sold all the copies and then they wouldn't print any more.

MR. BROWN: Why?

MR. FAISON: They didn't seem to be interested. I don't know. I mean, they didn't do any advertising. It was one little thing three inches high in the *New York Times* when it came out, and that was it. I think it was a distinguished text loss for them, something of that sort. And they made Margaret Marshall happy. I don't know. But it was a great thing for me.

I made over 11 years of royalties, above the original 500, which I had to pay back, you see. I made $1000. I

made about $100 a year for 10 or 11 years off of the book, period. That's it. Well, as a result of that book--see how things work from one to the other--if you don't turn down an opportunity, maybe, you never know what will happen.

Years later--we now jump to 1963--a man I didn't know very well. I'd met him years before, often heard of him, named Eddie Warburg, called up. He said, "I'm a regent over here. I live in New York, but I'm a regent of the State of New York meeting in Albany all the time. I love your book, that book you wrote, and I want one on New York State." I said, "All of New York State?" And he said, "Yeah. New York City and all these museums around my state. Nothing's ever been done about them. I want a book like this. Will you write it?" I said, "Yeah. But why do we have to include New York City, because that will be three-quarters of the book and you won't ever get to those small places? Or it's got to be two fat volumes, and I'm not sure I want to do that. And why does the Metropolitan Museum of Art need another book about itself? I don't get it?"

He said, "Okay. No New York City, but everything else, starting at Yonkers and all the way to Buffalo." I said, "I'm in." Well, this time they gave me a state car.

MR. BROWN: This was to be a state project?

MR. FAISON: State project, through the Department of Education. They gave me a state car, all expenses paid, not against royalties. And I had a committee they organized. The state was divided into nine sections.

MR. BROWN: What was the committee's function to be?

MR. FAISON: Each one was a museum director in that area who would advise me that I must go to these museums, but that isn't worthwhile, because they would know these things.

MR. BROWN: But you'd have final say, though?

MR. FAISON: I would have final say.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: And they were very helpful indeed. I mean, it was a great bunch of people. We all met in Albany to launch the thing. I had full secretarial services and all that business.

But the catch was that my royalties were split with the state, 50–50. And knowing that, I then said, "Well, I'll do this if I get something paid anyway."

MR. BROWN: You mean a stipend?

MR. FAISON: A stipend against royalties. But I can't do this, and make $100 a year all over again. That's too much work. It's ridiculous. So I should have asked for much more. I asked for $2500 dollars, help put a son through school or something. And they gave me $2500. I've never had another cent since. I don't know what happened.

But it wasn't pushed. It should have been. It was not pushed.

MR. BROWN: It wasn't distributed or much advertised, rather?

MR. FAISON: I don't understand it. I mean, the state is in there for 50 percent of it. Nothing's ever happened. So that's out of print.

MR. BROWN: So there again--

MR. FAISON: But then as a result of these two books--

MR. BROWN: And that was pretty much like the New England guide, right, relating things here to the things there?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yeah, identical. Format and everything. But it was published by Random House this time, well, because--I don't know. Eddie Warburg's foundation put up a lot of money. And at any rate, that was bad, and it went out of print. And there are a few copies around, not many.

MR. BROWN: You got to make a lot of new acquaintances, did you?

MR. FAISON: Oh, enormously.

MR. BROWN: Anyone pretty significant?

MR. FAISON: Sure, sure. In what ways shall I say it? I'm running a museum here all this time, I mean, you know. You learn things. You borrow things. Something you see you want to show, or, "Wouldn't you like to borrow ours?" and it helps you put your own museum on the map. Yes, of course. Sure. And I'm a member of the Art Museum Directors Association of America, which is not to be confused with the American Museum Association, which is just all kinds of museums. But that was a wonderful annual meeting that you attended. Great carpet treatment, you see everything to be seen in the area--much more interesting than College Art meetings.

As a result of that, of one way and another, I get this telephone call in 1976, is it? Christmastime, or '77, whichever it was. David Godine on the telephone. He said, "I'm a publisher from Boston." I said, "Yeah. I have heard of you. But I haven't heard very much." And it turned out that he was talking to Bill Goodman at the Harvard Press. Bill Goodman was leaving the Harvard Press. And he was about to join David Godine's forces as senior editor, which he now is.

And David said, "I have this little series coming out about New England. I've got one on New England gardens, and I've got somebody signed up for historic houses of New England. But I want somebody to write a book on the art museums." And David said, "Well, didn't you know it already exists and it's very good?" He said, "No, never heard of it." Well, David said, "Well, here's my copy. Take it home and read it."

MR. BROWN: You mean Goodman said that?

MR. FAISON: Goodman said this to Godine.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: And the background was that Goodman, all these years before he went to the Harvard Press, was working at Harcourt Brace, discovered my book there, spent years trying to tell them, "For God's sake, print some more copies," and they wouldn't do it. So that's how that happened. And when David called up, he said--he was all breathless--said, "Do you have a contract for a new edition or a revised edition, bring it up"--sort of this way. And I said, "Mr. Godine, why don't you just relax. I've been waiting for this telephone call for 16 years. When are you going to come see me?" He said, "Tomorrow."

So that's how the present book, which as we are here today, exists upstairs in the page-proof version, to come out next April or so. That's how that happened.

MR. BROWN: Were you able to expand quite a bit from your Harcourt Brace book?

MR. FAISON: It's about twice as big.

MR. BROWN: There are a lot more museums, for one thing?

MR. FAISON: Yes. The old book had 60; this has 101. One--about three I should have put in and didn't, oversight or laziness; many others existed, but didn't have anything worthwhile then. Twenty-some are brand new. Yale's British center, for instance, and all the existing ones, twice as big as they were.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: So this is completely rewritten. I mean, I've used paragraphs here and there. Not much change in Mrs. Gardner's museum. You know why.

MR. BROWN: That would be an exception.

MR. FAISON: And you know why you can't change anything in Mrs. Gardner's museum? Because the will says that if they do, everything is sold and the proceeds go to Harvard University.

[Laughter]

MR. FAISON: I should think Harvard would have changed something in there. Never mind.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible] those 20 years that, as your recent survey for this publication would have indicated what--steady growth?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, yes. Steady growth, with, you know, big windfalls such as the little windfall I had here. I mean, things like that happened in a big way. Sure.

MR. BROWN: But many of the venerable institutions, smaller ones?

MR. FAISON: Yes.

MR. BROWN: You haven't seen too many that have stood still?

MR. FAISON: Mrs. Gardner's palace. There were a few like that.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: The museum is like on Broadway. It's wherever there is something, at least one thing that I think is worth seeing of importance on public view at stated hours. So this includes historical societies, libraries, but not private collections. Not private collections. The big growth has come from private collections being given to public--going public.

MR. BROWN: Is there any particular strength of characteristics, marked characteristic of the museums in New England as they compare with the museums in New York State?

MR. FAISON: A much--the contents are much finer. There are many more of them. It's the greatest concentration in the world. I had some statistics in the beginning. New England is less than half the size of France. Massachusetts is half the size of Denmark; I remember that one. Three-fifths of the museums of New England are in Massachusetts and in an area half the size of Denmark. If you just take Massachusetts, you've got three-fifths of 100; how much is that? Sixty, isn't it?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: You've got 60 museums. There's nothing like this anywhere in the world. In addition to that, you have all these academic places. There's nothing like that anywhere in the world. We're going to have an opening. We're expanding our museum now.

MR. BROWN: At Williams?

MR. FAISON: At Williams. We are going to have an opening sometime in '83. And I'm to be the guest curator. And because we're going to borrow from New England college museums and let everybody know how extraordinary it all is--there are 36 of them. Now, what kind of a show do you have? Do you just try to get something good from each one? It's a mess of a show. So we decided we'd better have a subject. And the one subject that most could contribute to was American painting. That, of course, eliminates the British Center at Yale and the Peabody Museum and things of that sort. So we lost some. But we'll have 25 museums.

MR. BROWN: This will still demonstrate the great strength of the region.

MR. FAISON: Unbelievable--25, 25. Take England. What have you got? Art collections owned by colleges. Well, Oxford and Cambridge, London University, I suppose, Kertog [phonetic]. And there will be a few more. It's unheard of anywhere else in the world.

MR. BROWN: Why do you suppose this is so in New England in particular? So many academic institutions have art museums?

MR. FAISON: Well, New England is the oldest part of the country, I suppose, isn't it, sort of?

MR. BROWN: Except for Virginia.

MR. FAISON: Yeah, but they had a Civil War and lost a lot of money, you know? So, we're not in Europe. That's important. Europe doesn't need museums the way we do. This, I think, is essential. Art history isn't taught very much. In Europe, they teach French art in France, and they teach Italian art in Italy, as nationalized. But we over and over again find foreign students here who have been simply flabbergasted as the breadth and scope, you see. And you know, it's beginning to take hold. We are influencing Europe on this one.

And well, we send students over--junior year abroad, they go to Rome. We know ahead of time they're only going to get Italian art. So we make arrangements so that that will count.

MR. BROWN: Sure. And you send them there for that strength.

MR. FAISON: Oh, sure. Right. But the kind of art 1-2 that we get here or the Fine Arts 13 at Harvard doesn't exist anywhere.

MR. BROWN: But this anthology of art history is extraordinarily rich in New England?

MR. FAISON: It is. It is.

MR. BROWN: Do you agree that it's also mostly pitched toward an academic audience? Or what's the effect it may be having on the public in general?

MR. FAISON: Well, I've told you about the 25 or 30--those museums.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: But after all, we've got Boston museums.

MR. BROWN: That's 70 or 80 additional.

MR. FAISON: Yeah. That's the answer. Of course, many of them are very small little historical societies that may have a glorious Copley or something. That's how they got in the book. Or my favorite place of that sort is Saco, Maine. And there's a little building next door to the town library. And it's what I like to call a historical museum. But they own 13 paintings, all of the same family, by Brewster from Connecticut, who came up and lived with the family, the Kutz family, and painted them all. And they're perfectly wonderful.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MR. FAISON: There they are.

MR. BROWN: Obviously not an art museum.

MR. FAISON: Not an art museum. Right.

MR. BROWN: But these are treasures.

MR. FAISON: It's a treasure. It is. So I don't know how to answer that question at all.

MR. BROWN: You also had another publication, this handbook of the Williams College collection, which came out just a few years ago.

MR. FAISON: Yes. When I retired, I think I ought to tell this little story because now he's dead. But Charlie Cunningham, who for years and years was director at Hartford--and I knew him very well that way.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON:--ended up rather unhappily at Chicago. He left Harvard, and didn't like it, and retired--resigned. Certainly not thrown out--resigned. Couldn't take it because they were bypassing him. They really just--you know.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: And he came back here, by invitation, to be chief curator of the Clarkhart Institute under George Hamilton. And he was very useful, and he bought some very good pictures for them. And he set up for this whole--really his whole effort, the conservation center that we have in the back rear of the Clarkhart, but it's now working far beyond this region. I mean, Dartmouth sends pictures, Vassar, all kinds of--Bowdoin, all kinds of places.

Well, that was a real contribution of his. Of course, he was independently with chips and terribly generous. And he said to me, "Look. You're about to retire. There is no book on the art museum. Wouldn't you like to write one?" I said, "Oh, would I?" And he said, "Well, I'll give you some money, and with that you ought to be able to get a grant." And that's what did it. So I wrote that in '77, the year after I retired, and it came out in '78, with help from Washington, D.C.

MR. BROWN: Were you allowed to pick favorites or key pieces?

MR. FAISON: I picked--there is no particular specialty of a museum; we've tried to resist that. We were a little happily heavy on Spanish paintings. That's a little rare, and we've got good ones.

MR. BROWN: Did that happen under you or under Weston?

MR. FAISON: That happened under a donor by the name of George Alfred Klonedin [phonetic], a classmate of Weston's who was a summer resident here. And he bought Eugene O'Neil's house in Sea Island, Georgia, which was fake Spanish, and he put real Spanish furniture and some few pictures in it, and then when he closed that house gave us whatever we wanted from it, furniture and paintings--not many paintings. And he said, "Now, I'll give you some more money. Buy Spanish pictures, but not Picasso." I said, "All right, sir." He said, "Start off

with El Greco." I said, "You'll have to give me more money." He said, "Well, I won't give you more money, so you won't have an El Greco." But that's how that started.

Well, I picked out things beginning with the first works of art received, namely three Assyrian reliefs, all the way to contemporary.

[OFF THE RECORD]

MR. FAISON:--we decided to call it a handbook. That takes about 70–75 objects all the way from ancient Assyria, reliefs that we had received from missionary alumni in 1850. But historically speaking, I think they were among the oldest things, and a few Egyptian things that were not--our Egyptian things were not good enough to be in the selection, is what I mean.

MR. BROWN: You didn't include any founder's portraits or anything?

MR. FAISON: No, no, no, no. Well, one, because it's in the building and it's pretty good. And it's Amos Lawrence himself.

MR. BROWN: Who gave money for the--

MR. FAISON: Who gave money for the building, which was the college library. And the portrait was painted in Boston by Chester Harding and is one of the best Hardings. And it's the same--it's identical to the one in The National Gallery in Washington, which was the family portrait. He had two of them painted, one for himself and one by request of the trustees of Williams College. That's the sort of frontispiece. But we start with Assyria and go to yesterday, including a good many American things given by--well, I suppose, [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: You didn't attempt, of course, to be exhaustive in a handbook.

MR. FAISON: No.

MR. BROWN: Did you intend it to be instructive?

MR. FAISON: Instructive. I wrote it and decided it was for a general public. But the general public was visualized as the Williams student who is not yet a senior and is interested in art. Now, it has a lot of things in there for the scholars, and in the sense of bibliography and footnotes and so forth. But the articles are meant to be readable and they talk about the object and how we got it and all that kind of thing. So there's an essay on each picture. A few of these, 20 out of 75, were written by members of the staff. I had invited them to contribute, particularly in areas where I don't know much, like Chinese seraph prints.

MR. BROWN: There's a great deal of writing?

MR. FAISON: There's a great deal of writing. There's a great deal of writing.

MR. BROWN: It's a prodigious thing. It must have taken you--

MR. FAISON: Yes. And we had some money from The National Endowment. And so we thought it should be a good-looking job. And I think Stinehour Press and [inaudible] did a perfectly beautiful performance. So that was circulated to all the museums that had been nice to us over the years. So it puts us on the map more than we had been on the map.

MR. BROWN: And this is a format that can be updated periodically?

MR. FAISON: Sure. Oh, sure, very much so.

MR. BROWN: You also have that in mind with your guides, of course?

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: Just as you would your guide.

MR. FAISON: I think the new director someday will probably put out a checklist of everything we own, or everything worth mentioning that we own. This is a selection of the best things, as I read it.

MR. BROWN: You mentioned it a bit in passing. But the Clarkhart Institute has become quite a prominent thing out here now. Did that get underway in the '50s?

MR. FAISON: It opened in 1955.

MR. BROWN: Were you involved at all in discussions of it?

MR. FAISON: Yes. Not as much as Mr. Weston.

MR. BROWN: Mr. Weston was still around?

MR. FAISON: Yes. He died in 1956. This surfaced in 1950. Or do I mean '60? Wait a minute. No, in 1950, '50. And we didn't--shall I tell you how the Clark museum started? Do we want that?

MR. BROWN: Certainly.

MR. FAISON: Because it's crazy, crazy.

MR. BROWN: Crazy or not.

MR. FAISON: Mr. Weston received a telephone call, we'll say in the winter of 1949–50--that's about right--from the head--the senior trustee of Williams College named William Sidley. I have a feeling I've told you this before. Sidley, S-i-d-l-e-y. It was a lawyer on South Street in Chicago. And he said, "I have a friend here who has a client who has a lot of art. And he's looking around for a place to put it in a college community, and he asked me if I knew of any." I said, "Well, there's my own college." And so he said, "You know, Karl, I don't know anything about art," and was that ever true. But he said, "I was taken to New York to see this collection, and it's pretty big. And they'll show it to you if you let them know."

And Karl said, "Well, I've been through this before. It's an awful bother to get down to New York."

MR. BROWN: He said this to Sidley?

MR. FAISON: Yeah, he said, "And usually it's worthless. Tell me about these pictures." And he said, "Well, Karl, I don't know anything about art." And I said, "There are an awful lot of pictures. Who painted them?" He said, "Well, let me think now. There was one guy who painted a lot of them. Now, what was his name? A French painter. Something--is there a fellow named Ree-noyer or something like that?" And Karl said, "We'll go."

So that is how it started. And he--and I was already director, you see. And we didn't know what was up.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: By the sheer chance of Weston's persistence.

MR. FAISON: So we went together. And I remember there were floods. It was midwinter and we had an awful time. We were terribly late because of the weather. And when we got to the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, there was Mr. Clark. And we knew the name. He was a rather gruff guy, a big fellow, sort of tweedy. And with him was a strange, small man with a wall eye. And you didn't know which eye was looking at you--who turned out not to be a lawyer or anything like that, but he took care of your money for you. He was a financial undertaker. And he was a sharp tack.

Well, we talked for quite awhile. This was before lunch. It was terribly late already. And nothing was said about art or Williams or anything of the sort. It was an interesting conversation. And quite a bit to drink--and then we had this gorgeous luncheon in the then glorious dining room of the Ritz-Carlton that doesn't exist anymore. And still nothing said.

And Karl looked at me, and sort of had a chance to whisper. He said, "I don't think we're getting anywhere." And at that point, Mr. Clark said, "Well, gentlemen, I think we'd better go upstairs and see a few things." So we went upstairs and crossed into the residential section, and here was a big apartment, almost uninhabited. There was a bed, but hardly much sign of anybody living there, simply crammed with pictures, and a little bit of sculpture. When the door was opened, here was the Degas dancer with skirt, see.

And ultimately, Mr. Roberts called us over and said, "Now"--

MR. BROWN: Mr. Roberts was the financial--

MR. FAISON: Was the other man who hadn't been saying very much. He said, "Now, gentlemen, I have something to tell you, that you will be seeing part of Mr. Clark's collection. He is thinking about placing it in Williamstown. Should he hear from any source that he is thinking of placing it in Williamstown, he will not place it in Williamstown." And we sat on this secret for something like five years until it ultimately, eventually--well, we saw lots of Ree-noyers as you might say. And we saw all kinds of things. The emphasis French nineteenth century, but there was a--

MR. BROWN: Were they hung?

MR. FAISON: Some were. Many were stacked against the walls like that. There were a lot of things we didn't see that first visit, because there was a later visit when, after the Ritz-Carlton was sold and torn down, the Clarks--there was no Mrs. Clark in evidence yet. We didn't know about her. Everything we had heard turned out to be quite wrong. One heard that he'd married somebody from the Folies-Bergère chorus. So we had a picture of flaxen hair and something or other. Well, Mrs. Clark, when she eventually materialized, was the same age as Mr. Clark, elderly, and extremely distinguished. We were over 100 percent wrong.

Well, they moved to a big apartment on 72nd and Park Avenue. And we had a luncheon there once and saw a lot more things such as the Piero della Francesca, you know, more stuff.

MR. BROWN: He kept calling you and Mr. Weston down, to get ideas maybe?

MR. FAISON: Yes, off and on.

MR. BROWN: It wasn't clear what he was--

MR. FAISON: It wasn't entirely clear. But finally, they came up and visited, and looked around. There was a luncheon for them with the president.

MR. BROWN: The president was in on this?

MR. FAISON: That's right. That's right. And we were told that we could tell him that, if necessary, that we hoped he'd build a little addition to Lawrence Hall, see. He didn't have any idea what was coming up. And he said, "No, no. I like your museum. No, no. We'll keep my stuff together." "Well , there's all this land right here. I suppose we could build something in front of one." "No, no. Don't you have some land around?"

Well, serious land at college property--yeah, you could have this. Well, how many acres is this? It's the middle of town, two acres. No, we need more land. Well, finally it turned out that he bought 90 acres, you see, out where it didn't--and then it began to emerge that this collection, really we hadn't seen very much of it, because there was--well, then the articles of incorporation all went through and we became a legal thing, and it was going to be an educational institution as well as a mausoleum, and so forth.

MR. BROWN: With a connection to the college?

MR. FAISON: Not yet clear, you see, not yet clear. But the graduate program comes later. But--and absolutely separate from the college financially and legally, and still is, except that now over 50 percent of the trustees are Williams people. But legally they're absolutely separate.

He then had to prove to the--for tax purposes, Mr. Clark had to prove he was serious. So he said, "Can I put a show in your museum?" We hadn't started the building yet--and to demonstrate. And we said, "Certainly, certainly, certainly." And we thought, my goodness, we have a Piero della Francesca, they have a Renoir, a Monet, everything. Silver--nothing but silver. Next year, "Can we have another show?" "Certainly, certainly." Silver, including both times several things by Paul de Lamerie, who is the most recherché--if you are collecting English silver, if you have any--

MR. BROWN: Tremendous rococo style.

MR. FAISON: Yeah. Not my favorite. I'm a Paul Revere man myself, but never mind. Third show--only Paul de Lamerie. Three silver shows. And the following year, the first room for paintings opened up in the museum. That takes us to 1955. And it opened up room by room. And then it turned out there were books, there were photographs, there were prints, there were drawings, et cetera. That's how it all started.

MR. BROWN: You still didn't know what all was going to appear, though, did you? He was very secretive, right?

MR. FAISON: Oh, very, very, very, very. And then in later years, starting--let's see. In 1960, the president of Williams College, Sawyer was the new president at this time, and he really took the ball.

MR. BROWN: You mean the former president had not done that?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes, he'd been excited about the idea of the thing and most receptive. But Jack Sawyer was personally, passionately interested. He studied art under Whitney Stoddard and me, to begin with. And he is really personally interested, not just institutionally interested. And so he persuaded the Clark Foundation, which had had for fortune--the foundation in New York has half of this, the institute had the other half of the money, you see.

MR. BROWN: Were the Clarks by then dead?

MR. FAISON: No.

MR. BROWN: No?

MR. FAISON: No, not yet. Maybe Mr. Clark had died; Mrs. Clark was a few years later. And she was of course on the foundation. And so they established a professorship, which we still have, a full professorship to be gotten from outside, visiting people. And once that was established, then Jack Sawyer took the bit in his teeth, and he said, "You know, we ought to combine the two somehow. That's where we should have a graduate program."

Now, Williams is not a university, and it doesn't have graduate programs, so this was an exception. It does have a thing for economists, but that's not exactly – that's for foreigners and is really a separate operation.

[END TAPE 2 SIDE A]

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Now, Williams is not a university, and it doesn't have graduate programs, so this was an exception. It does have a thing for economists, but that's not exactly--that's for foreigners, you know. And it's really a separate operation. And the Clark Institute can't give an academic degree; Williams College does. So Williams faculty is deeply involved; Williams College is. And that's how this whole thing evolved, and it of course meant the new building, the art library, with great supply. Ours wasn't good enough. So that's how it all grew up.

MR. BROWN: And how did that sit with your art department, your people in the art department?

MR. FAISON: Well, we love it.

MR. BROWN: You thought it was a great thing?

MR. FAISON: Oh, sure, of course.

MR. BROWN: Separately endowed outside visiting professors?

MR. FAISON: That's right. And we participate in it, you see. Sure. I taught there many years, including this one. Not every--but many years.

MR. BROWN: The building, the first building at least, is quite a lavish thing, isn't it? Marble?

MR. FAISON: Um-hm. The other one is still more lavish but doesn't look anything. It's faced with South Dakota purple granite. That's more expensive than Vermont marble.

[Laughter]

MR. FAISON: But it provided the auditorium. It's one of the 10 finest art libraries in the country, I think, now, something like that. It's incredible.

MR. BROWN: There has been published this repertory of fine historical publications.

MR. FAISON: That's housee there, that's great.

MR. BROWN: Is that something that initiated there, or at least is--

MR. FAISON: I think it's--it may be because of Michael Rinehart, who was brought in as the librarian here. And he's awfully good--very, very able, was at E. Totty for awhile before. And he--I think his physical presence here is possibly--there was room for him. The story is it's eventually going to move to Washington to The National Gallery, but I'm not sure about that. I've heard it--heard it for several years, and it's still here.

MR. BROWN: Now, what effect did that have, say, on your undergraduate teaching--

MR. FAISON: Enormous, oh, enormous.

MR. BROWN: Clark had a very specialized teaching. And did students, undergraduates want to hop out there and take courses, or did this affect your curriculum at Williams?

MR. FAISON: Well, the courses that are given at--for the Clark program were for the most part given--not always, however, sometimes at Williams because of the innate--where the slides are and this kind of thing. And what

you have is a real opportunity for advanced students to participate, and a few can get in some of these courses. So that's good.

But all the courses profit from it. I mean, even the huge introductory course is taken out in sections of 20 and used and students in all courses write papers on something of the Clark. And the library is available to everybody except the 1–2 level. That's just too many people. So it's made an enormous difference, that plus coeducation coming about the same time. We are now, I think, the largest department at Williams College, believe it or not. If not, we've played tag with history or English.

MR. BROWN: Did coeducation affect your teaching?

MR. FAISON: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: The emphasis in your department quite a bit?

MR. FAISON: I don't know what you mean by "emphasis." I was charmed, delighted. I wondered why--I mean, in retrospect, why didn't I go teach at Wellesley or Vassar? I simply adore teaching women students. And the mixture is awfully good, awfully good. The boys work harder because the girls have a bad habit of working. It turns out the boys are just as bright, but we didn't used to get their minds so much as we do now. Or I should say "they do now," because I don't do much teaching anymore.

MR. BROWN: How was the Clarks' collection received? When you finally had it out there, how did it look? Did it look generally very fine, some extraordinarily good things? Very large numbers--

MR. FAISON: Well, it's something of a mixture. I mean, there are too many--this is my opinion. There are too many Renoirs. I don't know what they can do about it. There's not a single great Renoir. You know, I would trade all 30 of them for the *Déjeuner des Canotiers* in Washington. But you can't do that. It's not a great Renoir, but my gosh, it's--and then there were Monets and the other Impressionists, and then the minor--the minor ones are coming in now by gift and things. And they need a Caillebotte. They haven't got one, but they have a Guillaume, and they're doing things like that, quietly.

MR. BROWN: There's a room of Alfred Stevens.

MR. FAISON: Yeah. And then--but all the enemies of the Impressionists are there, too, you see. They work so you can fight the battle of the academy and Impressionism with the real people right in front of you. And then pretty good Old Masters of one kind or another. Some have been downgraded, but Reubens is not Reubens, it's a school. And the Rembrandt portrait is a school. But still, there are a lot of very good Dutch pictures and a lot of damn good Italian ones. They have, until recently, until they had to pay for this new building and heating it, which is a problem.

They tried to do one big purchase a year. So they got the seven-part 1300 Sienese triptych altar piece and the Fragonard portrait. And then the wonderful collection of late-nineteenth early-twentieth century prints that were about to go on the market in Chicago. And the Chicago Art Institute, which had helped to formulate the collection, couldn't come up with the money. And it had to be sold like that, and we got it. I mean, things like that are connected. So it's a fine new thing now.

MR. BROWN: There's also contemporary things and recent things.

MR. FAISON: Not much.

MR. BROWN: Not much?

MR. FAISON: Exhibitions are active on that.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. FAISON: No, because the idea is to respect Mr. Clark's wishes, pretty much. They bought a Bouillard, which is 1901 or something. There's a Gauguin with relief; they don't own it yet. They hope to. That's 1900, isn't it?

MR. BROWN: But generally, the chronology--

MR. FAISON: He hated Cézanne. They wouldn't have dared buy one in his lifetime. There isn't any to buy, I guess, now. There isn't any.

MR. BROWN: Did you get to know him at all?

MR. FAISON: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: What did he turn out to be like? How would you characterize him?

MR. FAISON: Well, you were a little cautious. He was so unpredictable, he had a terrible temper. But I helped him out. Finally, he said he liked very much being talked back to. And, you know, he said that Cézannes are worthless, I wouldn't have one in the place. I think I answered back. I said, "Well, that's your opinion. It's not mine. We disagree on that, Mr. Clark." "It's all right." Picasso, I should say not. Picky-ass Picasso, he called it. He wouldn't give him house room.

[Laughter]

They have some--one of the--some--one or two of the great prints of Shrizelle [phonetic], but that was after his death.

MR. BROWN: What was she like? Did she enter in on these things?

MR. FAISON: Rather cold, quite charming, beautifully mannered, beautifully dressed, with a tricorn hat, beautiful flower, stylish. Très Française. A little difficult, a little hard to crack. But he was fun. Profane as hell. I mean, and a fanny pincher. Oh, he was a blade, you know? He was a blade. And a great horseman. You know all about that. I mean, he--well, he was great--he had two passions. He had three brothers. One was a gentleman farmer up in Cooperstown. That's where that whole Cooperstown operation centers in that house, whatever, the museum. The family lived in Cooperstown quite a lot, other than New York City.

Steven Clark was a great art collector, and he was competing with him. And Ambrose was a horse fellow, and he was competing with him. So he comes out with collections quite a lot larger than Steven Clark, not the quality, though. And he comes up with the horse--the first American-bred horse that ever won the Epsom Derby, called Never Say Die. And his brother Ambrose couldn't come up with that.

And so you would find that one of the mixtures is, an awful lot of horse stuff among these pictures. Sometimes magnificent--I mean, beautiful, knockout, and sometimes rather more on the documentary sides, you see, sort of a mixture. But if the horses are by Degas, you bless him. So, what else can I tell you?

MR. BROWN: Well, what do you see as your next opportunity? You're finishing one up now upstairs.

MR. FAISON: Me, right now, I've got two things ahead of me. One is finishing upstairs, the book. I'm going to be guest curator for this opening that we have sometime in '83. And I am presently guest curator for a show to open next April in Vassar College called "Hudson Valley People, 1700 to 1900, Albany to Yonkers". And it's a good title because the river flows that way, and it's alphabetical, A to Y. And the show will be limited to the things that come from the area, or about the area. The people are, or the person who painted it is, of--there is not to be anything in there a portrait just because it represents somebody unless it's a good picture. They are all pretty good pictures.

MR. BROWN: There's going to be a distinct cohesiveness.

MR. FAISON: Right. There will be about 40-some pictures. About a third of the show is from the Albany Institute, which is taking the show after it leaves Vassar. Otherwise, we wouldn't have got it.

MR. BROWN: Are you still involved with the--you have been. You were on the Massachusetts Art Commission?

MR. FAISON: Well, I was at the beginning and served another term. But I haven't been on since.

MR. BROWN: That's been years ago. Well, I should have asked you a bit about that. Were you there when it--you were a founding member?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. There was a commission to come up with an idea, should they or shouldn't they? And we thought, yes, it would be a very good idea. And so it was done.

MR. BROWN: Is there anything you can say about that? Who was governor at that time, if you recall?

MR. FAISON: Probably Volpe.

MR. BROWN: This would be the early '60s, probably?

MR. FAISON: Yes. I think so. Even earlier. What I remember from serving on the commission, or I should say on the committee, is that I had to fight hard to get any money for western Massachusetts. And nobody--it was full of Boston people who had never traveled west of Framingham. I mean, it was serious. I finally said, "Look. I come down here. It's an awful long trip. And all the money is going to Boston. This is ridiculous. I want some money." So they gave us some for a project here. And you had to fight for that.

I said, "I think we should have a meeting in western Massachusetts. Why don't you all come our way once? See, the rest of the State there." The head of it at that time was Bob Gardner, who was one of the Gardners, and he ran the Corbusier Center at Harvard. And he said, "I think that's a good idea. Let's meet in Springfield." I said, "Mr. Gardner, I'm sorry to tell you, Springfield is only halfway to western Massachusetts." It's a true story. He wasn't even ashamed of himself.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: Did he ever get as far as at least Pittsfield?

MR. FAISON: They met in Springfield. I don't think they've ever as a group--

MR. BROWN: But you didn't stay with it too long?

MR. FAISON: Well, I was on this commission. I served for three years on that. The chairman when I was there was Jeff Wade. Wait. I may have been on two sessions. I think it may have been twice, two--

MR. BROWN: Who was he?

MR. FAISON: Jeff Wade is a lawyer and a very bright man, who is a trustee of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. He's a big-time lawyer, came from Cleveland, the Wade family that gave so much to the Cleveland Museum. Married the eldest daughter of Bill Vanderbilt. They live in Bedford, Massachusetts.

But there was another head that I was--I seem to remember three heads, so you can figure it out. One is Gardner. One is Jeff Wade. And the other was--his name escapes me. He was awfully able. He ran the Boston College of Art, not the Boston Museum School and not Boston University. It's a separate thing, a Boston College of Art, maybe still does, but I can't remember his name.

Well, I meant that most of the money should go to the Boston area because that's where people are, and so forth. But we weren't getting anything.

MR. BROWN: Did you see the role of such a council as being a very effective one, providing funds and technical advice to small groups?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. It's become--well, you see, I remember when the annual budget was $25,000. So what are you going to do, you see? Well, what's the figure now, a million or something?

MR. BROWN: Yeah, or more.

MR. FAISON: Or more. Yes.

MR. BROWN: You were interested in it because it could bring support, potentially at least?

MR. FAISON: The question is how much of it, what proportion of it should go into the performing arts? And most of it was going that way. And the things that--I mean, things have moved, I think, properly towards conservation. I mean, that's a real problem, now really giving grants and helping out museums, which particularly today is going to be more and more. And you know, I remember saying, "Well, look, this is wonderful, but surely if artists are starving and all that, really there is more to this picture than the present, current performing arts. Really, there is more to it." And there were others who felt the same way.

Two young people came to see us. At this moment we are on Joy Street. At least that's where it is now.

MR. BROWN: It's not now, but it had been, yeah.

MR. FAISON: Joy Street, and later Ashburnham Place, then wherever they are now. Okay. Joy Street. And there were two young people, Allen L. Somebody, began with an L. Both foreign names. They were representatives, state representatives, and young and very much interested in art and really helped push the budget up. The other one was Dukakis, long before anybody ever thought of him as governor. So it was that far ago.

MR. BROWN: Volunteer work of this sort, you've done quite a bit of, haven't you, from time to time? I mean, advisory groups such as this?

MR. FAISON: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: You're on the visiting committee at Harvard and on the visual arts way back in the '50s?

MR. FAISON: Well, that wasn't a visiting committee. But we'll talk about that in a minute.

MR. BROWN: It wasn't?

MR. FAISON: On the visiting committee at Princeton, Wheaton College, no longer either of those now. Mount Holyoke, I have been for years and still am very much interested. Well, occasionally consultations, Bowdoin College once about their new building and whole program.

MR. BROWN: You do this because you feel you have a duty, or you're just damn curious?

MR. FAISON: Damn curious and I enjoy it. And at least you get your expenses paid, and have an interesting time. No fee, of course not.

MR. BROWN: What about that committee on the visual arts?

MR. FAISON: Well, this was--here's another thing, what happened. I'm over in Europe, see. And as I said, you meet all these people. And I didn't talk so much about the Americans you meet. But at one point, I think it was when I--the night I arrived in London. And everybody who was connected with art somehow got put up in a Mews, had about three rooms up behind the street, up Charles Street in London--wonderful location. It was back in a Mews, Hayes Mews, you see.

And if there was room in the corner, that's where you got, because where did you go? And everybody started off there. And among the people around was John Nicholas Brown. I'd never met him before. We sat up all night talking, about 10 people--wonderful. And I saw him several times in the course of the year because he traveled around. I forget, but he was sort of big chief in monuments and arts and inspecting around, wore a uniform of some sort. And you didn't forget him because he was about eight feet tall, you know, marvelous man.

Well, I sort of kept in touch with him, in the most casual way, but liked him. And he was interested in what I was doing. And he knew Plaut and so forth. And he called up one time, and he said that, "I don't like what's going--I'm an overseer at Harvard. I don't think I like what's going on in the arts department as much as I used to like it, but--and I put up some money and I've got the Rockefeller Foundation to put up some money. We're going to have a commission." That's what he called it. "And I want you to be the executive secretary," just like that. You know, this is '54.

And I said, "Well, this is so sudden." He said, "Can you get--would you be interested?" I said, "Well, I think so. But wait a minute. I'm chairman of the department. This is for next fall?" I said, "Well, I'd have to get a substitute. I'd have to get the permission of the president, all kinds of things." He said, "Well, go try." I said, "All right. I'll try."

Well, the president knew about John Nicholas Brown. I think he was somewhat impressed. I think that didn't hurt. Although John Nicholas Brown was a Democrat and our president was very Republican, and he wasn't sure how serious John Nicholas Brown was. But it was Harvard, and Jim Baxter, after all, was master of Adams House at Harvard and so forth. And it was Harvard, and that was all right. So he said, "All right. You can get a substitute, go to it." So I did.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

MR. FAISON: So I had a half-year off and reported for duty at Harvard. And they put me up when I was sort of living at Harvard and coming home weekends for a term. And I had a place--oh, in that VIP house next to faculty club, that yellow old house, very trendy. I guess I was there quite a bit. And I had a secretary. We had a wonderful committee.

MR. BROWN: What more had Brown told you about this before you went there?

MR. FAISON: Only that there was money to look into the whole situation of the fine arts at Harvard.

MR. BROWN: Had you checked if it was this, with the knowledge at least of the faculty and so forth?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes. It was all quite open. This was--I'll clean up. And Mack Brown--do I mean Mack Brown? No. The dean of the college, that brilliant man who ended up as foreign counselor to Kennedy.

MR. BROWN: Bundy?

MR. FAISON: Bundy, "Mac" [McGeorge] Bundy.

MR. BROWN: Mac Bundy.

MR. FAISON: Was the dean of the college. And there was a sharp tack if I ever met one. And so it was under his local sponsorship. And he said, "We always put one faculty member on these things. And my choice is George

Wald. He's a biochemist, but you'll find out he's very interesting and interested." Well, we thought it was a very peculiar choice until we saw George Wald, long before he became a Nobel Prize winner, for heavens sake.

I'll skip to George Wald. He--I'll tell you the rest in a minute. He didn't say very much for quite awhile. We learned that he was--his biochemistry was focused on human vision, how the eye behaves. And I went to his office thinking I was going to a laboratory. And there may have been one. But in a room pretty nearly--a good generous size--it was crammed with books--I looked around, and there were all monographs on artists. The library was so much finer on art than mine I couldn't believe it.

I said, "Good God." He said, "Oh, yeah. I'm interested in art. I really am." Well, he came. He didn't say very much. When he said something, you paid attention. One day he came in and he said, "I just wrote a little piece with my thoughts." And this was an essay called *The Artist and the University.* And it was a passionate appeal for the university recognizing the importance of the living artist and adding one to its roster and doing something about it.

We published it as the centerpiece in the report. It was republished in the *Atlantic Monthly* as a special essay. When the report came out, of course, it meant great changes if they'd gone through. And everybody in the Fogg thought it was terrible. And they particularly thought this essay was terrible.

MR. BROWN: Can you get down to why?

MR. FAISON: Because they don't want living art around. I mean, now we're talking about 1954–5. This is after the great ones had retired, post Pope. We interviewed all those people, Sacks, and they all came and talked to them. They had all retired. This is before Sydney Friedberg arrives. And you can figure out in between. I don't know. They were all this way.

MR. BROWN: Very insular?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. And they didn't want anything--any fooling around with--they had Lux Feininger, the son of Lamal, way up in the corner in the top floor in a little cubbyhole, and he had five or six students, and that was it. I mean, it was very discreet up there.

MR. BROWN: When you interviewed, say, Sacks, what was his comments?

MR. FAISON: I wish I could tell you. I'd have to look it up. I took a lot of notes. But at any rate, if a report exists, you can see it. And I think they were fairly sympathetic to--we didn't--you know, we didn't say, "We have a plan." The plan was growing, you know. And the point was that we came up with a full-grown program in the studio. That's what we finally ended up with, that it should be built right next to the Fogg, and one open up into the other.

So the result of all this was the Carpenter Center. A man called up from Oregon and said, "My name is Carpenter. I've read this report. I want to give the building. It says here that it should be by a distinguished architect, and the committee doesn't say who." He said, "If I give it, it's got to be built by Le Corbusier. And that's the way it all happened.

Closed doors between the two, you know, to this day except for people like Seymour Sly, who at that time was quietly on my side, but he wasn't on tenure. And he and I had lovely talks together. I never--he said, "You can't say a word." I couldn't. But he was very sympathetic, of course. Some things have changed a great deal.

MR. BROWN: At that time for Harvard, it was more difficult than almost any place else, was it, to consider this?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes. Absolutely. Well, I was sent on a trip all over the country. I chose my own itinerary, to get ideas on how things were done elsewhere. We thought that they should be interested. I think people were except the Harvard Art Department. They were it, you see. And you could hardly--there was no way to improve on what they were doing.

Well, it was very, very good graduate training. But the undergraduate side was missing something. It was being done very seriously. Other members were John Walker, then the director of The National Gallery, Wolf Stekhouse [phonetic], Donald Onslager, who was marvelous. And of course, theater came into it, too, and the germ of the Lode [phonetic] Theater came out of this. And Charles Sawyer, I think, was on at the time; you'd need to find the roster.

MR. BROWN: But you had a good deal of backing from the administration?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes, very much. And so all this visiting and talking and discussing what next, I would take notes and then they would read them over and then [inaudible], change a little bit, this and that. And I wrote a draft of the report. And the finishing touches were in the second part of the year I was teaching. Maybe--how I

did it, I think I was back teaching and going back and forth. And finally it was published in '56 over the dead bodies of a good many people like Leonard Updike. He just snorted, "Oh, no way." All along, every word was wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong.

MR. BROWN: What sort of things did [inaudible]?

MR. FAISON: That there should ever be any--

MR. BROWN: Studio art?

MR. FAISON: Studio art.

MR. BROWN: Did they think that Pope's course was enough at that time?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. Actually, they really thought that that was probably a mistake in the first place. Artie Pope was one of the best people I interviewed. He was superb, really. But that was a fascinating experience. So I suppose that's why I've been asked once in awhile--well, Bowdoin College in '68, I spent a week up there in midwinter because they were planning a new building and a new program and all that stuff.

MR. BROWN: Was that pretty clear sailing up there? I mean, they wanted something?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: What practical suggestions?

MR. FAISON: And I wrote a big report and I got paid a fee for that, a rather nice one. And that was private torture for the chief trustee of the place, down in the law office of New York, and all very interesting. And most of--and most of what was suggested came through. Of course, I think that whole place is superb now.

MR. BROWN: Do you find in general that meeting with key people--or like you mentioned, John Nicholas Brown or Bundy the dean at the time, or this trustee--this is what gets things rolling?

MR. FAISON: True. Right.

MR. BROWN: But you bring into it also your many years of experience as a teacher on the students maybe in the end, what is apparently, supposedly the school exists for?

MR. FAISON: That's right. That's right. You know, this guy--his name was Curtis--he was a wonderful person. And he'd listen to you which is why I thought he was so wonderful because sometimes some of those people don't. He listened and said, "No, I don't know anything about this. Now, tell me what's made it so [inaudible] from the teaching point of view. And I said, "Well, this is what I think."

So Phil Beam [phonetic] was kind of fluttering around the side. He said, "I don't want to tell you anything. I don't want to prejudice you or any of that." But he drove me all the way into Portland to the airplane. And he told me everything he wanted me to say. Well, I said some of it.

[Laughter]

It was very funny to me. Oh, he told me plenty.

MR. BROWN: He wanted something more [inaudible].

MR. FAISON: Yes, yes. Well, all right. But that got--some of it got in, some of it--and if it didn't, he had every right--you know, I mean, he's there. He could say what he wants. I didn't have to say--how he said it, if I agreed with it.

MR. BROWN: Sometimes when you are brought in from outside of it, there could be a little resentment of it in the home.

MR. FAISON: That's right. That's right.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: All these personality issues, which are important at the time, but you have to remember, people are going to change. Now--and all these people are dead.

MR. BROWN: You have reckoned your own personality has been one that has been a pretty good listener, quite affable, and yet you have a definite trust, I think, in what you do and say.

MR. FAISON: Well, the way I've been talking today I would--

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MR. FAISON:--I've not been a very good listener today, though. I never talked so much in my life. But I did try to listen. I think it's very important.

MR. BROWN: But as you compare yourself with your peers, I mean, do you feel you're a good mediator type? You're a good person--

MR. FAISON: Not bad. Not bad.

MR. BROWN: --at getting things done?

MR. FAISON: Well, within limits. I mean, I don't like to--I chose long ago not to operate at the highest planes, you know. I'd be very uncomfortable. I turned down two jobs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I don't think I would have been happy, really, really.

MR. BROWN: You think the work was too powerful?

MR. FAISON: I could have been Curator of Medieval Art under--after Rorimer, when he was director. I was very fond of him. But I wouldn't want to work for him. And then I could have been the Director of Education. I didn't want to do that.

MR. BROWN: There could have been just too many difficult personalities?

MR. FAISON: [Inaudible]

MR. BROWN: Powerful outside influences?

MR. FAISON: Well, I want to teach students. And you don't do that if you're Director of Education at the Metropolitan. You're like being superintendent of the state schools or something. I like to teach. I have a son who has the same bad habit. He's teaching in public school. He went to Saint Paul's and Harvard, and he said, "I want to go into public education." He teaches in the junior high school in Concord, Massachusetts, and he's a star, and he does not want to be the superintendent. So he's starving, but loving it.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: And you're going to continue to love it--consultant when you can, as a writer? What are you going to spend most of your time doing, do you think?

MR. FAISON: Well, I might write the book that I've always wanted to on German Baroque. I don't know if I ever will. Last summer I did four fairly meaty articles on--for the forthcoming *McMillan Encyclopedia of Architects* on four of the great architects. And then I've been teaching that subject this fall, so as I said to the students, I'm in better shape than I've ever been. I'm just bursting with information that you don't want to hear. And it's going to be harder because I've got to get rid of all that stuff for you, keep to the important things.

But I'm--you know, you wonder what happens afterward. I may teach some more; I don't know. I mean, money is giving out on the graduate program. They're going to have to cut. I don't know what's going to happen. I'm 74, you know what that means. But as invitations come, I'm waiting for invitations. I'll probably accept them.

[Laughter]

One thing that we're very proud of at Williams--and that means I'm very proud, and Whitney Stoddard and Bill Pearson, those of us who have been here awhile--is the number of people that have gone into the arts, all our students. Today a few--I mentioned the Marxist artists, that's a very small list. But I wasn't thinking about them. But quite a number of distinguished teachers and the remarkable number per capita, for Williams' size, are museum directors. And I thought I'd just mention that as of today, the directors of the following are Williams students who presumably majored in art: Chicago Art Institute, Los Angeles County, Toledo Museum of Art, the number-two person on The National Gallery of Art in Washington, Buffalo. There are some more, but I'm getting this out of my head. Kirk Varnedoe's professor of New York University, and already--he's only 33 or 34--he's already a major authority on Rodin and Caillebotte and things like that.

And we have other teachers. Pittsburgh is another museum, just got that. Gordon Washburn is a year older than I am, was Buffalo, then Providence, and then Pittsburgh, and then Asia House, where he retired. Before him--this would be Mr. Weston's time entirely--is E.P. Richardson, who was Detroit and Winterthur and wrote a good book on American painting. James Thrall Soby was the Class of '28 at Williams. He studied no art at all,

curiously. Bought reproductions on Spring Street of Maxfield Parrish, those pretty girls swinging, you know? And got bored with them, wondered why he was bored. Never paid much attention to Williams, but seemed to love the place. At any rate, he turned out to be very important in the Museum of Modern Art and was very helpful to us over the years, gave us things, [inaudible] paintings, [inaudible] painting, things like that.

And then there were some collectors like Steven Payne of Boston who majored in economics, never took any art. Hardly knew I existed. Got hit with polio in the Korean wartime, in bed read John Canaday's *Seminars on Art.* That's where he started. And so it goes. All out of one small college. This is in no sense a complete list, but I just thought you'd be interested. That's one of the nice things that happened.

MR. BROWN: I thin it is by any measure quite a concentration, isn't it?

MR. FAISON: Yes, it is.

MR. BROWN: It really is. I think probably quite a lot owing to Weston and you continuing the development of the art department, the studio, the museum.

MR. FAISON: Wouldn't it be nice to think so? At any rate, we now have a visiting committee of the museum, and many of these people joined it and come, and very helpful indeed. We have one very distinguished dealer, too, named David Tunick in New York--prints. Probably the finest dealer around in this country; I think that's right. I believe that's true. And he was not an art major, but he took some courses with me, and we became very good friends.

And it was all a big surprise, but as soon as he finished college he began going around the country hawking rather poor reproductions of modern art all around, and then a little bit better stuff. And then Eleanor Sayre got hold of him in the Boston Museum, and sat him down, looked him straight in the eye, and said, "David, you should be ashamed of yourself selling this stuff. You should stop today. And I'll tell you what to do. You go to New York and get yourself in the print room of the Metropolitan Museum for one year and go into selling serious prints." He came to see me about it, and I said, "Can you afford it?" He said yes. I said, "Well, I'll write you a letter to Hyatt Mayer, which won't hurt." And Hyatt Mayer just lapped him up, they couldn't be more different.

He did spend a year in the Metropolitan print room. The next thing you know, he opens up and was first on the west side of Riverside Drive area. And now he has an entire four-story house that he lives in one block from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, if you please. That's a nice story.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MR. FAISON: Okay. Shut off the machine.

[END TAPE 2, SIDE B]

MR. BROWN: This is October - . This is an interview--what are you doing?

FEMALE VOICE: Testing. Nothing.

MR. BROWN: The interviewer. October 27th, 1981.

MR. FAISON: Oh, you want me to say anything?

MR. BROWN: Yes. This is an interview with Lane Faison at Williamstown, Massachusetts, Robert Brown, the interviewer. And we can begin by talking about your beginning. You were born in Washington, 1907. Is your family from there, or how did you happen to--

MR. FAISON: My mother was from there. My father was from Faison, North Carolina.

MR. BROWN: Oh, the family name.

MR. FAISON: And he was U.S. Army. And between stations, we would tend to return to my grandfather's house on Massachusetts Avenue, where I was born. My mother and her mother were from Washington.

MR. BROWN: What were some of your early memories of growing up? Did you grow up in Washington?

MR. FAISON: By no means. My memories are we moved once a year.

MR. BROWN: Oh, Army life, huh?

MR. FAISON: Army life. Army brat.

MR. BROWN: And your father was forever being posted to a different place?

MR. FAISON: Correct.

MR. BROWN: What sort of things was he doing then in the Army when you were a small boy?

MR. FAISON: Well, he was in the infantry, and he was--I first remember him as a major. He was 47 when I was born, so he was already well along. And then he got to be lieutenant colonel, colonel, brigadier general, acting major general in World War I, and trained a division, and finally retired in 1924 as the grade of brigadier general. His last station was Governors Island. And after that we moved across the harbor to Columbia Heights in Brooklyn, and I went to school. For the first time in my life I went to a school for three successive years before coming to college--nine schools altogether.

MR. BROWN: When your father would be posted someplace, you would be put in a school?

MR. FAISON: Oh, sure, yeah. I went to three different schools in Washington at three different times, you see.

MR. BROWN: What kind of a--did you get a fairly good education, or did your parents supplement it at home?

MR. FAISON: Well, I don't know. I can't answer that. I thought I got a very good education. I learned a lot when I came to Williams I never knew before.

MR. BROWN: Did you have any particular interests as a child? Were you pretty outgoing?

MR. FAISON: No. I never had a chance to make a friend. We always moved, you see. And I made friends at Williams for the first time, I would say. I was interested in ships in New York Harbor because, from Governors Island, to go to school at the far end of Brooklyn every day, every school day I would cross New York Harbor from Governors Island to South Ferry and back again. So I learned--I love New York Harbor. I could even make a--I could even put one on for you with different kinds of whistles, but that isn't what you came to tell me about--ask me about.

You know [WHISTLES]. I can put the whole harbor on for you. I love it.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: You had a pretty happy childhood, did you?

MR. FAISON: I think so.

MR. BROWN: Despite the fact you moved around so much?

MR. FAISON: I think so. I would say so.

MR. BROWN: Did you show any interest--well, in the arts when you were a child?

MR. FAISON: I would say absolutely not. But the year before college, my father, who was afflicted with arthritis, had been--who had been retired--had been advised to go to Europe to take cures. And rather--I think I was dragged kicking and screaming to Europe. But I had one year in Europe before college, and that's what did it. And specifically, Chartres Cathedral, where I was taken by one of my schoolteachers, and I didn't even know what it was going to be. He said, "We're going to Chartres today," and I said, "What's that?" That's where it all started.

And in later life I have taken young people to Chartres and refused to say one word until they'd been inside. Then they can ask questions.

MR. BROWN: Does that work with you?

MR. FAISON: That worked with me.

MR. BROWN: What was your reaction when you got in there yourself?

MR. FAISON: Well, something short of the conversion of Saint Paul. I don't know. That's the best I can say. I'll never get over it. Something like that should happen to you, you know?

MR. BROWN: But at that point, you don't remember being specifically sensitive to architecture or museums or anything?

MR. FAISON: No, no, no.

MR. BROWN: What do you suppose it was about Chartres that--

MR. FAISON: I wish I could tell you. The fact that I can't tell you is the answer.

MR. BROWN: Where did you live at that time, in Europe?

MR. FAISON: Well, we were in Switzerland for awhile. And I learned bad French from what I'd taken in school. But I learned French from bad Swiss French. And then we--then I went with my mother--I'm only 16 at this point--a couple of months in Italy. And there was a friend who turned up that knew a lot about art, and that helped. And then I planned a trip with my mother and sister through Southern France while my father was at Vichy being ruined by the waters instead of helped. And we ended up three–four months in Paris, where I saw a great deal of a young gent my age and learned better French.

MR. BROWN: Now, was your mother interested in your seeing art?

MR. FAISON: Yes, she was. She was.

MR. BROWN: What was her background and interests?

MR. FAISON: Well, she was a daughter of a successful physician in Washington and been to a nice finishing school, later became a college [inaudible] and seminary. I remember a book that she--later on that she showed me in later years, published about 1896. And it did have the 12 greatest paintings ever painted, one to twelve. And most of them were Dominiquino [phonetic] and Carracci and people like that, and Karlo Delphi--by no means Piero della Francesca or Masaccio or anything--or God forgive us, not Cézanne. There was mostly seventeenth century Italians, yes, Leonardo da Vinci, yes Raphael. It was all laid out, but all wrong, of course. She had some interest.

MR. BROWN: But she didn't attempt to form your tastes?

MR. FAISON: No, no.

MR. BROWN: You were simply--

MR. FAISON: I attempted to form hers, and I failed.

MR. BROWN: Oh, you did?

MR. FAISON: Yes.

MR. BROWN: You mean as a child?

MR. FAISON: Yes.

MR. BROWN: When you'd go to museums and things?

MR. FAISON: Yes, yes.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: What do you remember excited you that you tried to make her appreciate?

MR. FAISON: Oh, things like John Ho [phonetic]. I responded to that rather rapidly, I think. You know, in an innocent sort of way, but she said it didn't look like real things. And I said, "That's just the point." Never mind.

MR. BROWN: Had it been decided that you would go on to college and where you would go?

MR. FAISON: It had been decided I was going on to college. I was an art student. I always got good marks. And I was very much interested in my studies. My father wanted me to go to West Point. I looked him--I think the day I grew up, sort of speaking, was when he said that and I looked him straight in the eye and I said, "Do you think I would make an Army officer?" And I saw him quail. Now, he's 68 years old and I'm 16 or something like that. And I knew I was in. And he said, "Go anywhere you want," bless his heart.

I was all signed, sealed, and delivered for Princeton, where my uncle had gone. And during the year abroad, I corresponded with two classmates. And by pure accident, the one that went to Princeton, who was rather dour, wrote terrible letters about Princeton. And the one who went here was happy-go-lucky and said it was the most wonderful place in the world. And quite a few students from my--classmates from my school had come here, though I'd never set foot in the place. And I decided to go to Williams.

MR. BROWN: You mean, this is your school in Europe?

MR. FAISON: No, the school in Brooklyn, where I'd finally graduate. Yeah. But during the year between school and college, I changed plans, which you could do in those days--no problem.

MR. BROWN: How did you find it when you came here, Williams?

MR. FAISON: Well, it was love at first sight. And the first time I ever stayed put, really, except those last three years of school when we were living in Brooklyn. And I felt very much at home, adored the place--had a wonderful teacher. There was no art major. There were only four--two years worth of courses given by one person, Karl Weston, who was a superb teacher, with great taste and sensibility.

And about sophomore year, I guess it was--you couldn't take it freshman year, but you--actually, you were supposed to take it junior year, start off art in junior year, art history. There was no studio. And the--oh, I said--I went to see him and said, "I've had a year in Europe, and couldn't I start sooner?" And he said, "Well, you've got to--you can't do it freshman year. But I'll see what I can do." So he got me in sophomore year. And then as senior year, I had a private course with him, which you could do. And that's the way it was.

But in that very first year, one day, a blinding flash hit me, this is what I want to do. Never had any change of thought since.

MR. BROWN: You mean you wanted to study and go into art?

MR. FAISON: I wanted to study art history and do what Karl Weston was doing. And that's what I did.

MR. BROWN: What was he like, Karl Weston?

MR. FAISON: Well, he was a highly intelligent, cultivated, much-traveled, sophisticated gentleman, who had actually been teaching Romance literature and languages, and had been retooled, thank God, by being given a couple of years leave of absence. He'd studied at Princeton and Johns Hopkins, and started off art history here. And he was a remarkable teacher.

MR. BROWN: How do you account for his effectiveness as a teacher? Of what did it consist?

MR. FAISON: Well, a passionate interest in what he was talking about; the fact that he had seen what he was talking about; he'd been there. He didn't talk about it unless he knew it. And he had a natural responsiveness to the forms of art. And way back in 1926–7–8 that I'm talking about, he was wildly excited about Cézanne, which was unusual, at least. That wouldn't be true of Harvard or metropolitan areas, but in Williamstown that was something. That was something.

MR. BROWN: Did you share his enthusiasm for Cézanne?

MR. FAISON: Instantly. Instantly.

MR. BROWN: Why do you suppose you did like Cézanne?

MR. FAISON: I suppose for the same reason I like Jano [phonetic]. They have a lot in common. Also, reading Roger Fry helped a very great deal. Students don't like Roger Fry today; they call him a formalist critic, which means that they are not responding to forms, as I think they should. They're responding to subject matter and iconography, and that's all very well. But the forms are the basis. And Roger Fry's book on Cézanne, very difficult to read, is what I think people should cut their teeth on.

MR. BROWN: And you did?

MR. FAISON: And I did. I was lucky. And it bores me sick when I hear young ones say, "Well, that's formalist criticism."

MR. BROWN: Now, what was Weston's teaching procedure?

MR. FAISON: Well, he had slides, of course, no color in those days. Every student of the time that I've known--there are a great many that sat in his classes--we all agree that we visualize the color of Titian. God knows how he did it. We knew the color of Titian. He did have some color reproductions--rather good ones, those you'd bring out and tack up on the walls. But all slides were black and white. And when I came back here to teach in 1936, there were 9,500 slides altogether, and two color slides.

And Bill Pearson, who was appointed here in 1939 or '40, was avant-garde in getting--he made color slides, bless his heart. And he was on our staff, and he started us off. We were way ahead--I taught at Harvard in the

summer of '54 and took a tray, a big tray of color slides down in my summer course on modern art. And in no time flat, in the basement of the Fogg--I was getting larger and larger crowds. And there was a bright guy I knew and I was talking to. And I said, "What is this all about?" And he said, "My God, you're using color slides. Nobody has seen them around here. The word is getting around." I think they're probably terrible slides, but at any rate.

MR. BROWN: They wouldn't trust those.

MR. FAISON: We did the best we could.

MR. BROWN: But here at Weston in those days you really couldn't get hold of color.

MR. FAISON: There weren't any. There weren't any.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. But he apparently was so eloquent that he was able to describe--

MR. FAISON: That's right. I often wonder what Charles Elliot Norton did. I'd like to know, you know. He was the first great teacher of art history, cousin of the president. What in God's name did he do? You know, he didn't even have decent color slides. They were those horrible lantern things, hand-painted or whatever. It was interesting. I'd like to know more.

MR. BROWN: So Weston probably had to be quite a good platform lecturer, didn't he?

MR. FAISON: Oh, he was--yes. Very good indeed, I mean, a fine speaker.

MR. BROWN: And when you had your independent study in your last year, of what did that consist?

MR. FAISON: Well, we dreamed it up together. And it was the history of sculpture, as far as I could take it, because he had lectured primarily on painting and on architecture of different periods, and not much had been done with sculpture. So the poor man--I would write 20 pages a week and read it to him--read them to him once a week. And that went on for one year.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: That was an independent course. And I did all--well, I won't say I did all the work. I think he did quite a lot of work having to listen to me. But at any rate, I learned how to write in the process, somewhat. It was marvelous practice. And I read books, one after the other, you know, put together--it's all worthless now--but what I learned was important.

MR. BROWN: It was worthless because the information is out of date?

MR. FAISON: No. I mean it was all very elementary. I mean, for God's sake, don't ever publish those 20 pages a week. I mean, they were ridiculous. But it was summarizing what I had found.

MR. BROWN: As in painting, so also in sculpture, in architecture, was Weston very interested in things going on at the time?

MR. FAISON: Not quite at the time. I think that's wrong.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MR. FAISON: He was--I feel the same thing. In 1951–2–3, I was art editor, art critic of *The Nation.* I came down--I went down to New York once a month and wrote a column. Somewhat trained to what was going on by Clement Greenberg, whom I succeeded in this position. In the sense that I was feeling that I was really with it as to what was going on, what was important and innovative and new in '51, '52–3--I think Mr. Weston was not that connected. Now we're in 1981, and I feel somewhat lost. I do not--I mean, I do keep up, but I don't feel the excitement that I felt then. Is it age, or, as I prefer to think, is it a decline in what's going on? I leave it at the question. I think there's a decline in what's going on.

MR. BROWN: But Mr. Weston--you did look into, say, his latest Rodin in sculpture?

MR. FAISON: Rodin, Cézanne.

MR. BROWN: Or in architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright?

MR. FAISON: No. Not yet, not yet.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MR. FAISON: McKinney, White--we didn't do much with contemporary architecture. It was more Medieval. He didn't teach it. It was Medieval and Renaissance, and not so much Baroque either.

MR. BROWN: What about Victorian? Was that really not looked at at all?

MR. FAISON: He didn't touch it. I didn't know anything about it. I remember feeling it was all horrible. We were reacting against it. That's all I remember. We didn't study it.

MR. BROWN: Now, your art studies were surely not your only studies here. But were they the predominant ones?

MR. FAISON: Well, they couldn't be because they were only four courses. And in those days we took five courses each term, which five times--40 courses. And--

MR. BROWN: It was about 10 percent of your entire course load.

MR. FAISON: So I had to major in something else. I majored in philosophy, which was interesting, and I learned a lot from it. I don't--when I went to Harvard as a graduate student, I was considerably behind the equivalent people coming out of Harvard. But--well, you catch up somehow.

MR. BROWN: But you left Williams with a good deal of intellectual curiosity.

MR. FAISON: A great deal, I suppose. Literature, music--such as there was, not very much then--and a great deal of philosophy.

MR. BROWN: Was this a fairly intense campus, as an undergraduate? Do you recall a lot of discussion and lecture?

MR. FAISON: If you'd--nothing like now. And it was a rather gentle pace. If you wanted to be interested, there was superb faculty. It was not the thing to do. And maybe that was the advantage to the smaller group, like me, that was interested, you know.

MR. BROWN: You mean, in other words, the faculty--

MR. FAISON: Full time of anybody you wanted at any time.

MR. BROWN: They were pleased.

MR. FAISON: Marvelous, marvelous. And first-class people.

MR. BROWN: There were a good many fellows there then--I mean, students who were taking it easy? They were genteel?

MR. FAISON: The word is "gentleman's C."

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: It's now "gentleman's B-plus," you know. It was awful. I mean, everybody--if they don't get A's they scream bloody murder.

MR. BROWN: Really?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes.

MR. BROWN: And they can get a B-plus--

MR. FAISON: They'll even scream if they get an A-minus. They think it should be higher because--

MR. BROWN: It's so devalued, it seems, huh?

MR. FAISON: Almost. You would say so. But they're thinking of what comes next and how they stood in their class and all this is very important these days. Because what's--the job market is so different.

MR. BROWN: Sure. When you were here, there were still many rather relaxed young gentlemen.

MR. FAISON: A very great many. That was the tone.

MR. BROWN: But you were not?

MR. FAISON: I was not relaxed.

MR. BROWN: You had a curiosity. And what did you want to do when you left here?

MR. FAISON: Well, I told you. I found out in sophomore year--teach art history.

MR. BROWN: Teach it?

MR. FAISON: Teach it.

MR. BROWN: You wanted to turn right around --

MR. FAISON: I wanted to be the teacher. Absolutely. Absolutely.

MR. BROWN: But had you planned before you left here, then, with Mr. Weston, what you would be doing? What were your options if you wanted to go on in art history? This would be 1929.

MR. FAISON: What were the options? Well, it was a relatively simple world. And there were plenty of jobs. And art history was beginning to expand beyond the big universities. So there was going to be plenty of opportunity to teach.

MR. BROWN: Even with a B.A. in art history?

MR. FAISON: Oh, no, no, no. Oh, no. I mean, you could have gotten a job in a school or something. But if you wanted to be a--no. So I went to Harvard. That was generally agreed as a good place. I mean, sure it was the leading place or one of the leading places. And just before I graduated, I met Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., who was teaching at Princeton and long ago had graduated from Williams. And in those days there were fraternities, and he happened to belong to my fraternity. And in that way you tended to see a certain group of people.

And he--I was startled when I was introduced to him. And I said, "Are you the one who wrote the history of Italian painting that we all read?" And he said, "The same." And I said, "Would you sign my book?" And he said, "Certainly." And so he wrote, "Inscribed at the author's insistence for S. Lane Faison Junior," which I thought was very sweet of him. And he asked me what I was up to. I told him. And he said, "Well, Harvard's a great place. But if you think about coming down to Princeton, I'd love--come down and study with me."

Well, I wasn't quite ready for Harvard. I really hadn't had enough courses. And I remember going to Arthur Kingsley Porter, which was, you know, way out, difficult, in between Medieval Art, Marovingen, Carovingen [phonetic], that sort of thing, about which I knew absolutely nothing. And I simply didn't know what he was talking about. I wasn't ready for that sort of thing.

And maybe the big city, I wasn't quite ready for yet; I'm not sure. But I did move from Harvard to Princeton.

MR. BROWN: But you stayed at Harvard for a bit?

MR. FAISON: One year.

MR. BROWN: And you did an M.A. there?

MR. FAISON: I got an M.A., which you could get in those days by getting B's or better in every course. Well, that was no trouble.

MR. BROWN: But you studied with [inaudible], you said, with Kingsley Porter?

MR. FAISON: I studied with--well, I dropped out of that. I just tried it, and I wasn't ready for it. Well, there were a great many courses, as there still are--lecture courses primarily for graduates and advanced undergraduates. And the graduates all sat in the front row. Tom Walker and I sat next to each other in Chandler's course and so forth.

And George Chase--I took two courses with him. And Leonard Updike in Baroque architecture, which I knew nothing about--Baroque Italian architecture. And they put me in a studio course of Arthur Pope, which opened my eyes to a very great many things. And that is why, years later, I introduced studio as part of the art program at Williams College--something of a battle over the faculty, but we got it in. And now it's nearly 50 percent of our program.

Well, those are the main people that I studied with at Harvard. Then I moved to Princeton for two more years.

MR. BROWN: Back to Harvard, though. Were the people--can you characterize them as teachers?

MR. FAISON: Chandler Post was, I thought, extraordinary and very kind and interested, delivered beautiful speeches. He looked rather Prussian. And he would pinch his sinuses, both his eyebrows together this way, and close his eyes, and walk up and down, and out it would come. And I loved this man. But I must say this, that I was sick for a couple of days and I wanted to make up the lecture. And I was told, "Well, read his book." And the shock was, there it was. He'd memorized his book, for God's sake. I'm sure he kept it up to date. But still, there was the same--you know, I'd look back to something I'd heard. I wondered about that. I did wonder about that.

In later life, when we managed to get some good Spanish paintings, he came up to Williams, when I was running the museum, and he couldn't have been nicer or more responsive or anything else. But there was that funny feeling. George Chase was most informal and did not teach from slides. It was a smaller course, Classical archeology--Greek, then Roman. He'd come in. Attendants would bring in truckloads of huge volumes. And I don't know how we always--how we managed to see the pictures. But this was a wonderful way to learn. And then we were taken to the Boston Museum frequently. And it was the sense of the object there, which was not true of Post, not true.

MR. BROWN: This was really about the first time you'd had a teacher who was constantly bringing you to the object, was it?

MR. FAISON: Yes, I would say so. Karl Weston would have, but I mean, there was nothing--there wasn't much here.

MR. BROWN: But that was pretty exciting?

MR. FAISON: That was very exciting. That was very exciting.

MR. BROWN: Would he ask you students to describe the object or analyze it as--guess what it was, or things of that sort?

MR. FAISON: No, no. I would say not. I don't think he was a great teacher. But he was a good man, and he certainly knew his stuff, and you learned a lot. No, he's not the kind of Socratic teacher that I think is the key, or a key.

MR. BROWN: And what about Pope, Arthur Pope?

MR. FAISON: Arthur Pope, as other people would agree, was the only man we ever knew who could lecture while he was asleep--while he was asleep. Unbelievable, and golden words poured out. This was a nonhistorical course in seeing. I mean, read his book. And a great deal of history and wisdom in it, and instead of emphasis on names and dates and influences, it was on the object. And that was a real course on the object.

Now, you only need one of those courses taught by a very great teacher. You don't need to major in it. But the weakness in so many places is, there is no such course.

MR. BROWN: There was a course in conassociate and physical analysis?

MR. FAISON: Not so much physical, but certainly conassociate. And, you know, he would take apart a Titian composition for you. I mean, did you see this? Did you notice that the dangling arm of Christ in *Christ Taken to the Tomb* in the Louvre by Titian that that piece of drapery over there echoes this and reinforces it, and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera? Did you see all that? And I think he was sound asleep when he said it. The voice droned on. It was a nice voice.

And then once in awhile, the slide operator would go to sleep. And I would wake Art Pope up, and he would go back and wake that guy up and start in again. We were all wide awake and didn't miss a word.

[Laughter]

I gave you my notes.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Yes.

MR. FAISON: Very enthusiastic. I didn't take a museum course. I had nothing to say--probably might have, would have if I had stayed there. But I wasn't headed towards the museum, in my opinion. I think the best thing that's going to happen to you in this field, apart from the practice of art, which is not for me, is some combination of museum and teaching, which in these days means--I mean, everything is getting so specialized, you know. But I was advised--art departments, when I'm asked about a museum, I say, "For God's sake, don't make it. It's got to be a person who can teach at least one course and be in there with the faculty. I mean, you don't want to split." But it's getting harder and harder because people are trained to be museum people, and

people are trained to be art historians with, often, no sense of object. And I like the bridge I was selecting.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Um-hm. Do you think it's fairly unfortunate there's been this specialization?

MR. FAISON: I suppose it's inevitable. I don't know. I don't know. But I am not one of those that thinks that a museum person automatically is equipped to teach. Teaching is a profession. A lot of museum people are under the misapprehension that they can lecture the students. They may be able to lecture to an audience of their members, but that's something else again. Talking to students is--you'd better be right there. Don't talk down to them or at them.

MR. BROWN: And your interest continued through this year at Harvard in eventually becoming a teacher?

MR. FAISON: Right.

MR. BROWN: Had you some inklings that you would be a good teacher? Had you taught at all?

MR. FAISON: No. But, you know, you'd have to make reports later on. And I enjoyed doing it.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: And--well, there was a graduate club at Princeton and a club of us, and we'd have to talk to each other. So you got some practice.

MR. BROWN: And so you had at Williams, in reading to Mr. Weston, right?

MR. FAISON: Well, I hadn't thought of it, yeah. I was reading to him.

MR. BROWN: But I mean, you had to express it.

MR. FAISON: Yeah, I had to express it. I think that writing was very, very important, very important. I didn't realize how important it might be. I mean, I couldn't ask--Mr. Weston was not available to lecture to me three times a week for one year. I mean, I had to--this honors course. I'm doing the work, and he is supervising. That's what it amounted to.

MR. BROWN: So in the fall of '30, you took up Mr. Mather's offer and went to Princeton?

MR. FAISON: I went to Princeton and studied with Mather and Morey and Ernest DuWald and George Rowley [phonetic]. And I attended lots of courses, you know, all new stuff and this and that architecture. But it was primarily work under Mather and Morey.

MR. BROWN: And it was quite a large department, was it?

MR. FAISON: No, no. It was quite small.

MR. BROWN: It was several people?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes. It was an important college department. And they kept it to something like 15 graduate students, or even a dozen, I guess it was. And Freddy Stolman taught sculpture. Bert Franz--I mean, these are all pretty distinguished names. And they all taught some undergraduate work. Some taught--there was no split. There wasn't a graduate faculty and then an undergraduate--far from it. And they were active scholars. It was something like a slightly enlarged Williamstown.

MR. BROWN: At Princeton, you went there to study a certain area or particularly to study with Mather and Morey?

MR. FAISON: I went there primarily to study with Mather in Italian painting. And everybody studied with Morey, and he was a very big figure. And this was a little erudite, too, a la Arthur Kingsley Porter, early Christian, the beginnings of Byzantine, and such. But that's just what you did. I mean, you were crazy if you didn't. I mean, Harvard was a bigger department than Princeton, and if you didn't study with Morey you were out of your mind.

MR. BROWN: Because he was the most prestigious figure?

MR. FAISON: Yes, he was. And Mather--I think I got him his last years of teaching. But Mather had a great sense of the object. He ran the art museum. Morey, you see, you studied--the emphasis was not so much on the object, because iconography and things of that sort--and that very important and insufferable Princeton index, you used. That is, I was trying to find out the date, et cetera, of a certain processional silver-gilt cross. And it had a semblance of the evangelists. And the Saint John held a scroll, and the other three held books.

Well, why is that or how was that or when was that done, and so forth? Well, you looked through Photostats by the hundreds, with this in mind, you see. And the sense of the object was not part of that course.

MR. BROWN: You were simply looking for resemblances to the one you were studying?

MR. FAISON: That's right. And you could do it through Photostats, mind you. And I wrote a long article in the *Art Bulletin*, finally, about that. And later, I saw the cross in the Vatican, and instantly thought, "Well, I should have seen that cross before I started. It would have been a very different article."

MR. BROWN: Why?

MR. FAISON: Well, it had color. It had sheen. It had imperfections. It had all kinds of things that had nothing to do with iconography. It might have been a forgery. It wasn't. But you know, I was not--I didn't write it with a sense of the object. And the things I was comparing it to were all done in photographs, and what were they like? I never really knew, you see. But the big article I also did in the *Art Bulletin*, thanks to Mather, on all the frescos in the church, the big church in San Gimignano [phonetic], [inaudible] I had been there, spent a lot of the summer working on--I knew what I was talking about.

MR. BROWN: With Mather, you did look indeed at the object? Or if you couldn't see it at Princeton, he would--

MR. FAISON: Describe it.

MR. BROWN: --describe it and recreate it for you.

MR. FAISON: And in that area, you could go down to Philadelphia or go down to New York and see equivalent things. And we did, of course. So I had some sense of what I was doing.

MR. BROWN: What was Mather's method of teaching?

MR. FAISON: Socratic. I remember I was lecturing on--giving a report, excuse me, on Simone Martini--it was one of my jobs. We did early Siennese painting, and somebody did Duchier, and then I came out. Maybe four students in the course, five--and I--my main point, apart from--you know, you only have to demonstrate that you'd read the documents and list them all. This is what we know. This is what we know, not from here or here. Here we go. This isn't by Simone Martini just because somebody thinks it looks like him. But this work is documented. We know this is him.

Well, from Duchier to Simone is a shift into French Gothic, as you know. And I mean to say, Simone Martini is a generation later, and deeply influenced by French Gothic. How come? Not because he didn't go to France until late in his life. And he never went anywhere near Paris. And we talk about Paris style. How come? Well, it has to be portable objects.

So I put a French ivory up inside, and it looks quite a lot like a Simone painting or a manuscript. And he stops me cold. You asked me how he taught. Old Pop Mather, he stops me cold. He says, "Wait a minute." He says, "Here you sit in the comfort of Marklon [phonetic] Library, and you put one photograph against another. You're assuming that something like this came to Sienna?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Have you any idea of the difficulty of getting from Sienna to Paris in 1325? No, you haven't. Let me tell you."

He then put on the most elaborate discussion of the land route over the Alps, and terrible snows and avalanches, and we never made it. And he says, "So we go by the sea route. All right. We go down the rivers and down the Rhone. We get out into the Tyrrhenian Sea." And then he put on the most terrible storm. We never made it. The boat foundered. He said, "And here you sit in the comfort of this [inaudible]." And I never forgot it. Don't just put two photographs together. Think what it means. He was a very wise man, highly civilized.

MR. BROWN: Your point wasn't provable.

MR. FAISON: No, not really. Not really.

[Laughter]

Well, I mean, everybody knew there was some French connection, and suggested it would be that way. But I was not comprehending what it meant. I wasn't wrong. But I didn't know what I was meaning.

MR. BROWN: You were making it seem too easy.

MR. FAISON: Yeah. Sure.

MR. BROWN: What about Morey as a teacher? Did he just point you to his index?

MR. FAISON: Morey was a marvelous man, a big figure, a tremendous personality when you got to know him, just a little hard at first. But behind you every minute in terms of career and all that business--the most terrible lecturer that God ever turned out, he just droned out. But everything he said had--God knows how many hours, days, months of scholarly knowledge behind it. And, you know, you were privileged to hear it. And finally he loosened up in later life and wrote some of it out, and it's really quite--a book called *Medieval Artists*--quite readable. And everybody was astounded, because really he was no teacher in the lecturing sense. But in the seminar when you reported on something, he would tear you apart and say, "Well, now [inaudible]."

MR. BROWN: Because he always had sort of new further detailed--

MR. FAISON: Oh, sure. Yeah. You know, and he had arranged with the Vatican--now, he was not a Catholic; I don't know how he did it, from the authorities of scholarship. But the Musea Christiano of the Vatican, which has all those minor arts, was set aside for study by Princeton University. And that's what you got into.

And they gave me--everybody gets an object, you see, at the beginning of the course. This is what you've got to work on. And they gave me two early Christian spoons, which had almost nothing on them. And thank God I was naïve and ingenuous enough to say, "Couldn't I have something better-looking than this?" And they said, "Well, it's massive. It doesn't make any difference what it is." And I said, "If it doesn't make any difference, couldn't I have something better looking?" And so they said, "Yeah, sure, if you want."

Aparently, they'd been trying to sell these spoons year by year.

[Laughter]

And Bodey-Smiths [phonetic] had been working on them, this gorgeous processional cross, fourteenth century, silver gilt. And you know, he was off on other things. He said, "Oh, well, go ahead. I pass it on to you," and gave me all his notes, and I started from there. Well, this meant you had to bone up on cathedral sculpture and goldsmith work, and oh boy. Thank God I didn't settle for spoons. But the method, the scholarly method would have been in either case.

MR. BROWN: But it was very thoroughly done.

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: And when you were working on your own during a seminar, Morey was a good person?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yeah. Oh, very much so.

MR. BROWN: So your concentration there then was in Medieval and Renaissance?

MR. FAISON: Right. And then comes June, and we've taken our exams and are ready to move on. And what happens? The phone rings from Yale University, and they want somebody who can speak French and be an assistant to two distinguished Frenchmen they're bringing over whose English may not be of the best, and would have to--this would be a two-year course in Medieval art, two full years.

And between Thanksgiving and Easter each year, this new person would have to fill in the course, because neither of those people would be present. That was Marcel Aubert of the Louvre and Henri Focillon at the Frank. And there I was, and I could speak French. Wow. So I had four years at Yale doing that. Marvelous experience. So I think I learned more from Henri Focillon than everything else put together up to that point.

MR. BROWN: So you got to know him then in the fall of '32?

MR. FAISON: No, six.

MR. BROWN: Well, you went to Yale in '32.

MR. FAISON: Beg pardon.

[END TAPE 3, SIDE A]

MR. FAISON: Well, he came at spring term.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: Spring term. And Aubert was awfully good, but Focillon was a philosophic mind and an incredible

eye and a wonderful writer, beautiful writer, and passionately interested in the individual student. I mean, he had everything.

MR. BROWN: What was he like? Did he hit it off with you right away?

MR. FAISON: Instantly. I don't know anybody who didn't feel this way--an extraordinary magnetism, plus an enthusiasm, great enthusiasm.

MR. BROWN: So your job at Yale in the beginning was to teach only when he wasn't there.

MR. FAISON: No. I would meet with students because they wouldn't always understand what he said. I did all that kind of thing. And then I--well, as you see, I had to be ready for November to Easter because I had to run the course, fill in the whole gap in it. And then, about a year and a half later or something like that, I got another course, you see, to give, which was Siennese painting at the graduate level. And then I did an undergraduate course in French painting, seventeenth–eighteenth century.

MR. BROWN: But for Focillon you had to do, what, Medieval and early Christian work?

MR. FAISON: It was Romanesque and late Gothic art, and Aubert did early Christian, Carovingian up to Romanesque. And then the next year he did early Gothic up to the late Gothic. I've also done work where French–French–French. You know, civilization tends to come from France. I really believed it with Focillon.

MR. BROWN: Did you? Why is that? Why was he so convincing and such an influence on you?

MR. FAISON: Read him.

MR. BROWN: Read him?

MR. FAISON: Read him.

MR. BROWN: Read him, yeah.

MR. FAISON: Or you had to meet him. But he had a way of--I guess you'd say we were disciples. I suppose looking back, we must have been rather insufferable, because we knew the truth, you know. I mean, what we knew was true, but it wasn't the whole truth. And I remember meeting one of his older disciples up in Belgium, and he'd written me an introduction to this wonderful guy who was a collector and an interesting person up in Ghent. And we had a wonderful time. And we got talking about Focillon. And one of us remembered a book by Mrs. R.E. Bordeaux or something. Est un Dieu Français. Oh, is God French? And we agreed with Focillon and Aubert and absolutely no doubt about it.

So I think--I'm not quite sure. I think that I tried to make the panorama a little larger, admitting, yes, something interesting was done in Germany and England was not really to be omitted, and Italy was--I think maybe I fell in those directions.

MR. BROWN: But these were areas you were not trained in, particularly, at Princeton, really, in the Medieval French.

MR. FAISON: Oh, my God, your training in art history is not just to teach--shouldn't be just to teach a certain thing. That's one of the troubles right now. It should be training and learning how to teach anything that you're asked to teach, for heaven's sake. If you've been there. You should have been there. Thank God I never taught Greek Art. I only went to Greece last year, and I'll never get over it. And I'm so happy I never taught it because I would have filled them up with falsehoods. Falsehoods.

I mean, you have to see it and believe it, and not read about it. So, you know, I'd have that year in Europe before college. I'd traveled all over every place in Southern France you ever heard of, moving up to Paris, which meant all the provincial museums and everything else. So I was not just interested in a particular kind of a--I was--well, I hadn't met Roger Fry yet, but Roger Fry is a sort of god of mine because he was looking for art, and thanked God wherever he found it, whether it was African or Chinese or wherever. It's optical responsiveness. It seems to me that's the basis of what we're talking about.

MR. BROWN: So here was Focillon, a man who was supremely responsive?

MR. FAISON: Right. He had terrible eyesight. He wanted to be a painter, but he couldn't. And he wore glasses half-an-inch thick. And when he took them off, he looked absolutely blind. But he could see the basic shapes of things, which you and I forget to look at because we hit the details too fast. And he would make very remarkable responsiveness, you know. Then, with his eyes on--I mean, like this--I mean, they were heavy--they were like magnifying glass.

I remember we had a slide that was early Romanesque French sculpture, a little bit of sculpture. And the label had been lost. And what was it? And nobody knew. And we finally took it to him. And we hadn't even seen this little bit of line of sculpture. It was so small. But he saw it. And he said, "Oh, I know what"--and he told us. We went and got the enlarged photograph, absolutely right. But somehow--in other words, he saw in two entirely different ways, and through some act of creative imagination could put it together. He saw in sharper detail than you and I do. And he saw in general shape more acutely or more comprehensively than most people do. But that doesn't mean he could put it together.

MR. BROWN: So for exposition of what you see or what could be seen in a work of art, he's unequaled, in your experience?

MR. FAISON: Yes, unequaled.

MR. BROWN: When he lectured, were you there in the class?

MR. FAISON: Sure. Oh, you bet.

MR. BROWN: As a note taker or as a helper?

MR. FAISON: Note taker. Well, I mean, if anything went wrong with the slide projector--I mean, I didn't do the slides. But if anything went wrong, I would run back and help out.

MR. BROWN: So that was your main--

MR. FAISON: Of even if a student, you know, asked a question, maybe I could--he understood English pretty well. But the students didn't, all of them. It was graduate students, and some unusual undergraduates. But they tended to know their French pretty well already. But not all of us. And I could help out that way.

MR. BROWN: So bringing him to Yale was a big thing at Yale, was it?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. Yale started art history at the top. This was Dean Meeks.

MR. BROWN: This was just about the beginning of art history there, was it? There might have been some people there?

MR. FAISON: Well, for instance, it was an art school, you see. And Dean Meeks, as dean, offered the art school, offered courses in art history, always taught by artists. And I found out later that that was Dean Meeks' policy. I didn't know that when I went there. Because I was interested in getting into the undergraduate area, not just high-powered graduate area. And I kept saying, "Where are our students coming from?" I mean, the art history they were getting was not very good. Really, it wasn't.

MR. BROWN: And why wasn't it, do you think? The prejudices of certain artists? That was about it?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. It was as easy as that. Technically all right, but art history--I mean, art history as a profession, it needs training. And how shall I put it? Well, you see, these were artists not as good as they have had in later years, in my opinion. They were kind of dried up at the time, academic artists. But they didn't read art history books. And, you know, they weren't interested in the evolution of Donatello, which is a thrilling story. And they'd touch on Donatello somewhere.

And they'd occasionally teach you to look very perceptively. But none of this had any status in Yale College very long.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. FAISON: So it was when I found out, the hard way, that that was going to be the policy as long as Dean Meeks was running the show, and Morey kept saying, "As long as Dean Meeks runs the show, you're not going to be happy there." And I said, "Well, sir, I'm very happy right now." And he said, "Watch it." Then I found out, no way I was fixed for the top drawer up there. It has nothing to do with the training of undergraduates. And that's when I got an invitation to come back here, and so I came back here.

[OFF THE RECORD]

MR. BROWN: This is side two.

MR. FAISON: Back to Yale. There was one person that was particularly nice to me, and that was Theodore Sizer, known as Tubby, who ran the museum, the Gallery of Fine Arts. I would say, in fact, I think he was probably assistant director. I'm not quite sure of that, because Dean Meeks had a way of having all the titles.

MR. BROWN: Dean Meeks was also over Focillon and Aubert when they came?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes, he brought them.

MR. BROWN: He was dean of the Art School.

MR. FAISON: Dean of the Art School. But this graduate project--it was all cleared and definitely had part of the Yale University, it had the sanction of its existence, which art history at the undergraduate level really did not. But Tubby Sizer was a great enthusiast and knew a great deal about prints, and he was generally savvy. I don't think he was an inspired teacher, and he was a little hit-and-miss and spasmodic and impromptu and ad lib when he taught, and I think sometimes a bit underrated. But he was a charming and lovely person and took a great interest in students and organized trips to private collections in New York, which I went along on all of this, and he was terribly nice to me.

And then I would also like to mention John Phillips, who was a rather sweet, not very self-assertive person, who turned out to be a most incredible scholar in this very limited field of American and English silver and furniture, particularly silver. He was even a member of the Company of Goldsmiths of London, for heaven sake. And he taught a course, which in those days had no status because it wasn't painting or sculpture or architecture. It was for silver. And it was known as "pots and pans."

Well, you see, the general theory that I am trying to suggest about--that prevailed. And up against distinguished people like Chauncey Tinker, who taught English literature, this was very minor-league, little league indeed. As a matter of fact, it was first-class in its small way. So things were happening at Yale. But they needed someone other than this very astute and clever Dean Meeks, who was not a very good architect and a fine administrator and a force and who was also power-mad.

And so I figured that it would take 10 years before I could do what I thought I wanted to do at Yale University.

MR. BROWN: You couldn't touch the undergraduates.

MR. FAISON: I couldn't touch them.

MR. BROWN: That was the problems of these conservative painters and sculptors.

MR. FAISON: And architects. Right.

MR. BROWN: And did you get any of their students in your graduate level?

MR. FAISON: No, no.

MR. BROWN: Unlike Harvard, they weren't--or Princeton, they weren't brought into these courses.

MR. FAISON: Did I get any of the--you mean the Yale art students? Certainly not. But the Yale undergraduates, yes, you see. That's where they all came from.

MR. BROWN: No, but while they were still undergraduates, did they come in and take some of the courses with Focillon?

MR. FAISON: I'd say not.

MR. BROWN: Unlike Harvard.

MR. FAISON: Very exceptionally, yes, but there was a--they managed to line up a wonderful group, all of whom went back to Yale and taught. I mean, my God, my students of those four years--name them off: Seymour, Kubler, Crosby, Carol Meeks, George Hamilton, et cetera, you see. That's where they all came from. Gradually, we began to get students from other places coming to Yale. Why would they come to Yale before? Nobody ever heard of Yale and art history. So it began to grow, of course.

And it obviously had to go down into the undergraduate level, but it wasn't going to and didn't for about 10 years.

MR. BROWN: I guess they started it partly because they started at this high level.

MR. FAISON: That's right.

MR. BROWN: But the students of Focillon were Yale art school graduates in the beginning?

MR. FAISON: No.

MR. BROWN: No?

MR. FAISON: Yale college graduates.

MR. BROWN: Yale college graduates.

MR. FAISON: Very important program, very important.

MR. BROWN: The first art history, really.

MR. FAISON: The first serious art history, yes. Yes.

MR. BROWN: Were there any others teaching art history except for Focillon and Aubert?

MR. FAISON: Well, Sizer and John Phillips. I mentioned them.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. FAISON: And all of the others--I hope I haven't forgotten somebody--were people out of the art school who didn't read art history, weren't interested in history. Yes, Holbein was a very good painter. Look how he did this.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MR. FAISON: Very good painter. But who was Holbein? And was he--as a German, was he affected by living in England? This would never come up. I mean, none of it--you see the difference.

MR. BROWN: I know there was a Daniel Thompson there in the early '30s.

MR. FAISON: Thank God you mentioned him.

MR. BROWN: He taught Hamilton.

MR. FAISON: He was brilliant. I succeeded him. He was leaving as I came in. The gap that--the budget was supposed to be very tight. And he actually didn't leave. He was a kind of a genius and very scholarly. He taught--he made everybody angry, which was one of his charms. He was a real wild man--absolutely brilliant and inventive. And he was a chemist, I mean, a real scientist on the side. So he did this book on Chennini's *il libro dell'arte* which he got George's assistant, you see, put that out.

He lasted one more year and had not expected to be there. And he had an enormous influence on me. I mean, some writing I was doing, he went over with me and I learned a lot from him. And then he left. And he had a meteoric career and ended up in the Courtauld Institute where he distinguished himself.

MR. BROWN: He had an effect on you in terms of scholarship?

MR. FAISON: Yes. Very much so.

MR. BROWN: Was he teaching your first year there?

MR. FAISON: A very small course in something or another, very small. And he made everybody mad, and charmingly so. But actually, it was the article I wrote on the Gothic processional cross. I hadn't finished it yet at Princeton, you see. I took it to him, and he said, "I don't know about the details of this. I can help you on your writing." And he said, "Can you wait till next summer?" This was already late spring. I said sure.

So I spent several days with him up outside Boston. He was--they had rented the house that--I don't know the first name, McGoon, who was very distinguished at Harvard. And there was the entire *Oxford English Dictionary*. And we spent three days on one page of my article. And he only asked one question: Is this the correct word? Is this what you mean to say? And the answer was somewhere in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and my God, what I learned. And he said, "You take it from there."

So I now feel a deep obligation to do unto students today what was done for me. I make them write me something with one page only, whatever it is. I want one page of writing, and I do that for them. And they don't seem to have gotten it anywhere else.

MR. BROWN: And from Focillon, on the other hand, it was looking, right?

MR. FAISON: It was looking.

MR. BROWN: Plus, you mentioned his philosophy. How would you express that? How would he come across to

you then, in talking with him, being with him?

MR. FAISON: Well, if you look to the portal, somehow he got you to the point where you became the architect or sculptor. And you knew this much, because that much had been done. This is what you inherit. You are a builder of a cathedral. We will say Chartres. And Notre Dame had already been built, most of it, et cetera, et cetera. And this is what you have. And what was your contribution? Specifically, what did this builder or these builders do that had never been done before?

It was as if you were in a scientific laboratory and the excitement of discovery takes place, recreated for you. Does that help?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: Most--I mean, Aubert didn't have that flavor. I mean, he told you the story very beautifully, in lovely language. But I mean, there wasn't this passionate concern with the act of creation. It was brought back into existence now as if it had happened five minutes ago.

MR. BROWN: And also, Focillon had pointed out the cumulative effect of the whole thing?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes, indeed. Oh, yes.

MR. BROWN: Was Aubert a more technical person, or a chronicler of the data, information?

MR. FAISON: Yes, yes. Right. And of course, very accurate [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: A major--

MR. FAISON: Not dry. He was a very elegant speaker. Elegant ladies adored him, and he was a huge--Aubert had made--Aubert was quite distinguished looking, and he was [inaudible], you know. And he had a red beard--not red. It was setter color, much more distinguished. And he was--whereas Focillon was--he called himself a bourguignon trapu [phonetic] which means Burgundy stocky, and he was--I don't know whether he was arthritic, but he looked like a bear. And he didn't stand up straight. He walked with his head in front of his body in a big curve, his shoulders rather short, and these terrible glasses. So he was not a Beau Brummel--anything but.

So the outer appearance couldn't have been more different. And one was an--you know, pretty much of an elegant social life. He was a very serious scholar. And the other was a man's man, a plain person, also was a very serious scholar and also a very deep thinker, which is not true of Aubert.

He attended and helped organize great philosophic conferences at the Abbaye of Pontigny in Burgundy, [inaudible]. He was one of the main figures, along with the--well, whoever it was.

MR. BROWN: Did he do anything similar at Yale? Or would that have been--

MR. FAISON: Well, he was only there three months. Then when the war broke, he was around more. I'd already left, of course. And he did a great deal of work for the resistance movement, insofar as you could from this country. And he was – he had a big interest in it.

MR. BROWN: So what else at Yale was part of your life there, apart from Focillon, apart from the teaching?

MR. FAISON: Well, I became a member of--I was--you tended to be assigned to one of the colleges at Yale. That wasn't automatic, but I mean, most people were. And then later, after my first two years, the third year I became a resident fellow at Saybrook College. And it was quite nice. And so you meet all kinds of people, and your own age and older, whatever, and see a lot of students. But it's a great big place, and you tend to keep in your department, you know, more so than in a smaller place.

MR. BROWN: What about its museum? Did you take any interest in that while you were there?

MR. FAISON: Yes, I did. Well, one very fortunate thing happened. I don't know quite how it began, although it's perfectly understandable. There was a young fellow had just been assigned to the Metropolitan, by the name of James J. Rrohmer. And he'd come out of Harvard slightly--he graduated a year--I think he might have been class of '28, something like that. And I'm class of '29. And we--he--I don't know why we weren't together at Harvard, but we weren't. I didn't know him.

But he--and maybe he didn't do any graduate work at Harvard. I'd have to look it up. But he got next to Joseph Breck, who was the curator of Medieval Art. The Cloisters doesn't exist yet, but it was just beginning to be planned. And he naturally, as he became an assistant curator of Medieval Art at the Metropolitan, was actually interested in Old Man Focillon. And so he appeared numerous times in New Haven. And yes, the Cloisters were

beginning to get underway. And I went there time after time and watched the Cloisters emerge. They managed to stop the architecture from creating fake Medieval buildings--said, "Leave it alone. Make it simple. We'll put the architecture elements and the sculpture there."

That Gothic chapel that is on the Hudson side--downriver Hudson corner of the Cloisters, by Allen and Collins is as fake as fake can be. But he managed to stop some other--they were going to build a Romanesque chapel and all that stuff. So it was through James Rorimer I got very much in the Metropolitan. I did an article on an object in the Met for *Belgian Review* because it was Belgian. And this was a whole new direction that wouldn't have happened to me except having been at Yale at this time. And my friendship with James Rorimer was lifelong.

MR. BROWN: Was he very gifted as a young curator? Did you sense--

MR. FAISON: Oh, God, yes.

MR. BROWN: What was his strength, would you say?

MR. FAISON: Well, he's brilliant. That helps. Enthusiastic. Very sharp eye, marvelous memory, and great energy. And he read two languages. His father--he grew up in Cleveland. His father, I think, was--I think it was high-class furniture or something like that. But great taste there, and sense of today. He didn't--he was not interested in living in a fake Medieval world. He had a lot of fine things in the department. Wasn't yet married to Kaye. That came later. And that was a good thing. I didn't mean--we were very fond of Kaye. But he was used to fine things.

And he was unscrupulous and he cut some corners and he made a lot of people mad, and so forth. But he deserved to be director, and I think he was one of the very fine directors they've ever had--very fine director, more so than what preceded him and certainly more than what followed him. Say I!

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: You were there until--

MR. FAISON: Thirty-six.

MR. BROWN: Thirty-six?

MR. FAISON: Yep.

MR. BROWN: Were there any particular students you had that were memorable?

MR. FAISON: At Yale?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: Well, yes, I reeled them off to you. There's been five or six, seven or eight years later, they are the faculty at the art history at Yale. That's it.

MR. BROWN: Were they for the most part Yale --

MR. FAISON: Yes, they were all Yale undergraduates. I've always said that Yale is the second-largest island in the world, if Madagascar is the largest.

MR. BROWN: And they were all first-class students?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yes. Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, I mean, it's expanded now. Bob Herbert is not a Yale man. But he's head of--sure.

MR. BROWN: But these people, were they all pretty well trained in history as well, European history?

MR. FAISON: Yes, they were. They were very well trained.

MR. BROWN: But broadly educated as undergraduates?

MR. FAISON: That's right. They didn't know a great deal about history, but they learned a lot. And they traveled, and they did travel immediately. And they tended to get a cathedral--very important building--that, "You work on that." And so Charles Seymour a few years later comes out with a fine book on [inaudible], and Sumner Crosby becomes the duke of Saturday, and so forth. George Kruger, no--interesting difference. He said, "I understand all this. I understand the method and all that, but I just don't want to do French objects. I happen

to be excited about the churches out in New Mexico, the combination of Indian and Spanish world traditions conflicting. And I want to write on it. I know them pretty well. Could I do a masters thesis under you?" says he later on, my last year.

And I said--because there was nobody else at Yale that he could have worked with. I said, "Well, George, I don't know anything about this at all, you understand. I can help you in your writing." And he didn't--he was half-German and very Germanic in his writing. I said, "I can help you in writing, but I wouldn't know. You can say anything you want about these; I wouldn't know whether it's right or wrong." He said, "That's just what I want."

[Laughter]

And that was published by--what is it? A museum in Santa Fe. That was George's start. And I am thanked for my help, but I--no way except in editing. I did help him and edited. But yes. We turned out some good people.

MR. BROWN: Were each of these men at that time consumed with going on into art history? Was art--you mentioned earlier that, for example, the more mainstream liberal arts faculty and all looked down a bit on art history?

MR. FAISON: Yeah. But they didn't look down on Aubert and Focillon. So that was all right. It had status in the higher intellectual reaches of Yale, no problem. Really none. I have a little trouble with Rustofseth [phonetic]. He was a little difficult. But they took care of him after awhile.

I had somebody else in mind. Most of these students, yes, were definitely going into scholarship and teaching--scholarship and teaching art history. We also had some students who took it as a sort of minor towards their Ph.D. in something else, such as Tom Mendenhall in English history. And I remember attending his Ph.D. exam. I asked him a few easy questions on the English Gothic architecture. And he taught for awhile, and then he became president of Smith College, you see. So there's the direction.

And Wilcox--what was his first name? Bill Wilcox, who was an English historian, I think he was--no, it must have been an American historian. But he was sort of around with us a bit. He came up here and taught for some years, and went back to Yale later and was very distinguished. He's dead now. Very distinguished--I think American history. So there were a few outlands.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. FAISON: Suburbs of our village, but still.

MR. BROWN: But you all along liked teaching as much as or more than anything else?

MR. FAISON: Right.

MR. BROWN: And you were more interested in teaching the less-formed mind than the graduate-level student?

MR. FAISON: As it worked out, I think so. Yeah, the excitement of getting it going, more than the--yeah, I think on the whole. I think that's probably why I left Yale. Well, the reason I left Yale was--you know, this run-in with the Dean. I just found out I had no future, as I figured it out for myself.

MR. BROWN: You confronted--

MR. FAISON: No ill will. But I said, "If that's the way it is, sir, I can't stay here. And I do have an invitation to return to my college, which is very flattering. And I've been thinking about it. But, sorry, I've got to leave."

MR. BROWN: Dean Meeks said that, "We have no plans for"--

MR. FAISON: He just said. You see, the old fellow who taught the introductory course in art history, which was painting, then a course in painting only, history of painting--died. And I figured I should get it. I wanted it. I was the only trained art historian. I mean, Tubby Sizer didn't want it, and I was about it. And they gave it to a young painter, who really didn't know the history of painting. I mean, no, he didn't. He taught people painting. And anything he told them about the history of painting was got to be out of a book.

And the dean said no. "Well, you don't understand. I wouldn't allow anyone but an artist to teach art history to Yale undergraduates." I said, "Sir, you mean that?" And he said, "Yes, I mean that." So that was it. That's all changed now.

MR. BROWN: That was tradition, then, I suppose. There was no other explanation.

MR. FAISON: No.

MR. BROWN: Because--

MR. FAISON: Now, you might ask, so then why did he get Aubert and Focillon there at all? Well, prestige, window-dressing and very distinguished. He had been shited I mean, what's the matter with Yale? I mean, Princeton, Harvard, Oberlin, California, art history, distinguished graduate training. What's the matter with Yale? And I think it got under his skin. So he decided, well, we'll do something about it. And he did it from the top.

FEMALE VOICE: Gale Goodman called you.

MR. BROWN: So then--but you had in the spring or so of '36, this offer from Williams.

MR. FAISON: Yes.

MR. BROWN: To come back.

MR. FAISON: So it was a new president. And Karl Weston was very much still here. And one other person, and there was a vacancy.

MR. BROWN: So it was a large department.

MR. FAISON: So I came back to a department of three, of which I'm one.

MR. BROWN: There had only been one when you were here?

MR. FAISON: That's right. And the understanding was that if I made good, I would succeed Karl Weston as chairman. This was '36. I did succeed him as chairman in '40.

MR. BROWN: You were interested in rising in the ranks and continuing in the academic community?

MR. FAISON: Yeah, yeah. Sure.

MR. BROWN: So this new president was also that you talked with him?

MR. FAISON: Oh, yeah. Tyler Dennett.

MR. BROWN: Tyler?

MR. FAISON: Very, very interesting man. He shook up the Williams faculty real fast in four years. He changed the whole atmosphere of the college.

MR. BROWN: Toward what?

MR. FAISON: Toward a serious place of learning. It was a very different place--very quickly.

MR. BROWN: When you were here, you were a minority.

MR. FAISON: Oh, I was a minority, definitely. Oh, sure. Yeah.

MR. BROWN: So when you came in, were you the junior faculty? There was a third person. Were you--

MR. FAISON: I was number two. I was number two. There was another person who was younger than I. And he left to--he went to Swarthmore after I came. And Andrew Keck had--who still teaches, age 76, in Washington, D.C., at Burton University, preceded me as Karl Weston's sidekick, you see. But he was leaving to go to Washington. And that was the vacancy that I filled.

MR. BROWN: So when you came here, what did the president say to you--did he indicate that he was going to make this a more serious place?

MR. FAISON: Right. Right. He said, "Karl Weston needs a lot more help than he's gotten." [Inaudible] Tyler Dennett, was a political historian, and had gotten a Pulitzer prize for a biography of Hay.

MR. BROWN: Secretary of State?

MR. FAISON: Secretary of State Hay, whatever his name was. And was full Professor at Princeton and came back here to be president at Williams. And he didn't know much about art, but he believed in it, from the outside. He was also--he had some crazy ideas. He wanted me to devise a course with some others. And one course, Introduction to The Arts. And I said, "No. Bad idea. No, no. You start off with one art or another. Don't

mix them up. Don't. Mix them up at the end if you want, but how do you"--he said, "But, what do the arts have in common?" I said, "No. You don't find that out until you know some of the arts." Then, sure, what do they have in common? I said, "I really think it's upside down." So he said, "Well, all right. I think you're wrong, but go ahead. I'll support you." Vigorous man.

MR. BROWN: How would you begin here then? With what courses?

MR. FAISON: Well, I obviously taught Medieval art because I did that. And a little later Whitney Stoddard came back here, and he was a Medievalist, and gradually I was moving away from it. He took it over; he's a Medievalist.

MR. BROWN: He'd been at Williams or had been a student here?

MR. FAISON: Had been a student here and did his work at Harvard under Curler [phonetic], who was not present when I was at Harvard. I think we need Hitler to explain that chronology. I think that's right. And I got more interested in--towards nineteenth–twentieth century as time went on, and so forth. But there was so much to do. I mean, we had a lot of prints. I got interested in the museum, you see. We had--Karl Weston founded this place in 1926, and we had almost nothing. He brought--had some things of his own. He cadged along. He went to attics. He made things look good even though they didn't amount to much.

But then things began to come in. And then somebody gave him a few hundred dollars, he could buy things [inaudible]. So I got interested in that. That's when I really had a chance to work with objects.

MR. BROWN: That was fairly early on?

MR. FAISON: From '36 on.

MR. BROWN: The collection as you found it was fairly well represented in a number of areas, or at least represented?

MR. FAISON: It was very modest, yes. Yes, a lawyer in Boston, Davenport, gave us entirely too much priceless early American furniture, more than we could possibly use without lots of storage. And a nice collection of British and American eighteenth century portraits. Well, we had that. And, oh, various bits and pieces of Roman mosaic, and bits of Tanagra figurines, some Greek pots, a few small Egyptian objects.

In 1941, Joseph Burma [phonetic], the dealer, found out we had three Assyrian reliefs. And Minneapolis desperately wanted on Assyrian relief. And he talked to Karl Weston and finally persuaded Karl that we didn't need three. And Karl went to the trustees of Williams and said, "I really don't think we need the three. And this would be a lot of money, and we could turn it into other objects." So for the $9000 that we got in 1941 for a genuine ninth century B.C.--

[END TAPE 3, SIDE B]

MR. FAISON:--genuine ninth century B.C. Assyrian relief from the reign of Ashur-Nasir-Pal, the price agreed to as fair, by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. We got about 25 objects, small and good, and all sorts Dürer engraving, Winslow Homer watercolors, a good slug of thirteenth century glass, and Mexican Aztec Mask, a Roman mosaic head, a watercolor by Kukushka, two Rembrandt etchings, and that is not all. And it put us on the map.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. You were suddenly a small--

MR. FAISON: This is 1941. That put us on the map, when we started this. I didn't inherit the museum until 1948.

MR. BROWN: But you were by '41, after that, a distinguished small teaching museum?

MR. FAISON: We weren't distinguished yet, but we were on the map.

MR. BROWN: You were on the map--noticeable, not notable.

MR. FAISON: Yes. We were just noticeable. We could bring objects in the class. Clark didn't exist, as you understand. That opens up in 1955, the first opening. We knew about it of course before the opening of the Clark Institute in 1955.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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