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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Roy C. Gamble,
1968 August 26

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Roy Gamble on August 26, 1968. The interview was conducted by Garnett McCoy at the Detroit Institute of Arts for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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

Interview

GARNETT MCCOY: My name is Garnett McCoy, and I am the Archivist for the Archives of American Art, and we are interviewing Mr. Roy Gamble today, August 16, 1968, in the Detroit Institute of Arts. We hope that Mr. Gamble will tell us some of his experiences in his early days abroad and in his later career as an important Michigan artist.

Mr. Gamble, could you tell us something about your initial interest in art and how it was that you got into it and your days abroad?

ROY GAMBLE: Well, first I probably had more reputation than I ever had at the Central High School. I was editor of *The Student* over there. And when I got through with that, why, I got acquainted with publishing and connection with that and finally got into the advertising line. And I was being acquainted with publishing and so forth and so on, I believe, with Harry Howard, who was a very fine artist on *The Student* just before I was on there. And we worked together and got off a publication called *The Inter-School Review*.

MR. MCCOY: What year was that, Mr. Gamble?

MR. GAMBLE: That was in 1905, I think, or — yeah, 1906, I guess it was. Yeah. And so, I worked in that line for a while. And I had made enough money to finally get into business for myself, believe it or not, but designing a folder and so forth and so on, selling it to people and so forth. And I was attending the Wicker School at that time.

MR. MCCOY: Where was that located?

MR. GAMBLE: That was in the Fine Arts Building on Adams. And one night on the way out of there, we were walking on Washington Boulevard, and there was Bill Fanning and Art Marchener and myself. And Marchener said, "Well, why don't we go over to — let's all go over to Europe and study." And of course, we were free and easy. Everybody says, "Yeah, that would be fine." And so that was that. I'd never figured out ever going over; I'd never even wanted to go, to tell the honest truth.

And so, then later on, I got a job with the Mulford Advertising Company there. And finally I was, very luckily, made head of the department there, and I had a pretty good job. And so — but I decided I should have more art education, although I had a pretty good schooling under Gies and Paulus and Wicker. But so I finally got permission from Mr. Mulford to go down there, and he even helped me out a little bit on the thing.

Went down there, and I was down there about six months.

MR. MCCOY: Down where?

MR. GAMBLE: At the Art Students League in New York.

MR. MCCOY: In New York.

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah. And getting along nicely down there and so forth. And finally, one day I got a letter from Art Marchener, saying, well, he was all ready to go over to Europe; what about me? Well, I had dismissed it from my mind entirely, and I was going to just write him right off right quick, because — but then I got to spend a sleepless night and finally said, well, my money was running short anyway. I might as well blow it in Europe. So I told him all right, we would go. I told Marchener, I wrote back and told him we would go.

MR. MCCOY: Who were you studying under at the Art Students League?

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, I was studying under William Chase and Louis Morra. And, well, I don't know. But mainly I studied under Chase mainly there. I got along pretty good with him, too.

MR. MCCOY: Was he a good teacher?

MR. GAMBLE: A good teacher, yeah. Chase was a very, very fine teacher. And I was very much encouraged. One day he came in there and he looked at work that I was doing, a portrait, and he says, "Well, that's pretty near as good as it ought to be done." But he says, "Not quite." He looked at me, you know, kind of funny. And so anyway, what I asked him was, "How do you finish a picture?" Well, he said, "Well, you don't finish them. You just keep moving" or something like that. Well, that's the whole trouble. I mean, none of these artists seem to know how to finish a picture. They can start in. Anybody can start a picture. But their idea was lots of starts, and that's the finish.

But anyway, anyway, Marchener came down to New York. And I took him around. Well, I studied with Robert Henri down there, too.

MR. MCCOY: Oh, you did?

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah, Henri. And he was a very fine teacher and a very exciting man to have as a teacher. And so I took Marchener around to where I — you know and so forth. And I remember we went up to a Bellows exhibit. Bellows was studying with Henri down there. And of course, Henri practically begged Bellows. And so anyway, Marchener got — he got kind of tired and so forth and so on. And we had — oh, we had our transportation, our baggage down at the Holland America Line and so forth and so on, right down there with — and our transportation on the Holland America line all paid and everything.

The day before, Marchener said, "What would you do if I didn't go?" Well, I didn't want to tell him what I actually — I made a brave of it, you know, and said, "Well, I'd go anyway." But I didn't think I would. But anyway, that night he was feeling pretty bad, and he had a stomach ailment there that seemed to think that would gain up on him and so forth, and he didn't want to go over there. And I said, "Well, you're going down to the boat anyway with me." He says, "I can't carry the suitcase." "Well, I'll carry it."

So I carried the suitcases, both of them, down there, and we just got there, and the boat was just about ready to leave. And they come rushing out, you know, and grabbed our grips and rushed them up to the plank where you went — the gangplank there. And I had no time for anything. I gave them my tickets and so forth, and I looked back at Art. And Art had tears in his eyes, but he wouldn't go.

MR. MCCOY: He wouldn't go?

MR. GAMBLE: No. And so I was on the boat. Well, I tried to get off the boat, to tell the honest truth, but it was too late. It was too late. Because I didn't know any French.

MR. MCCOY: This was what, 1908?

MR. GAMBLE: 1908, yeah — 1909.

MR. MCCOY: 1909.

MR. GAMBLE: 1909, yeah. Things — and so I tried to get off the boat. I went to the captain, even told him I had no business going over there. I couldn't speak the languages, that the fellow that knew all the languages had backed off at the last minute. So anyway —

MR. MCCOY: How old were you, Roy, at that time?

MR. GAMBLE: I was 21, I think, somewhere around in there. And so — I might have been 22. But it was — anyway, anyway, this captain just laughed at me. I said, "Well, the pilot boat gets off, doesn't it?" And he said, "Yes, but you're not going on it."

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: So then, I had made up my mind. We were going to go to Holland first and then go into Germany, because he could speak good German. So I met a couple of Frenchmen on the boat there. And they said, "What do you want to go to Germany for? Go to France." Well, they had had a flood over there and so forth, and it was a terrible thing. So finally, finally, I got — I studied a little bit of French on the way over there with this fellow. We got off the boat, got off at Boulogne, had a nice dinner together, and that's the last I saw of him.

Well, then I went down to the railroad station because we had tickets there to go through to Paris, I had. And so nobody there at all, nobody could talk English or anything. So I hung around, hung around, and hung around till round about five o'clock when the train, the boat train was going to leave for Paris. And I was fortunate in meeting a fellow on there who was a banker in Boulogne and who was going to Bourse in the morning. So I had

in those days a second-class ticket. So that's how I happened to meet him.

So he was very kind and took me right through the customs and everything. And boy, I don't know how I'd gotten through the customs. You know, they had the trunk on the back of the porters and all that sort of thing. And put me in a cab. Mind you, these are cab days. There wasn't too many automobiles around in those days.

He got me in a hotel where they could talk some English. So I got up the next morning, and it was a drizzly day, and this bus came down the line sliding from one side to the other with a couple of horses on it. And it was raining pitchforks. Well, anyway, I got on the bus, and I said, "Well, I'm going to ride to the end of the bus line and see what it all looks like, anyway." And I was disgusted with it, to tell the honest truth. I mean, that's the honest truth.

MR. MCCOY: Well, now, tell us a little bit about what art school you went to there.

MR. GAMBLE: Well, I'll tell you. Then I finally was directed to the Left Bank over there. It was very active there. I mean, there was this post-Impressionist movement was going full-blast, Matisse and Picasso and so forth. Of course, I was — naturally wasn't — I mean, that was kind of a shock to me, the whole thing. But, however, I went to school there at the Julian School there for a while, and also the Grand Chaumière. And of course, I went up to the Art Museum, or the Louvre and painted up there, and I had a small sketch box up there, I used to paint up there.

And it shows the type of art that — I mean, the change of things. I was up there — I'd come over there, and I didn't even know — hadn't studied much art, you know, that kind of art, you see. And so I used to pick out the different paintings there, you know, and made a small sketch each afternoon. I came home one day there to the Left Bank there, and a friend of mine said, "Well, what have you been doing?" "Well, I've been up the Louvre painting." "What do you want to go up there for," he says? And he says, "Let's see what you did."

Well, I had one picture that I just blocked in. I didn't — it was a Bellini, two heads there. He said, "I like your picture better than the one that's in the Louvre." See?

MR. MCCOY: Who did you study with at the school? Who were your teachers?

MR. GAMBLE: Jean-Paul Laurens at the school, the Rue du Dragon School.

MR. MCCOY: Did you meet Picasso?

MR. GAMBLE: No, no, no. But I didn't meet Picasso, but there was a Mrs. Stein — Mr. Stein was opening his apartments to students on Saturday nights, see?

MR. MCCOY: Leo Stein?

MR. GAMBLE: Leo Stein, yeah. So we went up there.

MR. MCCOY: Were you associated with any other Americans over there?

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, yes. Sure. There were some other Americans. That's how I kind of got along.

MR. MCCOY: Do you remember their names?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, there was a fellow of the name of Brightbyer [phonetic] and George — oh, let me see, there was George Hess, the fellow that — he had a scholarship from Syracuse University. And he and Hess and I finally got a studio over there. And we were working there. And then, of course, naturally — the Café du Dôme was right across the street from where I was boarding there, and so forth, so naturally, the artists were coming, you know, back and forth. You could see them. And I didn't know all of them. I didn't know all of them, but I know — you could tell.

But this one interesting episode, I thought, was — we went over there first to get to Stein's apartments, and we got the wrong address, and finally, finally knocked on the door and a voice came out, a woman's voice, a hearty voice came out there, "This isn't Mr. Stein's studio." But she says, "I've got some good pictures in here. Come on in." It was Gertrude Stein.

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: And she was sitting on the top of a — she was sitting on a model stand there, with a big black cigar in her mouth. She was a big woman, you know. And so she said — well, anyway, she was very friendly and nice. And around her were all these artists that — of course, I didn't know enough about them, but I spotted Matisse in the bunch because he had a red beard, kind of, and so forth. But they were just kind of having a

party there, don't you know?

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: But I thought it was very nice of her to make us friendly and so forth, and fun. She did have some fine pictures around there, too, Cézannes and different pictures around there. But it was a thrilling atmosphere over there. The whole thing was.

And then I met a fellow in a Kalarisi [phonetic] sketch class who was formerly of Indianapolis, Dick Black. And his family had moved over there, and he had gone to school in France for about eight or nine years. So that year, that summer, why, we got together and took a trip up through Holland and Belgium and then down through Germany, and then back. And then — and this fellow was very helpful there because he knew all — he was born, practically born in France, and we had things in common, too. He was a fairly good athlete in his early days, and we used to even have a little running match there over in Holland.

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: But, however, I found out after — I'd noticed he was puffing a little bit, and I found out afterwards that he had had — he'd been in an athletic contest and a pole vault had broken, caught him in the chest here. And he had TB finally. He finally died of TB.

MR. MCCOY: I think we want to get a little bit back on this side of the water. That's quite a bit about Paris. But tell us something about when you came back here and the First Michigan Artist Show.

MR. GAMBLE: [Inaudible]

MR. MCCOY: How long were you over there?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, I was over there for about a year-and-a-half or so. But anyway, just to finish up what I was talking about, he induced me to go down to the south of France where his mother had gone down there each summer. And it was St. Maries de le Mer right near Arles, see? And I pitched in there. I really learned how to paint right down there, to tell the honest truth, I mean, regardless. And the things that I painted there, when I got back here, why, they seemed to attract more attention than any of the other things, don't you know?

And there was quite a famous art critic here, Sheridan Ford, that liked some of the things that I had painted there. And he gave me a pretty good boost at that time, you see. And well, anyway —

MR. MCCOY: Did you come directly back to Detroit?

MR. GAMBLE: I came directly back to Detroit. And, of course, at that time, why, the artists were contemplating an exhibition here. And of course, Wicker and Josef Gies and Paulus, they were kind of headliners in it. And seeing that I was back, and then Mr. Wicker allowed me to use Gies's old studio there for a while there. And so that's how I happened to be in that exhibition, the first Hopkin Club show. The Hopkins, they used to — these artists met. I didn't know Hopkin. In fact, this was all pretty new to me, the whole thing, anyway, in the art line because I was really — before that I was interested in commercial art, to tell the honest truth. I'd never thought I'd ever get into this other work. Anyway —

MR. MCCOY: The show was in 1910?

MR. GAMBLE: 1911.

MR. MCCOY: 1911.

MR. GAMBLE: It was in 1911, yeah. It was a Christmas — it was a Christmas — it was kind of a Christmas show, you might say, it was gotten up.

MR. MCCOY: And that was sponsored by the Hopkin Club?

MR. GAMBLE: The Hopkin Club. Most of those members had been — in the year 1905, I think it was, Hopkin was 75 years old, as I understand, and they had a big exhibition of his pictures. And then he was — they formed the club then, see? I mean, there were 75 pictures there and so forth.

MR. MCCOY: Well, Roy, by 1911, hadn't the Hopkin Club become the Scarab Club?

MR. GAMBLE: No, no, no, no. No, it wasn't. It was the Hopkin Club, and we had two exhibitions under the name of the Hopkin Club. And then —

MR. MCCOY: But [inaudible] Detroit Art Museum?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes. So then the museum took hold of it, and it was under the auspices of the Scarab Club. But it was the Detroit Art Museum under the Institute of Arts under the auspices of the Scarab Club. But these fellows had been meeting, you know. The old Hopkin Club had been meeting at the Art Museum or had been meeting each year at Hopkin's birthday. And they had some beer and pretzels and stuff. Finally, finally, in 1911, why, they decided to have this show, see? Yes, in 1911, yes.

MR. MCCOY: Was that the first one of them?

MR. GAMBLE: The first one, yes.

MR. MCCOY: Scarab Club still hadn't been started yet?

MR. GAMBLE: No, no. The Scarab Club didn't get started till 1912.

MR. MCCOY: I see.

MR. GAMBLE: In 1912, I think it was at the end of the second exhibition. But I had a list of some of the fellows that were exhibiting there.

MR. MCCOY: Yes. Who were in those?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, there was Irving Bacon and Charles Chamberlain. These are in alphabetical order. Roy Gamble, and Josef Gies and F. W. Heinrich. He was a very fine watercolor painter, small things. George Hodges, Percy Ives, Charlie King, Murray McKee, Edward Peckbower [phonetic], Francis Paulus, Colbert B. Peters — he was the Secretary of the DSR at that time, but he was the son of a Sunday painter, too. And Ivan Swift, Charles Waltensperger, John Wicker, and Albert B. Wenzel, who was a very famous illustrator at that time.

MR. MCCOY: He went to California later on, didn't he?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes, I think he did. Anyway, the exhibition created quite a lot of attention here, and I was — I had a pretty good — I happened to — my mother kept clippings of one thing or another. I noticed she had a clipping there that I was the most promising one of the bunch.

[Laughter]

MR. MCCOY: Well, Roy, was the problem of the artist making a living in those days the same as it is now? Were there any of these artists who were living on the sale of their paintings?

MR. GAMBLE: I never sold a picture during the first exhibition there, and I didn't notice any of the rest of them selling too many either.

MR. MCCOY: I think Percy Ives lived on portraits, didn't he?

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah, Percy lived on portraits, and I hadn't gotten into that line. Really, I started in doing smaller sketches and so forth than the ones that — you know. And — but, however, it was — the thing I think was kind of — it was Christmas. It was during December, and I think they had things in mind, don't you know? But I never sold any.

Well, John Hanna says — you and I can imagine now if John [sic] Hanna says, "Well, your stuff is too far in advance." He says, "They won't buy that kind of stuff now." And that was Jim Hanna. He liked my stuff.

MR. MCCOY: Hanna Galleries?

MR. GAMBLE: Hanna, Hanna, Jim Hanna.

MR. MCCOY: Were you painting in kind of an Impressionist style?

MR. GAMBLE: Impressionist, yeah, Impressionist style, yeah. I happened to — I just happened to — this friend of mine had invited this art critic, Sheridan Ford, into my studio one day there. And Sheridan had been — he was the — Sheridan Ford was the editor of *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*. In fact, he named the book, really. And I used — well, I was kind of influenced a little bit by Whistler, I suppose. Wicker used to paint a little bit like Whistler. Don't you remember? You don't remember that. You're too young for that.

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: I'm talking to Bill Bostick now. But anyway, anyway, he liked two or three of those pictures and

finally came back and said he still liked them, and so forth. But he gave me quite a lot of encouragement in the start. And also, having been acquainted with these painters in Europe, like he was as art editor of the *London News* there — of course, Whistler — he got acquainted with Whistler, and he liked Whistler's work very much. And they were alike temperaments. And Whistler asked him to write the history, write his life, write the life of him, *The Life and Letters of James McNeal Whistler**. And it seems as though the thing was — Ford spent many months with his wife, you know, looking through the British Library and one thing and another over there — Whistler never kept anything — and got them all together.

And then at the last minute, why, they were just ready to print it, and the printer brought in something for Ford to check with, the proofs, and this little Cockney printer, Ford said — he said, "Well, gentlemen, I don't think you're calling this book by the right name." "Well, what should we call it?" Ford said. Well, he says, "In your letter that you wrote forward, you said it illustrated the gentle art of making enemies. If it was my book, I'd call it *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*." So Ford took it up with Whistler. He says, "I'll take that up with Whistler." And Whistler was pleased with it.

But I think it was Ford's undoing because Whistler saw bigger things, you know, and so forth. And they were just going 50/50 on this *Life and Letters* business.

MR. MCCOY: Right.

MR. GAMBLE: So, Whistler sent him a check for 50 guineas or something like that, for the work that he had done. And Ford was equally Irish, and he refused to be bought off like that, and he was pretty mad about the whole thing. And he finally got out an edition on his own, see? They had a couple of editions and they were stuck, see?

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: But, however, the experience of meeting Ford, and he could put you right in contact with the different artists, or Oscar Wilde and the different — and he had a letter over there introducing him to these artists from the — he was sent over there, not as an art critic, because he was sent over there to write articles back on different things. And the only reason he got over there was that the editor of the paper in New York saw one of his articles that he did for nothing, for this. And he said, "Mr. Ford, I like your articles on art." He says, "Why don't you follow that line?" Ford says, "Well, I couldn't follow it." He says, "What do you mean?" He says, "Go to Europe and study over there."

Of course, over there, why, that was the fountainhead of art, you might say, at that time. So he says, "Well, maybe I could make it possible." And he sent him over there, and in that capacity he was soon editor of the *London News* and in that capacity met Whistler. And they were — he said they used to spend sometimes — oh, sometimes a whole evening just debating on one word to try to trip some enemy of Whistler's.

[Laughter]

MR. MCCOY: What was he doing out here in Detroit?

MR. GAMBLE: He — afterwards, why, he became — well, after his affair with Whistler there, why, he went over and got a job with the *Galignani's Messenger* in Paris. And Somerset Maugham was one of the owners of that paper, see, of the *Paris Herald*, it was. And Somerset — and, of course, Ford had an agreement with him that if they fired him, why, he was to pen his own defeat in this thing. So he went in. And of course, naturally, Ford was not for these machines and one thing and another, that were in the salon. But the people over in France, they wanted that kind of stuff, you know, and so forth and so on. And they finally brought enough pressure to bear on the owners of the paper to fire Ford. He never got — he didn't get to pen his own defeat. And that was one of the dying words on his mouth, this thing.

But it just goes to show how at that time, he said he was going to write an article on Monet. And they wouldn't let him publish it, see. He said he was going up to Giverny [France] there, and Monet showed him a fence there with a — you know, white fence —

MR. MCCOY: Picket fence.

MR. GAMBLE: Picket fence, or whatever you call them. And Monet says, "Well, you see that's blue back there, isn't it?" And Ford says, "Sure, it's blue." So he came back and threatened to quit right then and there if they wouldn't publish this article, but they published it. But finally, they finally got him. They finally got him. He'd go into an exhibition — I don't know if you're acquainted with Armand Jean work or not. But he was kind of an Impressionist, a poetic Impressionist. And instead of writing about all these French artists, wonderful artists, why, he focused on Armand Jean. Well, anyway, that finished him over there. They fired him.

MR. MCCOY: Roy, let's get back here now to Michigan and Detroit, a little bit more about the Michigan art in the early years, what you remember.

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah.

MR. MCCOY: Where was your studio during these times?

MR. GAMBLE: My studio was on — well, I had this studio in the Fine Arts Building there for a month or two. Of course, I didn't have any money. But Wicker very kindly loaned this thing. And then I had worked for O. J. Mulford, and he built a studio for me when I was working for him in the advertising line. And so in the meantime —

MR. MCCOY: Over on Canton Avenue?

MR. GAMBLE: No, no, no. This was — no, no, no, this was right down across from the post office, right on the corner of 4th and Wayne. And so he finally — in the meantime, why, he had sold out to the J. Walter Thompson Company, only reserving his streetcar advertising, which I would like to say that he was the originator of streetcar advertising in the world. Yeah. And he did it down in — well, anyway, this studio that he built down there in the attic, I rented that from him for a while. And then afterwards, why, I had it there, see? But it was a fairly good studio.

MR. MCCOY: Did the artists work together at all? Or were they pretty independent?

MR. GAMBLE: The artists worked together fine. I mean, you take the — in the old days, you see, our first — when the Scarab Club was formed, Ivan Swift had something to do with that and another fellow there that had some Scarabs, and so they decided that Hopkin Club wasn't good enough. But I thought it was a mistake to ever change it. I thought they ought to have left it that way myself, because I didn't know. I was just a kid and really didn't know.

Anyway, they finally — finally they — let's see. I've got some notes here. Finally, they decided to have the Hopkin Club studio at 82 Grashetts [phonetic]. It was a cigar factory down below there. So we got — a number of these artists that I mentioned there, they were the original. And then in the meantime, why, I don't know whether they changed the name before they got in this place. I guess maybe they might have, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: They got together in a [inaudible] building?

MR. GAMBLE: No, no, no, no. All they did was to rent the upper floor there, and you could smell tobacco. You know, you were practically inhaling tobacco there. But they did — Jim Swan, who was an attorney down there and he kind of took over — he was a great friend of Joe Gies's. And so he had a saw and a hammer, and we all went to work. I built some of the furniture myself for the place. We built tables and chairs and one thing and another. And I think there's a picture in existence down there showing several of the artists.

Anyway, we had an etching press there, and of course, Charlie King, he was very much interested in those days. I mean, he was really one of the — but he didn't want to — I mean, he was an engineer. And he said the engineers took a dim view of an engineer that was an artist.

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: So he kind of kept that in the back. But Charlie did, he exhibited in the salon. And I might say that —

MR. MCCOY: Is it the Charles King who was involved in the automobile world?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes, yeah. Um-hm. Yeah. And I might say myself that I was fortunate in sending in pictures to the salon. I got a picture and an etching in 1911 accepted, see? And then I also had one the next year. But it was the fact that I got into salon or I wouldn't be in the art business today at all, probably, don't you know? I mean, it meant something in those days. It wouldn't mean much today, you know, because things have changed entirely.

MR. MCCOY: Did you continue doing commercial art at the same time?

MR. GAMBLE: No, I didn't do — I kind of dropped out of that and got into — oh, I did make a few automobile —

MR. MCCOY: When did you start painting portraits?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, I started right away. I started — well, not right away, no, no. Oh, you know, around 1913 or '14. What I did was, I was fortunate in getting some murals to paint for the Free Press Building. That really set

me up.

MR. MCCOY: I see.

MR. GAMBLE: Arthur Jaeger, who was one of the early members, and he was in the decorating line and he kind of switched things around. And then Sheridan Ford helped me a lot on that, you know. I mean, with E. D. Stair and one thing or another.

MR. MCCOY: What year were those painted?

MR. GAMBLE: They were painted in 1913. Um-hm. Yeah. And then, of course, I made up my mind I would — if somebody wanted a portrait painted, well, I made up my mind if anybody else wanted one, why, I'd paint it. But I wasn't stuck on painting portraits in those days, now, between ourselves. But, however, however, that was part of the Paris days, I suppose, a hangover from the acquaintances over there and so forth and so on.

MR. MCCOY: When the Hopkin Club got together and got the upper story of this building, did you all have studios up there?

MR. GAMBLE: No, no, no, no, no. That was just — they would meet on Saturday nights.

MR. MCCOY: A meeting place.

MR. GAMBLE: A meeting place. And the artists used to meet up there. You told about them getting together; they did meet up there. And they had a long table, and it would be Paulus's turn to go out and get the beer together and a few things to eat and so forth. They would have a little — maybe a little sketch class there, you know, and then sit down and talk art.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: You know, I mean, it was different than it is today. And then, of course, from then we graduated from there and we went over on Witherell Street, at 12 Witherell, right where the theater is, the Madison Theater at present. Bowman's Saloon was there, and we were up above that. And we had a very fine — that was called the — that was a Scarab studio, a Scarab place there.

MR. MCCOY: By this time the Hopkin Club had turned into the Scarab Club?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes. Oh, yes, definitely. Definitely, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: Same membership, though?

MR. GAMBLE: Same membership, and then more added to it, see? There were a number of good members came in. And then — but we did have — I intended to bring a picture down that Frank Scott Clark took up there of the Witherell Studio. You probably have it, though, maybe. If you haven't, you ought to have one of these, anyway. I don't know where they are. I've only got the one, I think. But it shows Charlie King and Gies and Paulus and the whole bunch of them sitting around, you know.

MR. MCCOY: Clyde Burrell was involved?

MR. GAMBLE: Clyde was in there. Oh, Clyde was very much interested in my exhibiting, too, in the beginning, you see. I mean, he was the head of the — running the Art Museum under Griffith there. And our — let's see. Where did I leave off there?

Anyway, they did — then we had the same arrangement on Witherell Street there. The one artist would have each evening, and they would have to furnish things. And they took up a little collection of maybe a dollar or two to kind of fill the bill.

MR. MCCOY: Well, who would you say was the leading artist in the area at that time?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, the leading artist was Gari Melchers, but he never — he was in Europe.

MR. MCCOY: He didn't live here.

MR. GAMBLE: He didn't live here, see? But Josef Gies and Paulus and Wicker and — well —

MR. MCCOY: Swift?

MR. GAMBLE: Swift, yeah. Swift was very, very influential. And then the early meetings, I would say this, that we had some very interesting times. That we'd have a meeting, and maybe Swift would get up and recite a

poem or two on the *Faggots of Cedar*, you know.

[Laughter]

[Inaudible conversation]

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah. And — well, I mean — and then, of course, Sadakichi Hartmann would blow in there and —

MR. MCCOY: Oh, yeah?

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah.

MR. MCCOY: He was there, too, was he?

MR. GAMBLE: And he wasn't a member, but he was — he was a friend of Sheridan Ford's. And so —

MR. MCCOY: You mean Ford would come to these meetings, too?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, yes, some of them. He came up to the club. He didn't come to meetings much because he was in and out. He was down in New York and one thing and another. But he had met Hartmann down in New York. And Hartmann wrote a pretty good book on Whistler, too. And Sadakichi Hartmann was half-Jap and half-German. And he was — but Ford laughed at one of the meetings they had there. He was telling about Hartmann down there having this evening of not only music, but scents, but perfumes and one thing and another. And Ford said he was — that he was at the door down there, and they had sold a lot of tickets and one thing or another for this thing. And they'd play music, and then they'd waft some of this perfume on the audience.

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: And it was fine for a while, but he said finally the whole thing got to — they had to all leave because they all turned into, you know, some kind of gas or something there. But it showed they —

MR. MCCOY: Roy, what happened here after the war when Prohibition was into effect, to these beer parties you had?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, we had beer parties. And of course, Sheridan Ford, he was an expert man in the newspaper line, and they had hired him to — that was one reason that he was in this section of the country, to fight this Prohibition, don't you see?

MR. MCCOY: Oh, yes.

MR. GAMBLE: And he had an article called "The Inside American." He used to call it "The Inside Yankee" or something like that. But he was — Ford was an unusual fellow. He could do anything, you might say. But he was — he really made a little money out of this last venture there, I mean, working for the liquor — you know, for the people and so forth. Even in his will, he even left me \$500.

MR. MCCOY: He did?

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah. So I went over to Europe again.

So anyway, I guess I'm getting this thing all mixed up here. Anyway, was there any other questions?

MR. MCCOY: Well, in the '20s was there any — I mean, here you were in France during the period of post-Impressionism.

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah.

MR. MCCOY: Was there any great art upheaval that you remember here in the years after the war?

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, yes, absolutely, absolutely.

MR. MCCOY: Were you conscious of the Armory Show in New York in 1913?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes, we were conscious of it. But, however, I don't think any Detroit artists were in it.

MR. MCCOY: I don't think so.

MR. GAMBLE: But we had one fellow here that wrote on that show there. Who was that cartoonist? Cartoonist — he was a cartoonist, Walt — well, anyway. He was in the show down there.

MR. MCCOY: Walt Kuhn?

MR. GAMBLE: Walt Kuhn, yeah, Kuhn, yeah. And he was — I remember we had dinner, Clyde and Kuhn and myself. You remember Kuhn, don't you?

MR. MCCOY: No.

MR. GAMBLE: No, that was before your time.

MR. MCCOY: He was one of the organizers of the show.

MR. GAMBLE: He was one of the organizers, yeah. And he told a lot of interesting — in fact, he wrote a little pamphlet, a booklet on it. I got that somewhere, if I could ever find it.

MR. MCCOY: Yeah. We've got it.

MR. GAMBLE: You've got it? Well, that was interesting. And so — but of course —

MR. MCCOY: But you went down to see it, did you?

MR. GAMBLE: No. No, I didn't go down to see it.

MR. MCCOY: What about your relationship with Clyde Burrows at that time?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, Clyde, of course, was a friend of the artist and so forth. At first, why, Griffith, he was under Griffith there. And Griffith was a wonderful speaker, but I don't think he knew much about art, don't you know. But he did give some wonderful talks down there. My father used to take me down there, and he used to have these stereo-optic lectures and one thing and another. Boy, he could really stand — command your interest, don't you know?

MR. MCCOY: Um-hm. Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: Let's see. What was the question there?

MR. MCCOY: I was sort of wondering about the further evolution of the Scarab Club.

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, the evolution of the Scarab Club. Well, then we went to — we used to have — we were in the Addison Hotel there for a short time. And we had a ball there. Let's see. That was in 1917, I think it was. And then Frank Scott Clark, he took over, and his wife and so forth and so on. Finally, the Scarab Ball was a result of that, which was a very, very fancy arrangement.

Well, then after that, after the Addison Hotel, that same year 1917, we moved up on Woodward and Charlotte. That was the Addison Hotel — no. I'm getting mixed up here. We moved up into 2036 Scarab Studio building. One of our members owned the building, as I remember, and I can't think of his name.

MR. MCCOY: What street was that on?

MR. GAMBLE: Right on the corner of Elizabeth.

MR. MCCOY: And?

MR. GAMBLE: Right on that corner, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: And we had some interesting — the first sketch class was started there. In fact, I started the first sketch class myself. It went on in the mid-week sketch class, see.

MR. MCCOY: How many students did you have?

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, we didn't — they were not students. They each would work. There would be 10 or 12, see. It was — then from — I think they — then the next move was 253 Forest. That was 1922. And we rented the building, and then we bought the building there and had some studios in the back. Joe Gies had a studio back there.

MR. MCCOY: That was the building on Elizabeth Street.

MR. GAMBLE: Yes.

MR. MCCOY: No, on Forest.

MR. GAMBLE: On Forest, yeah. And Paul Honore and a sculptor up at the club there. What's his name?

MR. MCCOY: Beaver [phonetic] Edwards?

MR. GAMBLE: Beaver Edwards. He had a studio there. But we had — and then we had some very fine artists. There was a poster artist from Germany there that was quite good. I can't think of his name now. But anyway, the artists kept — we had some very good exhibitions there, too. And then during that time, why, Frank Scott Clark, he took great interest there, of course, promoting the Scarab Ball. It was his wife that was kind of handy at that sort of thing.

MR. MCCOY: That became a great success?

MR. GAMBLE: It was a great success, yeah. But it finally got out of hand, you might say, don't you know. I mean, you couldn't control it exactly. And then things — they started fighting over who's going to be invited and one thing and another. And Joe Cramer and so forth, they wanted — the Clarks wanted to keep it on a high social level. And these other guys wanted to have it a regular Ketzar [phonetic] ball, don't you know, like in Paris. Well, anyway, that finally blew up anyway.

Then in 1928, Dexter Ferry had a lot over in back of the Art Museum here. And he bought the lot and gave it to the club, I think. And then Henry Stevens built the building on there. And he really kind of took matters in his own hands, you might say, and built the building. Of course, we couldn't pay for it. I mean — but it's a very fine building. And Lance Sukert, a very fine architect, designed it. And he was one of the old Eastern High School artists.

Then, of course, from then on, why, we have been there ever since 1928. You'll see that on the date there. And we've had some very good exhibitions there, you know.

MR. MCCOY: When Stevens died, didn't the whole indebtedness practically get wiped out on the unpaid portion of the club?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, I'll tell you. Stevens was a practical man. He knew what artists were. He knew that they're not going to — and so he didn't give it to them.

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: But when he died, why, an arrangement was made so that we took up a collection amongst the artists to buy off this business, see? And it was knocked down to us at a very low figure.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: I think I had \$100, a couple-hundred-dollar mortgage in it. I mean, they took collection, you know? But it was all paid off. Everything was paid off in that thing. Yes, sir.

MR. MCCOY: Largely, Mr. Stevens was the donor.

MR. GAMBLE: Stevens was the donor, yeah, yeah. Henry Stevens. And he wasn't a bad artist, either. I wished I had some of his — wish we had some of his things because he was kind of in the modern — he was, of course, interested in social work and so forth and so on. But he did have — he had a studio there, and he believed — he had a certain theory on art that was interesting, too. And some of his pictures were very interesting. And I tried to locate two or three of them for our Prismatic Club, but I don't know — they must have thrown them all out when he died or something.

MR. MCCOY: Well, Mr. Gamble, you referred to the fact that you went back to Europe. When was that?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, I went back in 1926.

MR. MCCOY: Did you stay long?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, I didn't stay too long over there because — but it was an interesting period of time over there because the Dome was buzzing with artists and writers and one thing and another. And one of these famous [inaudible]. You could go over there every — and any night you could see different artists sitting around

there, you know.

MR. MCCOY: Some stimulating time to be there?

MR. GAMBLE: Very stimulating. And the fellow that wrote Ulysses — what is his name?

MR. MCCOY: James Joyce.

MR. GAMBLE: James Joyce. I remember he was sitting in there one day there. And then this other pal of his, this other fellow, this fellow that would get into trouble during the last war there.

MR. MCCOY: You mean Ezra Pound?

MR. GAMBLE: Ezra Pound, yeah. He was there. You used to see him around there. And there was — but of course, that — when I first went over there, the Dôme was nothing but a saloon, you might say, or a bar. And then in the back, the Americans, some Americans induced the owner to put a pool table in there, and the Americans used to play pool in the back in this place. But then later on, when you mentioned — I'm glad you mentioned '19, because later on — because then it really came into its own, don't you see?

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: But it was a place there where you could meet all kind of artists and so forth and so on. Shorty Lazar was one of the artists over there. And he said that he was standing in front of the Dôme there, and Whistler was over there at that time. This was around 1905 or so, I guess it was. I don't know. Yes, around that time. Whistler finally went over and lived in Paris for a while. And he said Whistler dropped — he had his monocle in his eye, and it dropped and broke, you know. And Lazar rushed to pick it up, you know, and then Whistler pulled another one out of his pocket and put it in his eye there, as if nothing had happened.

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: That sounded — right on the corner.

MR. MCCOY: [Inaudible]

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah, yeah. I guess I'm wasting your juice.

MR. MCCOY: Not at all. One thing I particularly wanted to ask you about, and that is your recollection of the period of the Depression in the 1930s.

MR. GAMBLE: The 1930s.

MR. MCCOY: [Inaudible]

MR. GAMBLE: Well, yes, there was plenty to say about it. I was doing — by that time I had been doing portraits. And Albert Kahn called me up and wanted me to do some portraits. But I tell you. I was fortunate. I had some work to do during that time, see? I told them, "I can't conscientiously do this." He wanted me to do some work at the University of Michigan or something like that. I said, "I can't — I can't" —

MR. MCCOY: Mural work?

MR. GAMBLE: No, no, this was portrait work, you see, portraits. I said, "I can't conscientiously do it." But it was a great boon to most of the artists that are here that — I know —

MR. MCCOY: You are referring to the Federal Art Program.

MR. GAMBLE: Federal Art Program, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: A very fine project.

MR. GAMBLE: A very fine project, and I came in contact with a lot of them. But I didn't actually do any work on it.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: Because I didn't — I kind of was a little too conscientious probably. That was a side of — I should have taken off a mural or —

MR. MCCOY: You didn't really need to.

MR. GAMBLE: I didn't need to, and I didn't think that they ought to — I was a veteran of World War I, and I didn't feel that they ought to be — I mean, they ought to be kind of a little careful of what they're doing, don't you know, instead of just throwing the money around there.

MR. MCCOY: Yes. But you agree that it was a —

MR. GAMBLE: It was a good thing. It was a very fine thing, and Art Jaeger and — oh, any number of the artists here, Mikulski and, oh, let's see. The fellow that invented this drip movement. What's his name?

MR. MCCOY: Jackson Pollock?

MR. GAMBLE: Jackson Pollock's brother was one of the —

MR. MCCOY: Oh, yes, yes.

MR. GAMBLE: He was one of the leaders there, see? And of course —

MR. MCCOY: He's the one out of East Lansing now, Charles?

MR. GAMBLE: I think so, yes. He didn't work like Jackson Pollock. And somebody said that Jackson wouldn't allow him to work that way. I don't know whether it's true or not.

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: But, however, he was one of the — but that was a good movement, and it really helped the artists out here immensely.

MR. MCCOY: Was there an artists' union here?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes, an artists' union. There was an artists union here. What was that called?

MR. MCCOY: It was called the artists' union, wasn't it? Well, there was another thing called the Artists [inaudible].

MR. GAMBLE: Well, no, but this was kind of fronted up by that Japanese artist.

MR. MCCOY: Oh, that's the Artists Equity you're talking about.

MR. GAMBLE: Artists Equity, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: And that was after the war.

MR. GAMBLE: That was after the war, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: [Utagawa] Kuniyoshi.

MR. GAMBLE: Kuniyoshi, yeah. He was the — he was on here. And we had some very fine artists that used to come to the club. And we'd pay their way here, and I don't think we paid, but there was someone or some member of the club that I think was kind of a Santa Claus for the business, see? But we had some very fine artists that would come here. Kuniyoshi was one of them, and — oh, we had this German artist that did caricatures and one thing or another.

MR. MCCOY: Oh, you mean Gross?

MR. GAMBLE: Gross, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: Oh, yes. He came out here, too?

MR. GAMBLE: He came out here. And he would also — the artists would give a talk, and maybe bring some of their work, and so forth, and then we'd have our work exhibited and they would criticize it sometimes.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: It was a very fine —

MR. MCCOY: Well, that's very useful then.

MR. GAMBLE: Very useful, yeah, very useful. And Gross was very fine in telling his experiences and one thing

another in Germany and one thing another, and I think he enjoyed it out here too.

MR. MCCOY: Do you recall Sam Halpert out here?

MR. GAMBLE: Sam Halpert was a very good friend of mine. Yeah, Sam was a — and Sam told an interesting story. I knew Sam — I didn't know him in Paris so much. But he was — he knew — he had a studio in the same block that we had our studio in. It was three of us fellows together, the studio on the Rue Volant de Verre. And he said that he was — this Russo [phonetic], the artist, the famous artist, came around to see — or came around and visited there. And Halpert said that Russo — of course, the foreground in one of his pictures there. He said, "Well, now, let me take a brush. I think I could help you on that a little bit."

[Laughter]

MR. MCCOY: [Inaudible]

MR. GAMBLE: Yes. Well, she was the wife, of course.

MR. MCCOY: They were divorced when he came out here.

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah, they were divorced. He told me about her so forth and so on. He wanted me to take his studio down east there someplace.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: But anyway, I thought that was an interesting thing, him meeting him. And let's see. I don't know whether he bought one of his pictures or not. I'm not disappointed with that.

MR. MCCOY: You must have been in Paris about the same time he was?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes, about the same time, yeah. But I didn't stay there too long because the second time I went over there my mother was taken sick and I had to come back — rush, rush back.

But I met an interesting man up in — Myron Barlow was a Detroit artist and a friend of Albert Kahn's. And of course, we'd see him when he would come to Detroit. And so when I was over there, Sheridan Ford, he claimed the distinction of having introduced the Scottish group of artists to London. And he said that somebody told him there were some very fine artists up there and he ought to go up there. And he says, "Well — tarry Glasgow," he said, "I wouldn't think there would be much around there." So he went up there and became acquainted with some of the artists. And [Robert] Macauley Stevenson introduced him to a number of very fine artists there, Melville and — I can't think. But they were — this Scottish portrait painter there. Oh, I can't think of his name.

But anyway, they had a — Swan, as I remember, was an animal painter and a crackerjack, too. And, oh, the different ones, he invited them down to — in fact, he got a gallery in London to stage the show for them. And so they brought their work down there. And they — he arranged for a dinner for them and so forth and so on. And he thought he could get Whistler to come. But Whistler let them down, see. So they blackguarded him a little bit. But although these people were interested in Whistler and so forth, and Ford said it was a dirty shame that he wouldn't have come, see?

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: Well, he said they didn't sell a picture down there. And they didn't get much attention. But he ran into a fellow that he had met, a fellow by the name of Paulus from the Glass Palace in Munich. And at that time that was a very big show, because I went down and saw it myself when I was over there the first time. Had some very fine German artists, you know, and so forth and so on. And so Paulus, this director of this show, Ford took him over there and he liked the show so well that he invited the whole show down to Munich, put them right in the thing. And they showered some medals on them, gold medals and silver medals on these fellows. And after that they were accredited. And you go over to Glasgow today, you will find a whole gallery devoted to these Glasgow painters.

MR. MCCOY: Was Halpert considered fairly avant-garde out here in Detroit?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes, he was. Yes, he was, but he was —

MR. MCCOY: He was accepted?

MR. GAMBLE: He was accepted. And he was a very fine — he was a very — and he had a class. I attended his class, too, you know. And he was a good artist, I thought.

MR. MCCOY: Yes. And you must have known John Carroll, too.

MR. GAMBLE: John Carroll? Yes, John Carroll came afterwards.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: Yes. John Carroll, yes, he came along. And of course, his style of painting — I had met him before down in Woodstock, New York. And in fact, Carroll — the first I ever saw Carroll was Bellows painted a portrait of him with long hair and one thing and another. And it was in an exhibition down there at Woodstock. And I don't think Bellows thought much of the picture. Anyway, I mentioned it to Carroll one time, and he said, "Well" — Carroll was kind of ashamed because he had this long hair, I think, and one thing another. So he didn't say much about it. But I understand that, you know, he was kind of one of the — he'd been good for the avant-garde here, you know.

MR. MCCOY: Were you in Woodstock much?

MR. GAMBLE: Quite a bit. Judson Smith down there had a studio down there. And we had — in 1923, my brother and I rigged up a Ford with a top on it, a canvas top, and a couple of bunks that swung out from the side. It was an old — what is it, a 1917 Ford?

[Inaudible comments]

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah, it was an old Ford, and Marshal, he knew a little about it. He was just a kid that —

[Inaudible comments]

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah. Anyway, we went down to Woodstock and stayed down there. We stayed at — oh, there was quite an art center down there.

MR. MCCOY: Yes. You met all the people there?

MR. GAMBLE: The fellows were very friendly and so forth. And finally, we stayed — oh, one fellow invited us to come up and park the car on his place. But then finally, Jud Smith let us — he had a farm down there. And so we drove it down there, and we painted around there.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: And also we would take a swim in the river there. Were you down there?

[Inaudible comments]

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, yeah. But it was —

MR. MCCOY: He was a famous artist.

MR. GAMBLE: Famous. And Marsh had a place down there, I think, or at least his father did.

MR. MCCOY: It was Leon Kroll?

MR. GAMBLE: Leon Kroll, yes. They were all down there. And Carlson and Spiker, Eugene Spiker. I saw Spiker in 1958. We came through there. And Spiker was — and it was at Spiker's that I met George Bellows.

MR. MCCOY: Yes, they were close friends.

MR. GAMBLE: They were close friends, and they were sitting on a back porch there. And they were interested in our camping bus, you know, and one thing another. And I had quite an interesting talk with Bellows. I was asking him — he was interested in this theory —

MR. MCCOY: Oh, I know what you mean.

MR. GAMBLE: This theory of — he claimed that — Hambeach [phonetic] theory.

MR. MCCOY: Hambeach, yes.

MR. GAMBLE: And I was interested because I knew that he had used that on some pictures. In fact, on one of the pictures in the Art Museum here there's spots in the picture that show that he used it, see. And I asked him about it. And I said, "Well, do you find that that's much of an aid?" "Well," he said, "It's an aid for composition." And then he went on to show how the Greeks had used this, you know, in laying out their plots of land and so

forth and so on. They had used something like that or so forth.

MR. MCCOY: But one thing it would be nice to get back to before we finish, do you have any particular recollections of Robert Henri?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes. Yes, very much, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: Give me your impression of him as a person.

MR. GAMBLE: He was a very interesting person, a fellow that — and as a matter of fact, it was up in his studio that I really got more courage to paint than I did out of Chase or any of the rest of them there. We were in the class there. I didn't stay very long there. But at night, why, Henri came in, and there was a fellow right next to me there that had a canvas. He was painting. And so Henri took the brush and took his palette, and he just smeared that trace right over that he had there, see, and made it a — and then punched the eyes in and punched the nose in and punched the mouth and so forth and so on. And he had a picture there that looked like something.

Well, you know, that gave me courage. I said, "Gee, well, there's a way to paint a picture. I mean, what's the use in fussing around trying to draw it out and one thing another?" Of course, I think maybe it had limitations to it. I mean his style.

But he was a very interesting man. And on Saturday morning, he would have a class. He'd send these — he'd give them a talk. And then he'd send the students out, and we'd go out and make a sketch of something, of horse down or if it was winter, why, it would be a snowy day. But I remember one picture there with a horse down on the ground and — of course, he had — he was a dramatist, you might say. I mean, he was a fellow that could key up to go out and do something, don't you know?

MR. MCCOY: How did he do it? By what he said?

MR. GAMBLE: Just by what he said.

MR. MCCOY: Um-hm.

MR. GAMBLE: I'll give you an illustration, how he said about a nude there. He said, "You know," he says, "I really learned how to paint a nude," he said, "by" — he says, "I was in a studio, and this studio overlooked another artist's studio. And there was a nude model on the other side of this glass, you see." And he said, "I got a — there was a lesson for me right there. That model was standing right out there in the full light, you know and one thing another." He says, "I really learned a lesson there. I never saw a nude just like that before." I mean, that was the kind of talk that he gave.

And then, of course, he would — he had — well, he was — well, when I got back from Europe, when I got back from Europe I called on him. And he was very much interested in painting in the tempera painting, see, and so forth. And so I had a recipe that I had gotten from some Germans over there outside of Munich there. And so he said, "Well, you come on back." He says, "I want you to meet Merati" or somebody that was mixing some colors for him or so forth and so on. And so he discussed the thing when I got back there. And I gave him the recipe that I had.

I says, "Well, what do you want to paint with tempera for? I mean, aren't your oils good enough now?" He said something about it and so forth and so on.

MR. MCCOY: He was evidently a very inspirational teacher.

MR. GAMBLE: He was what?

MR. MCCOY: A very inspirational teacher.

MR. GAMBLE: An inspirational teacher. And he asked me what I thought of that movement over there at that time. I kind of hesitated a little bit. I says, "Well, what do you think of it?"

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: He says, "I'm asking you." Well, anyway, he said he thought it was all right. He said they had the right ideas.

MR. MCCOY: He did?

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah.

MR. MCCOY: These were the post-Impressionist movement?

MR. GAMBLE: The post-Impressionist movement, see, Matisse and —

MR. MCCOY: He thought they were pretty good?

MR. GAMBLE: He thought they had prospects. He didn't — but of course, when he was over there that summer, why, he had a studio over there. And we called on him. Black and I called on him. And we didn't get in the studio. But there was a young fellow there that — I can't think of his name either. He was a student down at the Art Students League. And he was a monitor of the class, and he brought out some of the work that they were doing down there. They had — they were trying to paint like Frans Hals.

MR. MCCOY: Yes, yes.

MR. GAMBLE: You see? And so forth. But Henri was a fellow that — I'm laughing because John — what's his name? The fellow that came after Halpert there.

MR. MCCOY: Carroll?

MR. GAMBLE: Carroll, John Carroll. John Carroll of course, said, "Well, I don't know if he could paint a good" — well, he said he was a paint splasher, he says.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: A paint splasher.

MR. MCCOY: But he was a great influence on people.

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, he was a great influence, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: Inspired people with confidence.

MR. GAMBLE: Inspired them with confidence. You got through with one of his Saturday morning sessions there, and you could see things that you never saw before and you wouldn't be interested in. I mean, at the League —

MR. MCCOY: Mainly the way he talked about it.

MR. GAMBLE: The way he talked about it. He was an actor, kind of an actor, you know, and he had that kind of a sincere way of — and he could really paint the picture, he could paint a better picture with his English, I think, than he could with — although I think he was a good painter.

MR. MCCOY: Yes?

MR. GAMBLE: Very good, yeah. And I met his wife down there, too, his second wife.

MR. MCCOY: Second wife?

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah, the second wife.

MR. MCCOY: He was an interesting-looking man, too.

MR. GAMBLE: An interesting-looking man, yeah. He was —

MR. MCCOY: Was he tall?

MR. GAMBLE: Fairly tall and kind of a gnarly-looking sort of a guy. And it seemed to me he had a scar or something on his face there, if I'm not mistaken.

MR. MCCOY: Did he have an accent?

MR. GAMBLE: No, no, no. He was American.

MR. MCCOY: He didn't have a Southern accent?

MR. GAMBLE: No, I didn't detect it. It was — he was — but he had a great influence, I know at the League there. The reason I went over there was I heard — I was studying at the League, and they — somebody said that they were over to Henri's studio there and Bellows was splashing paint around there. And he said that he had really built Bellows up. Bellows when he first started in there was a Gibson painter, kind of — well, I won't

say that.

MR. MCCOY: I know what you mean.

MR. GAMBLE: But he was — but anyway, that was interesting. And — but it wasn't long before he was really putting the — he had a couple of wonderful exhibitions there. In fact, just — and while I was at a sketch class — this might be interesting. I went over there, and we would all sketch the model, see. He'd give us 15 minutes to do it. Well, my first time in there, naturally, I wasn't just onto his method of working. I was used to working at the League, where we would kind of draw the thing out to some extent. So he went up and down the line and he picked mine out as the worst in the bunch!

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: And then so forth. Well, then he got me kind of mad there, you know, in a — well, I mean, I wasn't mad. I was just — but the next time I come up there, I just simply threw it in there without any — with abandon, see. I guess he didn't recognize my work, and he picked mine out as the best.

MR. MCCOY: Is that right?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes, sir. And he was surprised. He kind of had a — it took his breath a little bit there. But that just goes to show — I mean, but what he was trying to do was get the thing down there fast and then don't monkey around.

MR. MCCOY: But do you remember him particularly as a man of great sincerity?

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, very great sincerity. And then this episode, while I was in there, why, it was the first time. There was a fellow came in with a cape on and a kind of an artist's hat, you know, and kind of a — it wasn't exactly a tam, but it was kind of a — and so he came in there, and of course, the students were all around kind of interested. And he was asking about what the price was and what they were — how they were studying, and one thing another. And they were just about to enroll him, and somebody spotted him as Bellows. He'd come in there with his costume on.

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: And so then they all had a good laugh. But he had them fooled there for — it was just somebody that actually knew him, you know, because he wasn't in the class at that time. He had kind of graduated.

MR. MCCOY: That was about the time that Rockwell Kent and Edward Hopper and several of those people were studying with him, wasn't it?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes, they were studying with him then. But I didn't —

MR. MCCOY: [Inaudible]

MR. GAMBLE: Yes, yes. They were studying with him at that time. That was in the Lincoln — he had a studio in the Lincoln —

MR. MCCOY: Arcade?

MR. GAMBLE: Arcade, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: And then there was another artist there that was a friend of — that was very good. I never heard much of him afterwards. He had a studio, too, there.

MR. MCCOY: You weren't aware of John Sloan?

MR. GAMBLE: Yes, yes. I did. I was at Sloan's studio. There was a Margaret Cummings or somebody. Anyway, a friend of my sister's that went to the Wicker School. And she finally, finally ended up in New York as a kind of a writer. And she was secretary of that group down there, the — well, that was started right up after 1913, I think, that group that was — Independent Artists.

MR. MCCOY: Oh, Independent.

MR. GAMBLE: Yes. She was secretary of the Independent Artists and knew all those artists and so forth. And she took me up to — I had gotten back from Europe, you know, and so I was — went around with her to Romany

Marie's Café or whatever you call it.

MR. MCCOY: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

MR. GAMBLE: And she was a model of — what do you call them there? So she took me up to the — they were having an evening up there at Sloan's studio. And so we went up there, and they had — oh, all the artists around there. I didn't know all of them because I had been away, you know. I know whether I'm talking into this thing or whether —

MR. MCCOY: That's fine.

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah. And so he was — he surprised me. I thought — I'd heard of him and so forth and so on. But he was a scholarly looking sort of a fellow, you know, with glasses on and one thing another. But he had a wife that was a little dumpy sort of a woman. And she — they were — it was right after the war. And you could see that they were a little bit on the — well, they were independent thinkers, you know. And she was especially one. And somebody told me that she had took the American flag and misused it there on one occasion there.

MR. MCCOY: Well, they were both great Socialists.

MR. GAMBLE: They were Socialists, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: But then Henri and a lot of those people had strong feelings about socialism and anarchism and such.

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah, they did. They did. But Henri, I never heard him express anything about that. Because when I knew Henri at that time, why, it was before the war, see. And as a matter of fact, after the war, I think I was in his studio once there. But I'm not just positive about that. But I know his sister-in-law was down at Woodstock there, and his — I don't think Henri was down there, though.

Let's see. What was that question again?

MR. MCCOY: I was wondering about Henri's political ideas.

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: Did he express any of them?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, he didn't at that time because it wasn't — this was in 1912 or 1911.

MR. MCCOY: Well, that was the great socialist period in this country.

MR. GAMBLE: Yes. But he had — it was mostly, as I understood him, he'd say it in art, but don't — I mean, he was — I don't think he was in favor of — although he did have some Irish sympathy there. In fact, he had — there was — he used to meet with some of the Irish people.

MR. MCCOY: There was one principle that he had about art, the necessity of art being related to life.

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, yes, absolutely, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: [Inaudible]

MR. GAMBLE: Oh, yes, absolutely. Well, that's what I say. He would tell you about things, and he was against this academic art. That's the reason he jumped on me with that first sketch I made, see?

MR. MCCOY: Oh, I see.

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah, because it was too academic, see? And he wanted — he was for Goya and —

MR. MCCOY: Velásquez?

MR. GAMBLE: Velásquez, yeah.

MR. MCCOY: Frans Hals.

MR. GAMBLE: Frans Hals. But he would — Goya was quite a — he was quite an admirer of Goya.

MR. MCCOY: Can you say anything about comparing Henri as a teacher to Chase as a teacher?

MR. GAMBLE: Well, Chase, of course, was — yes. Chase was a little man and a dapper sort of a fellow. I remember he had a big ring on his finger, you know, and he'd move his hands around there, stand up there, you know. And he had a white moustache or whatever he had.

MR. MCCOY: Yes. He had a white beard?

MR. GAMBLE: Yeah, he had a beard on him and one thing another. And I remember him saying that — somebody asked him who the greatest painters were. And he said — well, he said there's Whistler and Sergeant, and he said, "Modesty prevents me from going any further." Well, I suppose that's a stock saying of his, but I suppose he would — but then he was having an exhibition in Boston, I think, at the time I was studying there. And he was telling the students about what they said about his technique.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: He was a technician, don't you see, and so forth and so on.

MR. MCCOY: He wasn't as inspirational a figure as Henri?

MR. GAMBLE: No, no. No, not at all. No, not at all. He was a regulation portrait painter, just a regulation portrait painter.

MR. MCCOY: Yes. Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: And I was kind of surprised, because I hadn't had a heck of a lot of experience when he came around and said — well, he said, "Oh, this is pretty near as good as it ought to be done," he says. Well, I know he was — then I could see by looking at him that he was pulling my leg a little bit, you know. And he said, "Well, not quite," he says. "Not quite," he says. Then I asked him that question: "How do you finish a picture?"

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: And he squelched me on that one. But I don't think he knew how to do it himself, when you come right down to it, I mean, a real finish.

MR. MCCOY: Yes. He was really a man of the past century.

MR. GAMBLE: Yes. And here's an interesting story. Who was that fellow down Marcelet [phonetic] that we met down in Woodstock there? It was Chase's monitor. Oh, anyway. Gee, my memory is not good.

Anyway, who was I telling you that we were sitting on the porch there? Spiker, Eugene Spiker. And he was laughing, telling about — he was the monitor of the class. Spiker was one of the finest draftsmen down there in the League.

MR. MCCOY: Yes.

MR. GAMBLE: You know, I mean, and he was a teacher even when I was down there. He was a teacher, you see, in drawing. But I didn't come in contact with him then. I came in contact with him later on up at Woodstock. And he said that the last time I was up there, why, we were talking about Chase. And he says, "You know, I was monitor for Chase," he says. And he says, "Chase had got an idea that he wanted the canvas painted all white, with all white paint, you know, see." And he says, "Here I had to go and spend 60 cents for a tube of lead white," he says, and smeared it all over the canvas, you know. And Chase, who is a little fellow, you know, he came in and strutted in there and started painting into it.

And I says, "Well, what did he want the white paint for?" I says, "Well, gee, that seems to me — I don't know." "Well," Spiker says, "I don't know." But he says it wasn't long before he got mixed up in that white paint, and he couldn't go any farther. But he finally quit in disgust.

[Laughter]

MR. GAMBLE: He says, "There I had to pay for the paint."

MR. MCCOY: Well, I guess we're about to run out, Mr. Gamble.

MR. GAMBLE: All right.

MR. MCCOY: I appreciate your coming down.

MR. GAMBLE: Yes. All right, fine. I hope I didn't overdo.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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