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Oral history interview with Marcella Comès (Winslow), 1982 May 4

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Marcella Comès Winslow on May 4, 1982. The interview took place in Washington, D.C., and was conducted by Estill Curtis "Buck" Pennington for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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

Interview

BUCK PENNINGTON: This is Buck Pennington from the Archives of American Art here today with Marcella Comes.

MARCELLA COMES WINSLOW: Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: For a taping session on her life and story as an artist. We'll begin with just some general background, if you will talk something about your family and where you were born, and your beginning education in art. That will be our start-off point.

MS. WINSLOW: Well, I was born in Pittsburgh, and I was brought up in an artistic atmosphere because my father was an architect. And all my life, in my childhood anyway, the people he worked with were usually the mural painters or the glass designers or whatever, or the bishops or the priests, because he was—specialized in ecclesiastical architecture.

So I didn't realize until many years later that I had a very privileged background because of the people that we knew.

MR. PENNINGTON: And so you were exposed to a lot of visual art.

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, yes, and of course, my father had only original paintings which seemed to amaze some of my friends when I went to art school.

[Phone rings.]

MS. WINSLOW: Oh dear. I heard that years later because I heard that somebody had said, "Oh yes, she had just original paintings in her house."

MR. PENNINGTON: When did you first begin to study art and become interested in art?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, I didn't start to study until I—I always drew ever since I was a little girl, but it was always assumed that I would go ahead and be an artist, but—and I took a few classes in high school, and then I took a test to enter the Carnegie School of Fine Arts it was called then. I think it's called Mellon now, isn't it? [Winslow is referring to Carnegie Mellon University's College of Fine Arts. –Ed.]

And went there for two years and then went to Europe to study. My mother took my sisters and me to Europe and we lived there for two years, and I studied in Italy mostly because I loved Italy. I couldn't get out of Italy, it just held me. Everybody was supposed to go to Paris. But when I got to Paris, eventually, it just didn't thrill me the way Italy did, and nobody had heard of Italy. Nobody knew who the Italian painters were, but that didn't seem to matter.

MR. PENNINGTON: Where were you in Italy?

MS. WINSLOW: We went to Florence originally, first, and we were able to rent or sublet a marvelous studio apartment of an English painter, and we took that over with their servants. It was very inexpensive at that time to go to Europe and live; and also there were very few Americans who were living there in the winter, and that made it very, very nice for my sisters and me.

MR. PENNINGTON: And while you were there, were there any paintings that you particularly looked at, or any gallery that you specifically visited that you were fond of?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, just everywhere, but I learned to love the Primitives, which I had not been able to do before that because I was just never rather exposed to them. I had come from Pittsburgh where every year we were fortunate to have the Carnegie Internationals, so I was very familiar with contemporary painting and

foreign painting, but primitive—[John Singer] Sargent was the one that was getting all the prizes at this time, you see, and so sort of to go from Sargent to the Italian Primitives was quite a jump.

MR. PENNINGTON: Quite a transition.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, and I loved it, I really did.

MR. PENNINGTON: And you executed paintings while you were there?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, I got my very first portrait commission from Monsignor [Francis] Spellman, who was later Cardinal Spellman in New York. He asked me to paint a portrait of the Bishop of Portland, Maine, from a photograph, and I thought this was really awful to work from a photograph. However, I sort of solved part of my problem by getting a very handsome Italian to pose for the flesh tones.

[Laughter.]

MS. WINSLOW: He didn't have—he wasn't dark, he had wonderful coloring, and if you can imagine my painting the flesh of a man named Marchese Albesoldelia Albesi. His family are represented in a painting in the Louvre and I did his flesh tones, but anyway—

MR. PENNINGTON: He was your color register.

MS. WINSLOW: He was my color register and he didn't mind doing it, and how silly I was not to have painted him. But anyway, and then I went to—and one could do this in those days—this was in 19—let me see, when was this? This was 19—in the late '20s, '29 probably. But I went to the Duomo and asked them to lend me—the Duomo, the cathedral—and asked them to lend me some sort of a robe that a bishop would wear, and they did; and I went to a lace shop and I said will you let me have some lace, and they did because I was American. They thought Americans and the dollars of course were worth it; you didn't even have to sign your name.

So I got all of these things together and painted from the photograph, but guess what happened to the painting?

MR. PENNINGTON: What?

MS. WINSLOW: I sent it through American Express and it ended up in Portland, Oregon.

MR. PENNINGTON: Oh, instead of Portland, Maine.

[Laughter.]

MS. WINSLOW: That's true, the guy was from Portland, Oregon, that's true, but it went to Portland, Maine, and I'm sure I had nothing to do with that.

MR. PENNINGTON: It was not lost.

MS. WINSLOW: No, it eventually turned up but I don't think it got there at the right time. But I made $400 which was riches.

MR. PENNINGTON: Oh yes, beyond.

MS. WINSLOW: Absolute riches for that time.

MR. PENNINGTON: For your first portrait. So then you went back to Pittsburgh.

MS. WINSLOW: After two years—let's see, we spent that winter in Florence and then we went to Rome, and in the summer we went to Perugia where they have the schools of languages; and then after two years, we returned to Pittsburgh. And I entered a painting I had done of the Swiss Guard—the Swiss Guard to the Vatican—they have these marvelous robes that were designed by Michelangelo. And so I don't know how I met one of the Guard, but he was willing to come and pose for me. He couldn't wear his uniform on the street, but he brought it with him. And he wanted to learn English and I wanted to learn Italian, so this was the way we did it. And this turned out very well, and I entered it into the Carnegie Institute and the Associated Arts of Pittsburgh exhibit that they had every year. And it won the portrait prize in competition with my former teachers. I would have been graduating, you see, at this time. So I guess it did me a lot of good to go to Europe.

MR. PENNINGTON: So you had several early exhibitions in Pittsburgh then?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, then I entered—we could enter shows there all the time, juried shows; and I had—when I got married I had a—oh, this was later, this was in 1934, but I did have several shows, and I ended up with, yes,

one-man shows, uh-huh.

MR. PENNINGTON: And regarding one of the shows of your paintings, there was quite a celebrated controversy, wasn't there? Regarding one of your—

MS. WINSLOW: One? Only one? What was the controversy?

MR. PENNINGTON: Where the painting was thought to have been stolen as—

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, yes, that's true. Well, I entered a painting of a nude in the county fair, and it was supposed to be returned to me just before I left Pittsburgh to come to Washington to live. And it was stolen, it turned out, and so it made headlines in the paper and said "Stolen Nude Spoils Bride's Honeymoon!"

[Laughter.]

MS. WINSLOW: And so I'm sure if I had stayed in Pittsburgh, everybody would have thought it was a publicity stunt. It finally was returned, but it was stolen again; but then you know, eventually I guess they got it. And one of the newspapers phoned me from Pittsburgh and said—because this was, you know, a story they would have loved to get into at that time anyway—you see, for a long time, I was the rising young artist—rising young artist.

I was a rising young artist for so long, and I never rose when I was in Pittsburgh, it was later, you know. I was always rising there. And so they called up the rising young artist after she was married in Washington—long-distance which really threw me—and said, "What do you intend to do about this—Ms. Comes, what do you intend to do about this painting?"

I said, "Well, if it isn't returned, I would like some redress. I have planned my whole bedroom around the color scheme of that painting."

[Laughter.]

MS. WINSLOW: So I made it up as I went along.

MR. PENNINGTON: It was one of the legendary experiences.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes. I will have to say that before I left Pittsburgh, I think even before I got this prize in the Carnegie Institute, I got the first painting I ever had framed accepted in the Corcoran Biennial in Washington, so that was very exciting. I think I got too—success a little bit too quickly. It sort of went to my head I think.

MR. PENNINGTON: And you thought you were probably one of the great young modern painters.

MS. WINSLOW: Yeah, oh I thought that anything, that all I had to do was just enter a competition and I would win, you know.

MR. PENNINGTON: At this time, was your painting style realistic, or were you following some of the more, let's say, abstract or cubist tendencies of the day?

MS. WINSLOW: Not at that time, no, because realism was absolutely it at that time, you know, really it wasn't—I don't think you could have made out at all in abstraction and I wasn't exposed to that in Europe, abstraction at that time.

MR. PENNINGTON: So you very much had a classical training.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: And your focus was very much on representational objects.

MS. WINSLOW: Absolutely, it was quite academic. As a matter of fact, before I left the Carnegie School of Fine Arts, I had—I couldn't go into the life class until I had been passed from the cast class. I had to work with charcoal casts which were horribly boring, and I didn't like it, you know. But that was what I had to do. And then we worked with anatomy and we had to start from the skeleton and work up through the various, with transparent inlays with the muscles and so on, so I did have a very academic—background.

MR. PENNINGTON: Right, right. I'm trying to—was Homer Saint-Gaudens involved with the—

MS. WINSLOW: He was. He was the director, yes, at the time of the Carnegie Institute.

MR. PENNINGTON: And did you ever have meetings with him or—

MS. WINSLOW: Well, he wrote a piece on a show that I was in. I was one of the—one of 18 artists who was invited to show at the Carnegie Institute, and he did a very nice piece on that. I knew him.

MR. PENNINGTON: In the meantime though, a very important event has taken place in your life in that you have been exposed to your husband—by which I mean you have met him and have subsequently become engaged.

MS. WINSLOW: Uh-huh.

MR. PENNINGTON: How did all that come about? Because I think it's very important.

MS. WINSLOW: Well, he was an Army engineer and was stationed in Pittsburgh to work with the rivers and harbors.

MR. PENNINGTON: Randolph Winslow.

MS. WINSLOW: Randolph, yes. William Randolph Winslow. And he was a very attractive bachelor who was very—he was well-traveled and well-educated, and so handsome that the first time I saw him, I thought I would have nothing to do with him because he would have to be really very vain. But I fell in love with him while I was painting his portrait and then I got so I couldn't see him.

MR. PENNINGTON: So you painted his portrait when you first met him?

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, yes, because when we returned from Europe the first time, it was still during the Depression. And the apartment—my mother had had to sell the house that my father built—and so we went to an apartment. And the man agreed to make a studio on the top floor of the apartment in a sort of attic which was very nice. So I was painting everybody around, you know, and trying to make out.

There was some sort of a show, an outdoor show, just to help artists to sell their work, and if you got $15 for a painting, you felt you were fortunate at that time.

MR. PENNINGTON: My goodness.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: That's not a bad thing.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: So you painted Mr. Winslow and you became engaged.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes. Yes, we did, after two years. We got married in '34. I knew him for two years. And he became very much interested in painting in the meantime. In fact, he made a guess on the artist that won the first prize in one of the Carnegie Internationals, Carl Hofer, before it was announced. That was a great surprise. But he always was very anxious for me too, to go ahead with my work. He was marvelous in that way.

MR. PENNINGTON: And after your marriage, was that when you first came to Washington?

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, I came to Washington because of that. He was stationed at the Commander Staff School, and I think—is that what it was called? No, it was Industrial War College. And we got a little house in Georgetown when everything was just cheap, cheap, cheap, you know. Paid $82 a month rent for a nice little place down the street which I just heard was for sale for $300,000.

[Laughter.]

MR. PENNINGTON: How marvelous!

MS. WINSLOW: Isn't that—oh!

MR. PENNINGTON: And when you first moved to Washington, was there much of an arts community here at that time?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, the main interest at that time in art was at the Phillips Gallery. Everything revolved around the Phillips Gallery with the group that were doing the most interesting things. I didn't know, since I had been very involved in art in Pittsburgh, and I had been involved in art activities and art organizations, I always have been interested in. I thought well, I would go to the Corcoran and see what was happening there. But at that time, there was—Minnie Garrod was the director and it was—there were only a few people on the staff there and it was very—there wasn't very much at all going on. Everybody said that, well, there was more going on at the

Phillips.

They had a little school, and Bob Gates at that time had—I met the Gates', he and his wife Margaret, and Bill Calfee, and Sarah Baker, and Bernice Cross. They were the ones who were—Mitchell Jamieson I think was around that time—they were the ones who were probably in the forefront. And then eventually, you see, they started the art school at American University.

[Winslow is referring to Robert Franklin Gates, Margaret Casey Gates, and William H. Calfee. –Ed.]

MR. PENNINGTON: Yes, the Fine Arts Department there.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, and it was more or less spearheaded you know, by this group.

MR. PENNINGTON: At this time, you did meet Mr. Gates at that time?

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, uh-huh.

MR. PENNINGTON: Because he has just recently died.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, I wrote a piece on him I want to give you for the archives. I took a photograph of him at the time of the big festival that they had to try to raise money to keep Watkins Gallery going.

[Blank space on tape.]

MR. PENNINGTON: So then through this experience of being in Washington and having married your husband, you began to be open then to other experiences. Because your husband's mother was a writer, wasn't she?

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: Her name was?

MS. WINSLOW: Anne Goodwin Winslow. But of course she lived in Memphis, Tennessee, and we were in Washington, but during the summers—it was a terrible time to go to Tennessee, but we used to spend quite a bit of time with her. However, although she had published poetry at that time, she had not—it wasn't until 1943 that she had a book accepted by Knopf. And then she became well-known. She became known at least in certain circles—because she got awfully good reviews from her things—for altogether I think five books, and all published by Knopf.

So she was a very, very interesting person and she spent some time with me during the war. In fact, when her book came out in '43, she was here with me. And then you see, my husband died in '45 in the war, so I don't—I can't remember when her next books came out but they were all around this period. She kept writing then for a while.

MR. PENNINGTON: So right before the war started, you were still in Washington and had you been exhibiting here at all?

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, I exhibited. I got a prize at the Carnegie—at the Corcoran Gallery, a portrait of my daughter who was eight years old. I think that was in '40—oh dear, when was that? It must have been about '46 or '47. Because the Corcoran used to be host to the art organizations like the Washington Society of Artists, and so I believe that was in that exhibit that I got the prize.

And I showed every year and was involved in most of the art organizations at that time. And the guild, there was a—have you heard of the guild, it was a professional—

MR. PENNINGTON: No.

MS. WINSLOW: —organization that was started during the war, and I was president of that for several years. That was in the '50s. But all of these organizations more or less petered out when the Corcoran and the Smithsonian both said they couldn't show any more local shows. So that then the opportunity to exhibit to a jury was really gone. So that I feel now that what we have are curator shows, and we don't have the opportunities that we used to have really.

MR. PENNINGTON: To see local shows.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: You really have to go to commercial galleries.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: To see show local shows.

MS. WINSLOW: Of course, there were very, very few galleries. In fact, there was only one as I remember, and it was the—it was called the Whytes Gallery, the Whyte Gallery. I had a show with them in—oh, when was that? I'm terribly hard at remembering, it's very difficult to remember dates, years. It was just after the war anyway, and I had already painted some of the poets that I have painted, because I remember they were in that show.

MR. PENNINGTON: In your live—

MS. WINSLOW: I did an awful lot in the late '40s, I know that.

MR. PENNINGTON: It was through your mother-in-law, through Mrs. Winslow, that you—

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, because I met—first I met Allen Tate when I went down to visit one time. He was teaching at the University of Tennessee. And he was a very, very—he and his wife, Caroline Gordon—were very close friends, and they used to spend a lot of time with her. So I think it was in '31—wait a minute, '31? No, I wasn't even married then. It might have been in '39 that I first met Allen Tate down there and did the first portrait of him. And then he came to Washington in '43 or '44. And this was a period that I was knowing a great many of his friends and meeting a lot of the poets and writers. And through really, through him, I was able to do a great many, and I found out who they all were and met them and liked them, and a lot of them were interesting in posing for me. Very few people had ever asked them to do that. In fact, I doubt whether some of then have ever been painted before or since.

MR. PENNINGTON: So then you were something of a fresh person on the scene for painting.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, I was a fresh young person who was—didn't have to worry about knowing everything about the literary world because I was a painter. And that was a great comfort to me because if I made the mistake and called Stephen Crane, Hart Crain, or vice versa, then they wouldn't mind so much.

[Laughter.]

MR. PENNINGTON: They could excuse you.

MS. WINSLOW: They would say, well, you are just a painter. I remember when I asked Caroline Gordon to let me do a portrait of her, and she was working on one of her novels. And I said, "well Caroline, you can come," and she said, "oh, I really don't think I should take the time." And I said, "but you could spend the night; why don't you just come and spend a few days and we will do it in my house, in the studio?" And she said, "oh, it isn't easy like painting. Writing?" I think you could write right here. And she said, "oh, it's not easy like painting."

[Laughter.]

MR. PENNINGTON: She thought that you had it easier.

MS. WINSLOW: That's right.

MR. PENNINGTON: So it was through Allen Tate that you did meet a large number of people.

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: Of these writers who were largely Southern writers. Had you—

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes. He more or less took me under his wing, I mean, they both did. They invited me to all of their parties, and they were very much party-givers, and very social, enjoyed people a great deal. He brought John Crowe Ransom and John Peale Bishop over. Harding Carter's father, I remember. I mean the first Harding Carter was here during the war on the—Robert Penn Warren, and of course, Katherine Anne Porter when she came to live with them.

She took John Peale Bishop's place at the Library of Congress and—

MR. PENNINGTON: As the poetry Chair?

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, the poetry Chair. And Allen called me one time and asked if she could come and stay with me because I guess they were lacking room, or else there was a little, I don't know what going on over there. But—so she did, and she came about February of '44 and stayed. And stayed that winter and then stayed here in the summer while I was away, and then she went to Yaddo after that.

But during this period when she first came, and in fact even before she came, I had planned to do her portrait, and we discussed what she would wear. I ran across a letter that I wrote to Mrs. Winslow because she admired Katherine Anne very much, her writing. They never met, so I—she always looked forward to my letters, and so I wrote her everything that I could think of, you know, about the literary scene and Katherine Anne particularly; which has been very helpful, I must say, to the biographer who is writing her biography, because these letters were all returned to me after Mrs. Winslow died. She told me she was saving my letters, and I would have forgotten everything. I don't have a good memory at all.

[Laughter.]

MR. PENNINGTON: But Allen Tate had been living here during the war because he was at the Library of Congress as well at that time, wasn't he?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, he was the first one I believe that they had. And they stayed—I believe that it was just for two years that they stay in that position, and then somebody else takes their place. But he was—let me see, was he here when Katherine Anne—yes, he was here, so he must have stayed.

MR. PENNINGTON: And was this the very time when a group of these people were up in New Hampshire?

MS. WINSLOW: No, I found—they had nothing to do with New Hampshire, because I found that little place through somebody—a dear friend of mine who was there in the summer. And she, just after my husband died, she asked me if I would care to go up there with my children and sort of try out a place she had just bought. And I did. I discovered that you could buy a house for—which I did—for less than $3,000—40 acres of land and a lovely little Cape Cod house.

MR. PENNINGTON: That's amazing.

MS. WINSLOW: And it was marvelous because I knew, at this time my husband had died, and I knew I wouldn't be wanting to live and be in Washington in the summer, so I suddenly found myself having a summer place.

MR. PENNINGTON: And being a land-owner.

MS. WINSLOW: A land-owner, and it was just marvelous. All of the intelligent business people who had been advising me what to do all said, "don't make this mistake, you must wait until your children are older and you know what you want to do." And if I hadn't done it then, I don't know what my life would have been like. It has meant so much to me.

MR. PENNINGTON: That's amazing. That's marvelous because you have been able to do such good work there and enjoy the peace.

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, this little place had the barn. It was not too large, and it had a north light, and I realized it would make a marvelous studio. And you could get carpenters in for a dollar an hour who fixed over the place for me. It was the smartest thing I ever did in my life, but I never stopped to—in my whole life, I have never stopped to think about the best thing I should do, I always just did it. [Laughter.] I always did what I wanted to.

MR. PENNINGTON: That's wonderful.

MS. WINSLOW: I think I was lucky in the timing, the time that I lived.

MR. PENNINGTON: Before we go on and talk at greater length about some of the people that you've painted, and some of those experiences, I wish that you would maybe just reflect in general for me on the differences between these Southern writers, and perhaps some of the other people that you had been exposed to, because this was your—this was really an exposure to the very core group of the Southern writers and the Southern literary renaissance. And they must have been vastly different than the Northerners that you were used to beforehand. Or do you think so?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, you see, I had never known any Northern writers. I mean, I was initiated to the Southern group and to me, it was just part of my life. I didn't realize that there was anything unusual or different. A lot of them weren't that famous at the time. Since then, since—I mean, this was in the early—in the '40s, and I was just thrilled to know them, and I was thrilled to paint them. To me they were very interesting, and I loved painting creative people because -- I think I've always said they don't ever ask for anything to be except what it is, because they are creative and they seem to know. In other words, you know, if you have a commercial portrait, they want cupid-bow lips or something like that, and you'll not find that with creative people, with artists, I think.

MR. PENNINGTON: So they have been much easier subjects.

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, but they were—it was a fascinating, it was really a fascinating time of my life. And then of course, it wasn't through Allen that I met—that I did the one with Ezra Pound. It was Robert Lowell, who was a cousin of my husband's, but whom I met, whom I saw. Actually I met Robert Lowell in Tennessee. And this was before I came to Washington in 1943. And he was staying with Allen and—do you want to hear about this?

MR. PENNINGTON: Yes indeed.

MS. WINSLOW: He was staying with Allen and Caroline in Monteagle, and that wasn't so very far from Memphis.

MR. PENNINGTON: Where your mother-in-law lives.

MS. WINSLOW: My mother-in-law, I was staying with her because my husband was overseas. And so they invited us to come, and Allen said, "There's a cousin of yours here," and Mrs. Winslow said, "I've never heard of a cousin named Robert Lowell. But Robert Lowell knew that we were cousins anyway. And so we went, we drove to Monteagle and spent a few days there. He was at that time married to Jean Stafford, and Jean Stafford was writing a book. It turned out to be the *Boston Adventure*, and so she was—you always heard typing going along madly upstairs. But Robert Lowell just adored Allen Tate, and he always wanted to be around him, and he would even go and set up a little tent or something, you know, on the grounds if he could be near Allen and get inspiration from him.

I think he had been—I think he had studied with John Crowe Ransom, hadn't he? Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: At Oberlin.

MS. WINSLOW: Well --

MR. PENNINGTON: Or Kenyon.

MS. WINSLOW: Kenyon College, yes, Kenyon College.

MR. PENNINGTON: Kenyon.

MS. WINSLOW: So I guess you have seen the pictures, haven't you? That I have taken at that time at Monteagle? Very interesting. But it was a very interesting few days, and so that was where I had known Robert Lowell first.

MR. PENNINGTON: Robert Lowell.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: And it was Robert Lowell who took you to see Ezra Pound.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: When Pound was here in St. Elizabeths [Hospital]?

MS. WINSLOW: That's right. You see, Allen didn't feel he should go for some reason. And so he had never—he had never gone because after all, there was, you know, sort of a stigma, you know, with Ezra Pound. I suppose you know the story.

MR. PENNINGTON: He had been—Pound had actually made broadcasts for the Fascist side—

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: —during the Second World War.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, and so after he was tried and put into St. Elizabeths, well, it was—Robert Lowell used to go out every week and see him and talk to him. And so in one of the—we always had to get permission to do that. And we got permission from his wife who was living nearby and used to see him all the time, Dorothy Shakespeare Pound. And the only thing was you were not supposed to take photographs or anything, but she said, "well, just"—I still have her letter—"just bring in something, you know, quietly."

The first time I went with Robert Lowell, it was very, very cold.

MR. PENNINGTON: This would have been about—

MS. WINSLOW: It was in probably '40—let me see, it was—oh, I can't remember the year.

MR. PENNINGTON: In the late '40s?

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, probably around '48, something like that, and do you remember the year that he left St. Elizabeths? I have it somewhere but I—

MR. PENNINGTON: I believe it was '59, wasn't it?

MS. WINSLOW: Yeah, but when we arrived there, I remember the—it was so cold outside and the radiator was making this terrible noise. And Ezra Pound had his own special little corner where he always sat and received visitors, and I was really rather petrified to meet this man, I had heard so much about him. I think I was probably shaking when I went in. And he was such a—I kind of—he looked like Santa Claus or something. You know, he had this beard that went off in three different directions. And he was a big man and he gave me a nice big sort of bear hug and I felt more at ease, you know, and I sat down with my pencil and paper while he talked to Lowell.

He had some nerve or something where he had to lean back and put his head back against the chair. Well, I did a sketch and I planned to go back later and make a little painting from the sketch. And the next time that we were able to get together and Lowell was able to take me out, it was an unseasonably warm day. And the usual place where we had to go and have the door unlocked and go in to see him, they weren't there. They were told they could all go out and sit outside.

So I had all my equipment with me, and so I had to do this little sketch very quickly outdoors, and it was entirely different from the sketch I had done inside. I had acrylics so I did it with acrylics.

MR. PENNINGTON: So you were greatly impressed by him?

MS. WINSLOW: Yes. I was impressed—I was impressed because of his great reputation. I wasn't impressed as a painter because I didn't know that much about what he had written, and I wasn't that able to judge really.

MR. PENNINGTON: And so he was one of the people that you painted in that period of the late '40s when you were so familiar with a lot of these other writers.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: Had you already painted Katherine Anne Porter's?

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, I painted her right away in '44 when she was living with me, and probably it never would have gotten done because her—the room that she had in my house was the room next to the one where I worked, and so I was able to more or less snag her, you might say. She was very much interested in having it done. In fact, we went together to pick out her dress. I wanted to paint her in a gray dress because her hair was prematurely white, and she had these beautiful sort of violet eyes, and I just thought the dress should be subdued and not be more important than she was.

And so we did get this lovely, lovely dress which complimented her coloring and her hair and everything, brought out her features, I think. And she, at first, she had something called the virginals. Do you know what virginals are?

MR. PENNINGTON: Yes.

MS. WINSLOW: They are a little thing that you—I never heard her play it but she owned one and adored it, and wanted really to have it in the painting.

MR. PENNINGTON: Somewhat like a dulcimer.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, and I would have loved to have put it in. I had some sketches, but somehow it didn't work in. It's—it just, the shape of it didn't work out for the shape of the picture. So I do have it. I made a three-quarter painting with I think in a very nice pose with both of her hands in it, and with an expression that she often had.

But it was very difficult to get her to sit because she was always very, very involved in a great many things and her health was never good, and she—but I was able to manage it.

MR. PENNINGTON: So she was a very energetic sort of person.

MS. WINSLOW: Well, not so energetic, she wasn't well. She never was terribly well. She had had tuberculosis at one time; and so she used to have these bronchial spells that really made her quite weak, and she would get exhausted. She got exhausted very easily.

MR. PENNINGTON: And yet she lived to be quite --

MS. WINSLOW: She lived to be 90 and with emphysema during the last, say 20 years almost of her life, but she was frail. No, she was frail and she was—and she was a person who put everything off because of that. I mean, you never knew—I remember one time when she was supposed to give a talk in New York on the radio. And she had to get a certain train to make that, and I was so worried because she was not hurrying for that. I had to go and get her and drive her down there, you know, and I don't know what would have happened. But she often would cancel at the last minute, so people never knew for sure if she was ever going to arrive.

MR. PENNINGTON: Arrive.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes. I guess that is pretty well-known about her. Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: Was it in this period that you met, of your first association with these writers, that you met Eudora Welty, the Mississippi writer?

MS. WINSLOW: Oh, Eudora Welty came up for—to Washington during the war. And I met her through a friend of hers, not through the literary group, a man who was here during the war who was from Jackson, Mississippi. And he said to me, I have a good friend, Eudora Welty, who wasn't awfully well-known at the time—she had maybe published one or two books. But Katherine Anne, you see, had told me about Eudora and had also—had written her the forward --

MR. PENNINGTON: The introduction to the first volume of short stories.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, and so he said I'd love to give a party for her, but I don't—I just live in this little place. And I said, "oh, I could—let me do it, and I said do you think she'd come here and stay?" And he said, "well, I'll ask her." I can't remember whether I wrote to her, but anyway, she did come—I guess I must have written and invited her—but when she arrived I mean, to my house to spend a couple of days with me, which was the first time we had met. And I just loved her the minute I met her, the minute she walked in I just thought she was such a terrific person.

I was leaving for the—getting ready to leave for the summer. And as a matter of fact, the people that were going to take my house—I had promised them that they could come in in two days, and they said—I said, "I won't be able to finish in that time." And they said "well, you can put your things in the third floor or whatever you want, and come in, but we hate to be in a hotel." And I said, "well, that's perfectly all right." So we had arranged that. So I wasn't worried about having to leave the house completely when Eudora came.

But I gave this garden party for her, and I remember, you know, she's so sweet and modest, and she said, "oh, I don't see why you should be doing this for me, you know, why should you be doing this for me?" I didn't realize you know, what a drawing card she is, she would be. And so at one point I said to her, "you know, I think I really ought to paint you," and she said, "all right." She was so agreeable, so nice.

We went up and I started this little painting and it just went miraculously. It's probably one of the best things I've ever done. And then in two sittings—but of course, I had to also let an awful lot of other things just simply go. And in fact, the day she was—that she left, I had to leave and let the other people come in, and I was going to stay with my mother and then come back and gradually, you know, sort of get the house in shape. And so when we left, we were invited to a tea at Mrs. Katherine Biddle's, who was one of the poets in the literary group, and she lived up 31st Street, and she had asked me to bring Eudora.

And so my car, I put as much in my car as I possibly could, getting ready. I had some things packed of course, and the very last thing that I handed the wet painting to Eudora to hold. You know, it was very small, just this big—10 by 12 or something. And I drove the car and Eudora had to put her long legs over the suitcases, you know, and was holding the little painting. And we got up to Mrs. Biddle's and we took the painting in, and I was so thrilled with it, that all the people that were there, I said, "isn't this wonderful?"

[Laughter.]

MR. PENNINGTON: Because you thought the painting was so marvelous.

MS. WINSLOW: I did. I was almost as though I had nothing to do with it. You know, it just sort of came out of the astral, yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: You have had quite a marvelous experience then painting some of the great writers and poets.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: Just tell me who are some of the others that you painted besides Katherine Anne Porter and Allen Tate and Eudora Welty.

MS. WINSLOW: Well, Robert Penn Warren I painted in 1945—I think it was '45, yes—and he was writing *All the King's Men* at that time. And all of these people that I asked to sit for me, I made the paintings quite small so they wouldn't have to spend too much time, because I didn't want to ask them to do that. And then gradually that's the way it happened. As each one came to take the chair of poetry -- Karl Shapiro, and I should get my list out—and Leonie Adams, I painted both of those at their desks at the Library of Congress. I went in to do those, you know, in acrylic. And Elizabeth Bishop came out to pose for me here, and Mark Van Doren I met through—he wasn't at the Library, but he was a friend who used to come to the meetings and—

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MR. PENNINGTON: So we are now discussing the writers and various authors that you have painted. And we've, as I said earlier, we talked about Katherine Anne Porter and Eudora Welty and Robert Penn Warren and Mark Van Doren, and then you painted Mrs. Winslow.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes. Well, she spent the war years here with me because she lives in a great big old drafty house in Tennessee. And of course, all the servants had gone away, you know, to factories or the war, so she really couldn't keep up the place by herself. And so she, in 1945, I painted her that winter. And '45, yes, that was around the period when my husband, when we heard that he had died in the war and—but she returned several years after that until the war was completely over.

And I painted her sitting right here in the window. She never used the portrait on her books though. But the photographs that Knopf took of her were never—never looked as much like her or were as good of her actually, as that one. You know how, you know how some women, particularly when they're not young, they don't see themselves as being the age they are when you paint them. And this has happened—this happens practically all the time. So that nobody wants --

MR. PENNINGTON: They see themselves as much younger.

MS. WINSLOW: Yeah, nobody wants to be remembered really as—well, probably—

MR. PENNINGTON: Ancient.

MS. WINSLOW: Yeah, well, maybe after 30.

[Laughter.]

MS. WINSLOW: Particularly women. And there isn't any point, you know, in making them look young. I think they should be made to look the way they look.

MR. PENNINGTON: The way they actually look.

MS. WINSLOW: Yeah.

MR. PENNINGTON: Yes, indeed.

MS. WINSLOW: Katherine Anne always looked very young though for her age. While she was staying with me, she said she would like to have her 50th birthday party here, and she was a marvelous cook. She had gone to a great cooking school in Paris, Dione Lucas or somebody, I don't remember—no, it was—what is it?

MR. PENNINGTON: Cordon Bleu?

MS. WINSLOW: Cordon Bleu, yes, Cordon Bleu. And she used to always like to say when they asked her—you know, she was not tall, kind of a petite, beautiful figure -- and when she went to the Cordon Bleu, and they said you know, "Madam, would you like to make a soufflé?" And she said "No, I want to cook a wild boar!" [Laughter.]

Anyway, she used to—she would often take over the kitchen when she was staying here with me, you know, and do marvelous things. So she planned this—her 50th birthday party, and with a very distinguished group of people I remember that came, but I didn't discover until some years later, it was her 54th birthday because she had kept that a deep dark secret.

[Laughter.]

MS. WINSLOW: And I would say that she certainly didn't even look 50 when I painted her.

MR. PENNINGTON: That's good.

MS. WINSLOW: She didn't have lines in her face; she had a lovely figure and was very attractive, beautiful.

MR. PENNINGTON: And she was not married at this point?

MS. WINSLOW: Not at that point. Allen Tate used to always say when she wasn't married, she's in the nesting period.

[Laughter.]

MS. WINSLOW: She had been married to Albert Erskine. He had been her last husband, and she never was married again after that. I mean, there were men in her life but they weren't --

MR. PENNINGTON: They weren't like --

MS. WINSLOW: That's right.

MR. PENNINGTON: Well, continue with some of the others that you had painted.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes. Well then, Denis Devlin was an Irish poet, a charming, charming man who was at the Irish Embassy. And he was a poet that Allen Tate introduced me to, and whose work he liked very much, and I think he translated some things of Alexis [Saint-Leger] Leger, the French poet. And then Denis—that was, by the time I painted him in 1946, I was—I had been lent this beautiful studio in Noel Macy's house in Georgetown.

It had been one of the lucky things that had happened to me, because when the Macy's bought this old federal house, it had the whole top floor -- it was a four-story, huge house -- the whole top floor had been made into a studio by the woman that had owned it before. And when I met Mrs. Macy through a mutual friend, I asked her where she lived and she said "Well, I live 3339 N Street." And I said oh -- because it was right around the corner from where my mother lived -- I said, "That's the house that looks like it has a big window that's a studio in the back," and she said, "Yes, that's the one."

And so I said, "Well, I always wondered who would be lucky enough to use such a place," and she said, "Would you like to?" And of course, I didn't believe her, but afterwards she said I'll have a key made for you. The key is a very unusual kind made in the old houses. It's a very long one that has a hinge on the little end of it. Have you ever seen one like that? That goes down and unlocks the door. It has to be a hand-made key. Well, she gave me that key and she said, "Use the studio." Well, it's—I've been there now for almost 35 years.

MR. PENNINGTON: Oh my goodness.

MS. WINSLOW: And I have painted most of my portraits there. I didn't do the earlier ones there because it wasn't until 1946 that this great thing happened to me. Well, the Macys you see, they couldn't possibly use any more money, and I couldn't possibly afford it, so I just have given them paintings every now and then.

MR. PENNINGTON: And they still live there?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, she does. Noel Macy died a few years ago. And she lives there and we're very good friends, and she has been, to me, a great patroness of the arts, to do a thing like that, I must say.

So I painted Denis there. I painted Ezra Pound at St. Elizabeth's, as I said. And then I painted Juan Ramon Jimenez, the Spanish poet who later won the Nobel Prize. He was staying at—in Hyattsville. He had left Spain when Franco came in. And so through one of my friends who knew that he was here, she said, "Oh, you're doing all these poets, you certainly ought to do Juan Ramon because he is a great poet." And so I made arrangements. He didn't speak English very well, and I certainly didn't speak Spanish. But I went out to his house and he was agreeable to let me do this. I asked him later when I found out that people were amazed that I was able to get him to sit for me, I said—I managed to get across to him the idea 'Why did you let me do this?' And he said, "Because you didn't have red on your fingernails."

[Laughter.]

MS. WINSLOW: Well, that was what he said, but it was interesting. He was a very, very—an unusual, amazing man. It was soon after that that he left to live in Puerto Rico and won the Nobel Prize.

And however, I met a man who had something to do with the—what is that room, the Pan-American room or something in the Library of Congress -- and he said—I met him at a party and I said, "Oh, you would be interested, now I'm painting Juan Ramon Jimenez." And he said, "Oh, how did you do that? We can't even get a photograph of him." And I said, "Oh, I didn't know, you know, I didn't know it was—I have another sitting to do."

So I did it in two sittings, and then I—they came to see it and they liked it very much and wanted it; but again, Juan Ramon did not want to be remembered at the age I painted him, so they told me. So I still have it.

MR. PENNINGTON: It's another case where age interfered.

MS. WINSLOW: That's right, that's right. Then after that, in '49, I painted Leonie Adams who—I painted that right in the Library, a small one of her. And then in '49, I also did Katherine Biddle. She used the name Katherine Chapin for work. She came to my studio for that. And Karl Shapiro—oh no, I did Karl Shapiro earlier than that I guess. I think that was in '47 that I did him. Elizabeth Bishop I painted in 1951 and then I painted Robert Frost in 1952.

MR. PENNINGTON: How did you meet Robert Frost? Was it when he was at the Library of Congress as the Poet—

MS. WINSLOW: Well, he wasn't. No, he never had that. Robert Lowell asked him—at the time Robert Lowell had the chair there—he asked Robert Frost to read his poetry to be recorded. So he invited Mrs. Winslow and me, who was staying with me at the time, to come and meet him and listen, which we did. So I asked him at that time if he would mind, if I would, since I went to New Hampshire in the summer, if I could come to Vermont to paint him, and he said I could.

MR. PENNINGTON: Oh wow, so you went to his farm?

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, in Middlebury.

MR. PENNINGTON: And saw the famous site of so much of his work?

MS. WINSLOW: His work?

MR. PENNINGTON: I mean the landscape that he used so much in his --

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, oh yes, of course, yes, I painted it right there in his own little place. And then, well, the—I guess it was not until '61 that I did Richard Eberhart. And Robert Lowell I didn't do until 1974, so there was a difference there.

MR. PENNINGTON: So you had known Lowell all these years but had not painted him until much later.

MS. WINSLOW: Well, he never wanted to sit. Of course I wanted to paint him. And he used to say to me, "Oh, I really hate to sit." When I was 16, I had to sit for a Miss Stackpole—I don't know why I always remember that name—but I never felt I wanted to put him through that. He was—he had just been divorced from Jean Stafford and I think he was going through, you know, as he always did, had some difficulties, you know, always—

MR. PENNINGTON: Emotionally.

MS. WINSLOW: -- emotionally, and I didn't feel that—he was shy and I thought well, I don't like to ask people to do things that they don't feel like. So I just let it go, and it wasn't until 1974 when he was married to the English woman—what was her name? He had already been married to Katherine, to Elizabeth Hardwick and he left her to marry the English woman, I forgot her name, do you? [Winslow is referring to Lady Caroline Blackwood. –Ed.]

MR. PENNINGTON: I don't remember her name.

MS. WINSLOW: And—but he came from England to give a talk at the Library—at the Smithsonian. And he phoned me and I don't know what had happened to him in the meantime—he had had a son by her, as well as a daughter by Elizabeth Hardwick, who he named for our mutual cousin, Harriet Winslow. He phoned me and said, "I've always been sorry I didn't let you paint me," but he said, "I will just be here a short time, would you like to do some photographs?" And I said I would love to.

We met at Harriet Winslow's grave up at Oak Hill Cemetery. And I made some sketches and took some photographs, and I had to do the painting from that because—which I don't like to do, I would like to have had him sit, but that was the best I could do for that.

MR. PENNINGTON: That's amazing, so that's when you actually got around to painting him.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, not until '74.

MR. PENNINGTON: He had many problems along the way.

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, very much, very much so. And mostly they were—I don't think he was in Washington when most of that happened. But I used to hear about him a lot; I had letters from the Tates about—because he

was always very close to them.

MR. PENNINGTON: And you remained close to Allen Tate then throughout his --

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, well, as long as he was around. He had been such a very, very close friend of my mother-in-law's, and so yes, he was a very close friend. He used to come and tell me all his adventures; and you know, he was divorced from Caroline, and then he married her again and then in-between there were all sorts of other people.

Well, whenever he—whenever there would be any of these friends, like when Philip Brode came to Washington, he just said well, would I put them up, you know, or would I give a party. I was always giving—having the poets over. You know, they were always coming, and it was usually Allen who --

MR. PENNINGTON: So you were running the literary salon of Washington.

MS. WINSLOW: Well, it was probably because he needed a place for it; and the Chinese from Nashville were living in Anacostia, of all places.

MR. PENNINGTON: Oh my goodness.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, because well, you know, Anacostia at that time, it wasn't like it is now.

MR. PENNINGTON: It was more like a summer community.

MS. WINSLOW: Well, it was out of the way, but it was not terribly far from the Library of Congress and I guess it was—they could afford it so they went there.

MR. PENNINGTON: Let's shift to a slightly different aspect of your career, and talk about your activities with the art world here in Washington, and your first interest in Artists' Equity here in Washington which I believe you have been very associated with.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes. Well, I belonged to Artists' Equity when it was—when there was no chapter here. It was—artists could be members-at-large around the country and—but it wasn't until—I wasn't that active, doing very much actively, I just believed in it. I've always believed in anything that would help artists. And it wasn't until 1960—wait a minute, '65, it was 1965 -- that a former president of Artists' Equity was teaching at the Corcoran, and he said, I just got this notice that this man was having a group of artists to come to his house to discuss starting a chapter in Artists' Equity, so I went. The other artists who were interested went, and then there were several meetings, and then they started a chapter.

I was asked to be a vice president of the chapter. And after I was vice president, I became a president for four years, and so naturally I was very much involved in it. And I have just written a history about it actually, for the Artists' Equity newsletter here. Because a lot of people, a lot of the members now—here it is in the '80s—and they don't really know anything about the beginning or how difficult it was and all the things that we did. We put out two directories and really have made some impact here.

MR. PENNINGTON: In many ways, it has been a great struggle for artists to be represented in Washington, and the growth of galleries has been very much a phenomenon of the last 10 or 15 years, hasn't it?

MS. WINSLOW: Very much so. Because as I said, there was only one gallery when I first remember it, the Whyte Gallery; and there was another, the second one I think started called the Obelisk, it was in Georgetown. And I can remember going to that opening and talking to Herman Williams, who was the director of the Corcoran, and Bill Walton who was an artist, friend of the Kennedys. And I said, "Do you think there's a chance that a gallery can succeed without having a bookshop?" They said no. You see, the Whyte Gallery was also a bookshop. It still is, that's the [Franz] Bader Gallery.

MR. PENNINGTON: Yes.

MS. WINSLOW: So they always had to have books, and nobody thought that just a gallery selling pictures could ever make out. Actually, it was—it did pretty well I think.

MR. PENNINGTON: Do you remember when the Henri Gallery opened?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, that was started in Alexandria and then moved over to Washington, you know, to P Street, I don't remember what year.

MR. PENNINGTON: It was in the '60s. Was it really the first of the strong contemporary art galleries in Washington in the '60s?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, that was one of the ones, yes, it was. Yes, it was, uh-huh.

MR. PENNINGTON: And quite a good one.

MS. WINSLOW: Well, I think the one that was considered perhaps the best was the Jefferson Place. And that was the group with [Robert Franklin] Gates and [William Howard] Calfee and that small group. I just taped Bill for your archives, and he was telling me a little bit about it.

MR. PENNINGTON: Bill Calfee?

MS. WINSLOW: Yeah, yeah.

MR. PENNINGTON: Oh, how nice.

MS. WINSLOW: Yeah.

MR. PENNINGTON: Let's talk something about your style. You were painting very representational paintings in the '30s and early '40s and then did you have an abstract, a period in which you were more abstract than you were at other times?

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, because it became quite impossible to get a painting in a show that was not—that was realistic. And I don't think this was the reason, however, that I did—I never went completely abstract, but I—it was just—I became interested in cubism and so [Georges] Braque was one of my favorite, you know, I was very influenced by that. And actually during this period when I worked semi-abstractly, I had much more success; I won more prizes with the work than I did at that time, and I loved it.

It is just, something happens with the climate, I think. You know, it's just the way if you tried to work cubistically now, you know, it just doesn't go over. I mean it's just not right.

MR. PENNINGTON: Art is somehow subject to taste and to mood swings almost.

MS. WINSLOW: Well, I don't know, it's not that I ever was trying to—because actually it was never that easy to sell. I mean, that wasn't the reason. It was just somehow the mood or the climate or something. And I said to Leonard Maurer, one of my good artist friends, he said -- at one point when I came back from New Hampshire and I had some things to show him, and they were, they were—I said, you know, it used to be that I wanted to paint—that Braque was my favorite, and now it is [Jean-Baptiste-Simeon] Chardin. [Laughter.] And I said that's the only way I can explain it because I never used to look at Chardin.

MR. PENNINGTON: How did you—do you feel the pendulum has swung back the other way and that these days, they are more interested in representation painting?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, there certainly is but you see, you can do anything now. I mean there is just no—not any one thing at all, but I think abstraction became so embedded. I mean, you truly, no matter how good you were, could not get a painting in a show that was not abstract, and that really wasn't right.

MR. PENNINGTON: You feel it had too much of an over-influence, that it had almost gone the opposite direction from the 19th Century where it became almost as oppressive as we think --

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, absolutely, sure.

MR. PENNINGTON: -- certain aspects of the 19th Century were.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, and I think it's still, it is still today, there are a great many, I don't want to say organizations, but people who have only come up in that period that are not able to take realism at all because they don't understand it, and they feel—they have this feeling it was old hat or you know, academic, or who wants that. It doesn't have to be. I mean, like all these realist shows now are—have so many different sorts of ways of painting.

But it is just that realist painting can be so bad, and you can tell it's so bad when you look at it. You can't always tell abstraction is bad. There is an awful lot of bad abstraction that is done.

MR. PENNINGTON: Oh, that's an interesting observation.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: You are still painting all the time.

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, uh-huh.

MR. PENNINGTON: Every day?

MS. WINSLOW: Not every day, no. I get interested in—I have a lot of other interests. I have done a lot of writing this winter, and that just takes time, you can't --

MR. PENNINGTON: You've written quite a few articles on art and artists for Washington publications, haven't you?

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, I was the editor of the National News—Artists' Equity Newsletter for about four years, and I loved doing that. It really was interesting. I just feel -- in fact my mother-in-law, who didn't become a successful writer, or well-known until she was in her—until she was in her middle 60's, that was when her first novel was taken by Knopf—and she said you know, her friends like the Tates really resented that because they felt that she had been a dilettante, she had this talent. And she said she didn't believe that you, you know, should give up everything else for your work and do nothing else. She had enjoyed her life and she had a great many things that interested her and friends and so on, and I feel the same way.

I think there are so many interesting things in life, and I could give up everything and just paint and try to be very ambitious and make it to the top and everybody gets very jealous of everybody else when all this is happening, and I just neglected all that. I mean, I am not that ambitious. I have just—I have enjoyed everything. I've enjoyed my life. I've enjoyed my painting. I've enjoyed things that happened through that, but I don't think I've been—you know, that I've said, "Oh, this is it, I've just to got to be this great painter," you know?

I think I have talent, but maybe I have not used it to the full, but I've done an awful lot of work.

MR. PENNINGTON: And you feel quite content with that.

MS. WINSLOW: Well, I do, yes, I do, because after all, you only have one life. And I've enjoyed—I enjoyed my gardening, I enjoyed my house, I enjoyed my grandchildren. And I feel if you want to be—if you don't want to be miserable, eating your heart out for something that maybe you can't have, I like my mint julep and having a friend like you.

MR. PENNINGTON: So you have a nice life. Let's talk about one last little sort of extraneous item, and that is the fact that at one point in time, you painted Alice Roosevelt Longworth, didn't you?

MS. WINSLOW: Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: And how did you come to be acquainted with her?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, she was a great reader, and she had liked Mrs. Winslow's books. You see, her [grand]mother was Southern, the [grand]mother that died when she was—soon after she was born so she never remembered her. [Ms. Winslow is referring to Martha Bulloch Roosevelt, Alice Roosevelt Longworth's paternal grandmother. –Ed.]

MR. PENNINGTON: Bulloch.

MS. WINSLOW: Bulloch. She had a great interest in—well, she loved her books, anyway, and through a young German diplomat who had known Mrs. Winslow in Memphis, who came to Washington and somehow or other met Mrs. Longworth, he told us one time when she was staying with me that Mrs. Longworth would like to meet her.

Well, we thought he was just showing off. We did not think that he could produce Mrs. Longworth, but sure enough, he—well, of course, yes, certainly, bring her to tea, and so he suddenly called up and said he was, she was coming.

[Laughter.]

Well then we thought, oh dear! Mrs. Winslow had a great sense of humor and we used to laugh—what in the world we had heard about all these comments she made, and you know, she could be so difficult and we were preparing ourselves, you know, for this onslaught, and she was absolutely delightful. She always was, as I found, with creative people. I think it was just—I don't know why she got along with people, you know, maybe who were doing things that she was sort of interested in.

And so we had a lovely time with her, and then it was—I don't know, sometime after that, I was asked to paint her granddaughter. Not through her but through—I don't mean—her daughter I mean. Wait a minute, not her daughter. Her daughter was—it was her granddaughter Joanna Sturm, who was only eight or nine years old. And

it was through another painting that her mother had seen this.

So that eventually ended up at Mrs. Longworth's house. And then when I had an exhibit one time—I was teaching at Catholic University, I taught there for about four years -- and I was having a one-man show there, and sent her a notice. And she called up and said she would like to go, she would come and get me in her car, which she did, and so in going back to her house, I said, "Mrs. Longworth, I've never—may I come in and make a photograph of the painting of your granddaughter?" Because in the meantime, her daughter had died, you know. Her granddaughter was living with her.

And she said, "Of course, it's your painting." So I went in and we had a nice little visit and everything, and I said, "I really would like to paint you too." Well, she said fine, so I did. I never could work before 2:00 in the afternoon because she never—nobody could even find her until 2:00 in the afternoon. She read all night according to what everybody says, and would sleep late in the morning.

It was very interesting. We painted in her house, and have a lot of her, you know, I wanted to get the sort of atmosphere of her place.

MR. PENNINGTON: It was very atmospheric, wasn't it?

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, it certainly was. It still has the old you know, the skins of the animals that her father had killed; and she had, you know, covers on her—I mean, I don't think she had ever changed anything in her house from the beginning. You know, she probably got it all there and then it stayed like that.

MR. PENNINGTON: Forever.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes, it had quite a lot of her own character. But—she talked a lot during the sittings. She didn't really pose. You know, she loved to talk and her granddaughter would come in and she would converse with her, and then I had a showing later of it in my studio.

MR. PENNINGTON: She came along?

MS. WINSLOW: Oh yes, she was the first one there.

MR. PENNINGTON: That's marvelous.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes.

MR. PENNINGTON: Let's wrap up this particular session in which we've tried to get down some of the points of your interests and activities in your very interesting career by talking just a little bit about Georgetown, because you have been in Georgetown for quite a long time and you have seen it go through many changes, and are very fond of it.

MS. WINSLOW: Yes well, I liked it better earlier when there weren't so many people. It has just become so crowded, and Wisconsin Avenue, I never go there Saturday, never. I mean, to walk down there in all this crowd is just too much. I used to be able to get in my car, run down to the Tastybake on Wisconsin or N, buy a loaf of bread, and come back and find a place right in front of my house. Those were the days.

But it was very sleepy and I liked it that way. You know, there were a lot of antique shops and everything closed at 5 o'clock, and the evenings were dark, and there was only one restaurant, it was called—oh, what was the name of that? It really was hardly a restaurant, it was just a little place; that was the one place to go if you wanted to go out to eat, and I remember when—it's now part of the Carriage House.

Well, anyway, nobody ever went out for dinner anyway I guess. But—

MR. PENNINGTON: You have seen Washington go through a lot of changes too.

MS. WINSLOW: When I first came to—as a bride here in the '30s, my husband and I used to take a walk every late afternoon, and it wasn't—you know, it wasn't built up at all. Well, I mean houses were all here, but there were ever so many streets that were just, you know, completely non-renovated at all. You could buy a house—the house that we lived in—you see, I was at 3136 until I came back in '43 and that was a little house that I told you was now -- where we paid $82 a month rent, and we offered to buy that for $10,000, and the owner wanted 12, so we didn't get it, we didn't buy it.

[Laughter.]

MS. WINSLOW: That's what it was like.

MR. PENNINGTON: Times have changed.

MS. WINSLOW: And if you owned a house and you were in the Army, as my husband was, you couldn't expect to rent it while you were gone, so people hesitated, you know. Houses would be for a rent for a long, long time, even at those low prices.

MR. PENNINGTON: You have been in this house since '43?

MS. WINSLOW: Since '43, yeah.

MR. PENNINGTON: So it must seem truly and deeply like your home?

MS. WINSLOW: Well, yes, because my children grew up here, when I was able to get it through a friend when my husband went overseas, and then I was able to buy it later on. I got it at a very nice, low price or I wouldn't have it today. Did I ever tell you what I paid for it?

MR. PENNINGTON: Yes, I think you did.

MS. WINSLOW: Incredible. It couldn't be sold as long as the woman lived and when she died at 86, thank God, it was just got me just about the—I couldn't have gone another year and still have been able to buy it.

MR. PENNINGTON: You just barely nosed out the equity.

MS. WINSLOW: That's right, that's right, yeah.

MR. PENNINGTON: Well, Georgetown is so lovely, especially on a pretty day like today.

MS. WINSLOW: Oh, isn't it gorgeous today? A perfect day.

MR. PENNINGTON: And I would like to thank you so much for this first interview, and I look forward to future conversations.

MS. WINSLOW: Thank you.

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