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Oral history interview with Edwin W. Dickinson, 1962 August 22

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Edwin Dickinson on August 22, 1962. The interview was conducted in Provincetown, MA by Dorothy Seckler for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Interview

DS: DOROTHY SECKLER
ED: EDWIN DICKINSON

DS: This is Dorothy Seckler interviewing Edwin Dickinson at Provincetown on August 22. Mr. Dickinson, we agreed that you have some reminiscences of your study with William M. Chase that would be interesting to students of art history, and I think it would be very helpful if you could think back to the early time at the Art Students League when you entered his class, or perhaps begin by giving us a little background as to how you happened to go to the League in the first place; how you decided to become an artist and to come to the League to study.

ED: I had failed at something previous to deciding to become a professional art student, full-time art student. I had always drawn more than other boys and it was suggested that I become an artist. I agreed, and entered Pratt Institute to draw from the antique in the fall of 1910. The following year, the fall of 1911, I was living in Manhattan and decided to go to the Art Students League, which was the premier school of the country -- had been for a long while and was so considered, I believe. I chose to study with William B. Chase who was one of the instructors at the school.

DS: Was he about the best known at that time at the League?

ED: Oh, yes, very much. He didn't criticize twice a week as the others did. And they were glad to get him once a week, and so were we. The other crack man with whom to study at that time was Robert Henri. I chose Chase without knowing what was, perhaps, the greater suitability for me in studying with Henri. I didn't know. And I've never thought that I chose wrong. Either one would have done well. I wanted to go to the League. It was the big prestige school in the professional art student's horizon. People came from the Art Institute of Chicago and from other places to the League. And they still do, though many other schools now make it less the chief school than formerly.

DS: Of course, you're an art teacher at the League yourself.

ED: I've taught there for a good many years part time -- all the instructors are part time.

DS: Yes. Can you recall your first impressions of meeting Mr. Chase in the class?

ED: Oh, yes. In the fall of 1911, following my year at the antique at Pratt Institute, I entered the League and drew from life in the morning, and painted in the Chase class in the afternoon, which was in two parts: Chase portrait and Chase still life. I entered the still-life class and painted a still life "premier coup" every day for seven months. Mr. Chase came once a week, on Friday, I believe, and was much listened to. I well recall his first appearance, my first view of him. It was known on what day he was to come. It was probably several days after the class began in the fall, probably on a Friday. We waited anxiously, those of us to whom he was new, for what would be his footsteps coming down the hall, and of course it would always be somebody else. But finally in he walked, looking brisk, with big mustachios and beard, and the ring, the tie, well-dressed, and a cocktail on his breath. His first words, as he looked around at the class, were, "All new faces." Which is not an important remark, but because he made it, we all, I daresay, remember it. I do. He went from easel to easel. It was entirely in oil; all the students worked in oil. And almost all of them "premier coup." We did, in other words, six a week, five or six, five. Many of which we painted out, and some of which we might work on a second time, though usually not. He stopped at each easel conscientiously. The piece was not elaborately drawn because "premier coup" you can't draw much and have the requisite painting time left over. But if your handling of the ellipses as of their indication of ellipticalness showed that you didn't understand the ellipse, he wouldn't make any remark on the painting, because the drawing indicated that you had better learn more about some essentials in the drawing before his advice on your painting was to be of use to you. He wouldn't look at it if it was not well enough drawn to make a promising beginning, as it were. The edges didn't have to be neat or anything of that kind, but the least strike toward an elliptical shape, however roughly done, shows immediately whether it's a comprehended affair or not.

DS: In terms of perspective particularly, or in terms of . . . ?

ED: Well, the ellipse -- its perspective doesn't enter in because it's the circle in perspective, and it's a circle in contradistinction to the oval, which of course is never circular. But the ellipse is the circle in perspective, and its proportions are determined by the position relative to the observer's eye. If one's drawing showed that one was more or less on the make, Mr. Chase required nothing more and gave you the criticism on the piece as a painting and polychrome.

DS: Do you remember an early criticism of one of your own still-life paintings, or the kind of criticism that he would typically make in terms of the lighting or color?

ED: I do remember one. I had done a head; I had not yet painted a head, but I had done one outside of class, of some fellow student or something, and I guess he saw it. He looked at me rather astonished and said, "Why, she's a giantess!" And that was the end of that.

DS: Did you have anything to do with the way a subject was set up or did the students themselves do that?

ED: No. Everybody did it for himself. The class was made up of people of dissimilar backgrounds in length of practice, different lengths of practice, some of them somewhat experienced, and others brand new, as I. The class constitution was helter-skelter. There was a fellow who was the crack rifle shot of the country at one time. Another was a circus performer, a young Englishman. And there were others. The young circus performer had not caught on that you must never address Mr. Chase except to ask what you considered an important question, and he would probably answer it. But he hadn't caught that; he hadn't had any background. With his very first painting he asked Mr. Chase to look at it, or put it on his easel. It was a painting of a lion with a frame around it, and over the frame were screwed bars so that the lion was behind the bars. Of course that was considered a big joke by the more sophisticated people who saw that Griff, the English acrobat, didn't know what kind of a thing to bring up. And when Chase looked at it he said, "Where are you from?" And Griff said, "I'm from the land of great painters." Chase said, "Where's that?" Griff said, "England!" Everybody laughed.

DS: Particularly since Chase had studied in Germany -- Munich. That made it all the more pointed.

ED: At the end of the week we handed out our pieces, saved almost none, and during the following weeks did other sets.

DS: Did he talk much about the way you use the brush in applying the color or the pigment?

ED: Yes. He liked stylish brushwork, he himself being a practiser of the native gift in sweet brushwork. In the case of that as a thing recommended or given much importance to by him in criticizing work showing or not showing that quality, he never let it be considered that brushwork without work of the more serious superiorness in color and in form as being the thing that was carried by the brushwork, he never let it be that the brushwork would hide any sins. His own work, so stylish, was marked for thoroughness in his still lifes with the fish and without, and his drawings from the nude, and his heads and so forth, was never let go with attractive brushwork not about something more important than it, by a good deal.

DS: Mmhmm. Did he have the students build up forms in values first, or work directly with color?

ED: Oh, there was no time in "premier coup" to do any underpainting of any kind. And nobody attempted it. We all painted just to go to work on "premier coup."

DS: Was that a fairly new way of working, rather radical at the time? Or was it pretty much an accepted procedure -- the "premier coup?"

ED: Well, the "premier coup" had come from France in about 1880, I suppose -- the strike in the out-of-doors.

DS: But he had, of course, not accepted Impressionist color. Was there any question of blue shadows and that sort of thing?

ED: We didn't know what would have been his remarks had we been painting in the field, because we were indoors. And the blue shadow is, of course, occurring out-of-doors as of a color understood as having been seen, than indoors.

DS: Yes.

ED: Color indoors is, of course, absolutely unpredictable. And outdoors too. Although there is seemingly a greater repetitiousness of blue shadows in the sun on light or white surfaces, or a post on the sand, any of those things. Does my turning toward you make any difference?

DS: What kind of color did he seem to favor, and how did he help you to see color in painting?

ED: I don't think he helped us particularly. I never recall any remarks that were to show his finger in directing us to do other than the best we could from the occasion of piece work, the experience of that piece. The objects which we painted -- many white objects, and dark ones, and copper and brass, and fruit if you wanted to bring it in, or anything you wanted, an antique cast, anything -- the color was how you carried it out. And if the color, passage to passage, or in the piece as a whole involved inharmoniousness, I think one would have heard from it. With the subject matter being as gray as much of it was, there was less strikingness of clashing rather raw colors than if the key had been raised or the pieces had been pointed out-of-doors with the sun on the canvas, a cardinal principle of the development of a colorist.

DS: Was he vary particular about the position of your canvas in relationship to a source of light?

ED: I don't recall his saying anything about it. But there were people of some experience in the class and everybody caught right away that the position in which they could see most brightly illuminated without glint their own passages as they put them down was the correct position for the canvass to be in, relative to the light, and with whatever modifications necessary towards the rights of other people in a crowded class. The problem was easier of tumbling to than in less well constructed studios of the Paris-room style, because the light was high and inclined at the proper fifteen degrees from the vertical. It was pretty easy to get the correct light without having to tip the easel forward, which of course foreshortens the canvas. The high light is the light in which the angle or incidence is securable without loss, easily, and the high north light as the only light, is the simplest light playing on objects and gives more bolt to the area to the shadow and the halftone passages than would be the case with a light low down coming slantwise across a room with lights from other directions at the same time.

DS: Yes.

ED: There hasn't been anything about the changes in subject matter of art, or the way in which nature or invention may be treated by the artist that makes a room of inferior light to the great studio light a better thing. I don't believe it is true. There is a dignity to the simplicity of the light with the increase in the area of shadow in the halftone versus the area of light which probably should be in the preponderance, but not by the amount that it is in a room facing a window low down.

DS: Yes.

ED: There are no cast shadows except on the side away from the window; none on the supporting surface, such as the table, the floor, under the model's feat, whatever it be.

DS: At the time when you were studying with Mr. Chase, he is supposed to have been influenced a great deal by Whistler. Did you see any evidence of that in the kind of criticisms he gave? Was there any interest in a sort of simplification or rather more appreciation of more decorative composition or flattened composition?

ED: I think he hadn't the gift of arrangement which Whistler had and probably not the capacity to have assimilated what was inferentially Whistler's intention to be profited by. I think that Chase was a representer without being a better representer than Whistler -- more chiefly a representer is my guess; it's better than a guess. He went very little into composition beyond what was acceptable and without too great an amount of time being given to it, at the expense of the remaining execution time when "premier coup" was the practice. And for good reasons: The practice of "premier coup" had the wonderful advantage of being a great weeder in how below generalness the student could allow his attention to sink. In the time you have, if you don't decide pretty quickly what are the essential things that you should get at, from whatever is your belief as to what constitutes these essential things, and the order in which you may, perhaps mistakenly, select them for the purposes of your trial in building your experience -- By George, I've forgotten the first of that . . . .

DS: Well, I thought what you were saying was extremely interesting there. What interested me is there's an inference here of a certain amount of time limitation in the method of the "premier coup."

ED: Oh, yes, yes. Yes, that recalls it to me. It just slipped my mind momentarily. Thank you. The time you had made you have to apportion your attention to several pretty good-sized things: what was to be at least acceptably a composition, the number of objects, the number you could give sufficient attention to, the percentages of light, halftone, and shadow being faced, the execution time, and how much time there was to go into many rather small things. And you had to make your decisions pretty fast and daily. It was very good going because everyone soon realized that if he could grasp the thing as a whole better and better, any specific attention toward working out minor matters was the capability of doing that when time permitted, was included in the practice of taking the thing as a whole, only because of the conditions of the job, which were "premier coup." But it wouldn't work the other way. The general would never come from the particular, but the particular was included in the general we found after we had some experience and practice in painting. We found there was time to do, or in studios later, spending much more time on one piece, the capability to get down to some details had been included in the first general consistentness of striking, see.

DS: Yes. Was there any indication given you from Mr. Chase or anyone else at the League as to how you should put down your first broad organization of the painting? Was there a system, or was it left pretty much to the painter's intuition as to what would be the most important masses to lay in, or colors to set down, and so on?

ED: Well, insofar as one bungled that at all consistently, it would show him how far the piece got and there would be sure to be some perception on Mr. Chase's part as to what accounted for not getting along bigger and further at the outset. So that I think everybody began with pretty good-sized spots and the order in which you took them was a matter for one to catch on to himself, more and more as time went on, when he felt he had begun with the wrong spot -- perhaps the biggest one wasn't the one first to begin with -- but he soon found his way. "Love will find a way."

DS: Did you always work on a white ground?

ED: A light ground.

DS: Mmhmm. Did you begin largely with your lights and work toward darks? Was that a . . . ?

ED: Oh, I think it was understood. The higher in the lightness of the spot up to very close to pure white -- which you can't go any further than -- the student's ability to discriminate at his finest amongst color spots is increased with the better that he can see them, which is the lighter and in the best light toward the window, which is the reason, of course, for always painting from landscape with the sun shining directly on your canvas in such a way that it does not make a glint. In other words, not as a flagpole to a sward, but in about the way that an easel angularly set relative to the north light gets it without glint, at maximum receivability of the light.

DS: Mr. Dickinson, you came to Provincetown in 1912. Why did you come here at that time?

ED: I had just finished my year in the Chase class and had known of Provincetown all my life because my family had lived here for a time in 1887 before I was born. Charles W. Hawthorne was the great Chase pupil then so considered, and I believe now. I wanted to study somewhere in the summer and at that time had the means with which to do so, and I came here fresh from leaving the Chase class. The town was made up more then, solely, of the Hawthorne class, two smaller classes -- that of E. Ambrose Webster and George Elmer Brown. But most of the art students were studying with Mr. Hawthorne. There were also, in most cases, previous students of Mr. Hawthorne or in less number of Webster; young painters living here, some of whom had acquired families and some of whom began to spend winters here soon following the time I began spending winters here, which was in the autumn of 1913, the beginning of a seventeen-winter residence here by me.

DS: Do you remember some of the names of some of those who were beginning to be permanent residents here studying with Hawthorne?

ED: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Oliver N. Chaffee (C-h-a-f-f-e-e), a former Henri pupil and a man very aware of the changes taking place in the attitudes among artists toward things not as yet established; he was starting a family here. Gerrit A. Beniker. Well, there weren't too many artists living here in the winter then. Margaret Ackerson, a former Henri student, who had switched from being a painter to being a writer. There were not very many. And the early small number was added to by a number of other painters and attachments as 1920 began to come closer. George Sensony, the etcher; Frederick Marvin, Mary Heaton Vorce's brother . . . .

[END OF TAPE 1]
[TAPE 2]

DS: This is Dorothy Seckler interviewing Edwin Dickinson in Provincetown, August 22, continuing an earlier interview on the teaching of Chase and Hawthorne. Mr. Dickinson, going back to 1913 when you first came to Provincetown, do you recall your first impression of meeting Hawthorne in class? What was he like as a person and as a teacher?

ED: I recall very well. I was very curious to see him; we all were, those of us to whom he was new. And I'd come to Provincetown for the purpose of studying with him. He impressed one with his size, seriousness, and formidableness. The distance between himself and his pupils was maintained without any labor by him. It was a privilege to be the one who carried his pad and palette and brushes back to the house following a demonstration, which I once or twice did. During the rest in the demonstration everyone crowded around his palette to look at it and see how it appeared. The unexpected appearance of the palette during the time it was being used was most interesting and not unreadable by us, to some extent being in the business however recently. It all looked like his spots as put down. The palette looked as interesting as the spots and the realized length of professional practice with the endowment of the practitioner was very evident to us all.

DS: How did it actually look? How were the colors laid out?

ED: I suppose the white in the middle of the palette for the purpose of moving the arm fewer linear miles in a lifetime. If it's at one end you must put it in the middle, because it's the color you're going to use the most. And if you're going to have to swing the whole length to get back to it when you can catch it very nearly by being in the middle, you save arm movement by a quarter of a mile in a lifetime. They, the dark colors on the left side and the light ones on the right is, I've always considered, instinctive in setting up without their successive positions mattering at all. The white was always laid out in two or three pretty good-size globules. Of course, the uninitiated who put a big one out, not several smaller ones of white, soon had a dirty bunch of white to go into and no clean ones to resort to pretty quick. I think it was everybody's practice. It was mine. I wouldn't think of it being always in effect without three globules of white, far enough to not fuse in the operation and not so far as to waste palette room, which must be economized on, no fooling.

DS: Were you working from the figure right from the beginning with Hawthorne, or did you begin with still life?

ED: We began with landscape. Some heads in the study for models on days when the landscape was unavailable. Not the gray days, but rainy days. There must have been a lot of gray days at that time, and with a natural hankering for them in what seemed to be the sweetness in color with the many white houses. I did a great many gray pieces.

DS: Did the class work out-of-doors most of the time?

ED: Those that were going to paint in the outdoor section, yes. As much as possible, meaning every day except on a rainy day.

DS: Was there a choice? One could be in another section and not go out-of-doors?

ED: Oh, yes. There was a model and you could paint still life, as in any portrait class you can.

DS: Were the people out-of-doors considered more daring and more adventurous?

ED: Not at all. They wanted to be outdoors rather than in, or they weren't particularly anxious to work from models in a studio. We had models outdoors sitting on kegs and we could use the models or not. Most of us did, Or we could paint our fellow pupils, or a nearby view, anything we liked. There was never a question as to how we chose to portion our time.

DS: How did Mr. Hawthorne's procedure differ from that of chase?

ED: Good question. It was broader. Both men are dead and I can make an invidious comparison of my, perhaps, imperfect judging of the matter without hesitation. I never speak of the living, against them. They . . . . The spot of the head as the whole against the adjoining passages -- the spot of the head taken as a whole insofar as it considered, with a squinted and generalized glance, one spot, with shadows cast by the features and so forth, left out if the shadows cast by the features didn't occupy the majority area of the head. Mr. Hawthorne didn't. Mr. Hawthorne painted in what was called a flat light with the light streaming pretty much on the face from the front, and we were entailed to go there and do likewise as far as we could.

DS: Was that influenced to some extent by Manet, do you think, on his way of posing the model in a kind of flattening . . . ?

ED: I never thought of it. It might be. You notice in the Trousseau and some of the canvases from that time, the modeling is very flat on the head, meaning that the nose isn't put into position to cast a shadow on the head, the front of the head.

DS: So Hawthorne's method with the figure was to put emphasis on getting the head broadly masked and in position?

ED: The head and every other thing that was to be undertaken as it came out. The chief difference was, and this is a guess as I was not in the Chase portrait class -- I was in the Chase still life class -- but my guess from what I knew of Mr. Chase is that the seriousness of the spot, of the head as a whole, of the front of the head and its utmost refinement of color by the student, time notwithstanding -- if he could get a better color, fine color relationship, from the premise of the color he had decided the head should chiefly be from the beginning, versus the spots that were around it, time taken to further refine it. When later established adjacent spots cast light on what was as yet not as well done as it might have been done, meant that the student went back to the premise spot, the head and light, and began to refine it. That would inevitably lead to its becoming, instead of the second-class spot in the ensemble, the first-class spot, and a spot adjacent of the near size, meaning area, that wasn't then found good enough, when having been better before, had to be pulled up to the mark too. Very likely to the point where the improved spot of the head wasn't good enough because the background was better, and you had to pull the head up to meet the background. And that came by battledore and shuttlecock that

lasted far into the night.

DS: Was this a step away from the idea of "premier coup?"

ED: It depends on how far you wanted the "premier coup" to describe the object, physically describe the object before one. If the refinement of the head as a whole, each color spot, were to take too much time, take a lot of time in exacting the most from oneself as a stater, delicately, of the color quality, of the spot as a whole, taken by the painter, time notwithstanding, he could easily run out of time to begin a feature because the model went home, or the sun went down, or the tide came in; whatever it was. It was very common to see a head that had taken some time to bring to a certain point, which at the point of its being necessarily concluded for the day at least, one eye shown out from it, glaring like a cyclops. There was no time to put in the other one. Nobody cared. It wasn't a person; it was a picture.

DS: Was this a strong emphasis of Hawthorne's to have the student look at it basically as an image on a flat surface rather than thinking of it in terms of pure representation?

ED: Well, the flat surface was what the painting was on. The created illusion that the flat picture was a three-dimensional subject was, of course, always present when one object was near you and then another in the ensemble. The great thing was that no time was to be taken from the utmost of the student's capability of refining an important spot to the limit of his being able to say, "It's the best I can do, for better or for worse." Then there was time to relinquish it and go on to the next one. I've already referred to the battledore and the shuttlecock, the two spots being pulled up together, which is, of course, necessary because there's no such thing as one color. They all exist in harmonious common relationships.

DS: How would Mr. Hawthorne's feelings about color have been in any way different from those of Chase's? Was he perhaps more aware of any of the innovations from Impressionism?

ED: He was a more experienced construer of the appearance of the out-of-doors in high key, best color refinement, than Mr. Chase was, I would say.

DS: Well, when you work out-of-doors, how did he . . . . You were mentioning before when speaking of the figure that you would squint at it and get a sense of the over-all broad patterns. Was that somewhat similar to the procedure out-of-doors, or was there a very different method when working in the sunlight?

ED: In sunshine, with the model sitting on a keg, and various spots beyond the model, not a background in the studio or a curtain or a wall, but the things that occurred from your station-point out-of-doors, there were more spots, and it was up to you to not saddle yourself with so many that you couldn't represent what you could have done with fewer.

DS: So there was the same emphasis on a breadth of treatment in the out-of-doors subjects? When you were doing a landscape or a bit of seascape, was there any difference in procedure there?

ED: It's a great thing in the separation between earth and sky. However close or far apart the color value relationships between a roof, a house, and the sky beyond it were, Mr. Hawthorne's urging of us was that no time be lost in exhausting our first best stating of the color value relationship between the sky and the earth. The roof that rose into the sky, and the roof over which a stone could not be thrown because it would hump into the sky was a looked-down-upon affair. As seen by the eye, the distance of the sky beyond the roof, or whatever was the horizon occasion, was such that no one was in any doubt as to which came first. And the training gotten from that close observation as a thing not to notice and know exists, but to do about the extent that you had to if you were painting it, and the relationship was to be pretty plain which was where, made the appearance of the painting evidently intended to give representational, where the sky was nearer than the hill, was considered a laughable failure, and rightly. And then it was not known where either one was, for purposes superior to the representation, nobody cared. It wasn't so much of that, not caring then, than now. And now when broader horizons are present without the performance of artists being better than formerly, the choosing to ignore the representational situation probably resulted in not having taken a thing that was very describable as being it and it only in the first place.

DS: As your own work developed in your maturity, how would you define the steps that you took in moving away from Mr. Hawthorne's method of handling, say, landscape? Or would you consider a refinement of it or a moving away in a direction of less literal attention, perhaps, to the exact separations of tone and light?

ED: I think I became more self-demanding of exerting myself on as big a matter as big adjacent spots, earth and sky, or whatever else. We all were working pretty much from nature, and the obligations invovled in that were so far greatly more engrossing than remembering or recollection of a teacher's technique, that we gave very little thought to them, and could trace the effect of our studentship under a given person, but not because we had studied with him in the first place.

DS: Do you recall if Hawthorne spoke to you about any particular great masters that he would use as examples to be at least a point of inspiration? Whom did he actually admire the most, either immediate predecessors or in other periods?

ED: I don't remember references to other painters, great painters, occupying much of the talk. It was understood that Chase was an admirer of Velasquez and Hals, and the connection between stylish brushwork and Hals was, of course not lost on us.

DS: How did Hawthorne approach brushwork in discussing your own paintings?

ED: He never referred to it. And I honored him for it. In fact, once, at the expense of having done a a piece better, I had evidently yielded, or resorted to an attractive brushing in. I was reprimanded publicly in the class for it in a way that gave me a different view of the matter. It wasn't that it was characteristic of my work, it was one piece in the Saturday criticism, and I wasn't let off.

DS: He wanted the students naturally to keep their attention focused on the building of the picture rather than the superficial aspects . . . ?

ED: On the art and not on how it was done. Thick or thin brushmarks showing or not showing. In "premier coup" they must show somewhat, because if a brush be used, as it often is, there isn't time to get rid of them or to do them in a way as to not have them evident. "Premier coup" isn't that long.

DS: Did he emphasize any particular kinds of brushes or use of palette knife that you recall?

ED: We copied the brushes he used, which were Rubens and Landseer, a black brush with long hairs called a Landseer brush which he could use in a way that we could not. Without his recommending it, we used it, we all used it. I have one now with about a dozen long hairs coming out of it, from that time.

DS: Were they tapered, flat brushes?

ED: No. They were just long; the bristles were long. The brush was flat, called a Landseer brush. Everybody had them. I wore mine out, and now I have one that looks worn out but I don't throw it away.

DS: Did you change later and adopt different tools after leaving Hawthorne?

ED: No. We all used palette knives a good deal. And later in his teaching he advocated more working with palette knives. They became putty knives in the hands of his later students. I think the putty knife was never equal to the occasion, and the palette knife was.

DS: Did he ever emphasize any particular kind of medium? Painting was pretty much a la prima, and not built up, of course, in any way.

ED: No. He built up, but it was nothing he could expect us to do, because his experience in the matter was different from ours.

DS: Even an advanced student, then, would not be encouraged to underpaint?

ED: An advanced student soon left him, for the reason that he didn't want to keep him, and the student wanted to get busy on his own, if not with another master.

DS: Do you recall any controversies that arose in his classes as to the new ideas that were coming into the picture, especially as artists came back from abroad? Did he ever become involved in any of those discussions?

ED: No. Not in public. If in private, I don't know. It was pretty hard to approach him except those he knew very well and we didn't have access to his conversations with them. It didn't come in to what was, of necessity, the limited range of matters treatable by his students, from nature, at that time. And largely "premier coup." He never referred to the movement, not ever spoke adversely about them, and was understood to have judgments regarding them that were uncriticizable by us, and we didn't need to know them, because he wouldn't ever bring up a controversial matter and no one ever differed with him or launched on any solo speech in the general criticism. They would have been stopped very quickly, and everybody regarded him from a distance. Genial and pleasant as he was, the distance between him and the student body was due entirely to the difference in experience and equipment; he versus the known equipped man, we not as yet.

DS: And he was a mature man at this time?

ED: Very. And a plain speaker, and a man who never confused small things momentarily with larger ones, lest he be misunderstood, at large, in his criticism. He demonstrated before the class, and was the demonstrator par

excellence, better than Chase -- more luminous, higher, more beautiful in color, and the pieces not carried this far and from simpler subjects.

DS: From the figure?

ED: I've seen Chase demonstrate and I've seen Hawthorne and other people demonstrate.

DS: Did he work from the figure in a demonstration?

ED: From a head. I've seen him paint a head in a demonstration, and I've seen him paint still life in a demonstration, and I've seen him paint landscape in a demonstration. That's all. I became a good friend of Mr. Hawthorne's and we had a happy relationship. We shared a building, a barn, cut into two studios, for quite a period in his later years on 46 Pearl Street here.

DS: How did he feel about the direction that your work was taking after you had left him? Was he very sympathetic to it?

ED: He was always sympathetic to me. He used me well. I was aware of his confidence and encouraging attitude. It meant a good deal to me.

DS: How long did your close association with him continue?

ED: Until his death in 1930. I knew him in New York and I knew him at the Art Institute of Chicago.

DS: Did you notice any changes about his feeling about his own painting during the time of your association with him?

ED: That would have been a matter privately in his thinking, which I wouldn't know. No, I never heard him refer as comparing his work in 1914 with his work in 1925; never. That he may have and some feeling about a comparison I would think very possible. I wouldn't know.

DS: Did he discuss the subject matter of painting to any extent in class -- the attitude toward a motif, what type of subject matter might prove most effective?

ED: Never. Never. The subjects that were struck from . . . the success of the striking and the constitution of the subject. He discussed the number of spots and the stretch of value. These were the only things that he made any remarks about. And the more odd and individual when not plainly imitative, or of weak selecting, motivation in selecting, he enjoyed any variation in and spoke in a complimentary way to anyone whose work in the selection of subject matter aroused his interest.

[END OF TAPE 2]
[END OF INTERVIEW]

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