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Oral history interview with Francis A.  
Lammer, 1974 June 14

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Francis A. Lammer on June 14, 1974. The interview took place in Adamsville, Rhode Island, and was conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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

## Interview

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Good morning Mr. Brown, how are you this morning?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Great.

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, this is an interview on June 14, 1974, with Francis A. Lammer in Adamsville, Rhode Island, and Robert Brown, the interviewer. I wanted to talk with you today or something about your—if you could discuss something of the profession that you went into as an engraver. Perhaps, you could begin by talking a bit about your, uh, earlier education and your apprenticeship as an engraver? And then I'll ask you some other questions as we go along based on what you were talking about. So if you could begin with something of—how did you begin to get interested in designing and this sort of thing?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well, when I was doing—in public school, we had physics, and of course, I always liked to draw, so I picturized my physics books, uh, together with the material explaining all about it and then I had pictures of the entire course. And when I went to interview with Tiffany and Company, Mr. Whitehouse, I had already learned that they had taken an apprentice for the next five years so that—my cousin told me who worked there. However, I went over to see Mr. Whitehouse, and he informed me that they had already taken a chap for the next five years, and they were filled up. [00:02:07] So I asked permission whether I could come back the next day and show him some of my work, and I brought over the physics book and several other pictures that I had done. I had no training—that is, I took no lessons in any schools or anything previous to that. He looked at them over, and he said, "There is a great possibility in your future that you would make a very good artist," and he said, "I'm going to hire you." And this was—I went over on a Tuesday, and on a Wednesday, I showed the pictures, and he said, "You report Sunday morning," which was Lincoln's birthday, February 12.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What year was that?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: In 1906. And we had a terrific blizzard. I started out at half past six in the morning, and naturally when I hit the New York—I lived in Jersey, when I hit the New York side, I had all the walking to do and not being too well acquainted with it because I always went up the Christopher Street Ferry, which was Eighth Street with my mother to Macy's and shopping and to the bank up there in Sixth Avenue. So that I went up there, and of course, I had to cross from 12th Avenue and Eighth Street up to Fifth Avenue and 37th Street in the blizzard. [00:04:06] It was, uh, at least—I was small, so to me it seemed the—some places, the drift was eight to 10 feet high, which seemed impossible in New York City. But I went through it, and I went over them, and I landed there. Instead of getting to work at eight o'clock, I got there at half past twelve. I apologized to Mr. Little, and he said, "Just, look, go over this place there," and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who is Mr. Little? Was he the—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Mr. Little, he had charge of the office where I was supposed to go in because the first six months, you go into the office and not into the shop.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What department was this at Tiffany's—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: This is the engraving department on—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mr. Whitehouse was in charge of it?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Mr. Whitehouse is in charge of the art department and the engraving and the library and also the office where the material went through. So I didn't like the idea of going into the office. However, I never regretted it because I got an office training, which I would never have received in another place, or it came in

very handy at—when I started in business that I had my experience and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you see that you were extremely lucky to even get a job?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I beg your pardon?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you feel you were extremely lucky to even get a job?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh, I prayed to God. The night before I went over, I prayed that the good Lord would get me the job. [00:06:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you think it was your—the sketches in your physics book that did the trick for you?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's what did the trick and then I also feel the good Lord had a hand in it somehow or another. He did it all my life and he—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, did you have someone in your family who was encouraging you to go on with this work? You mentioned a cousin earlier who—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh, my grandfather, well, he was not here. He lived in South America. He was an architect, and the cousin that I mentioned, he was a bookkeeper in Tiffany and Company, but he did not encourage me. If anything, he discouraged me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: So I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why would he discourage you, do you think?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well, they told him there was no place for me—

ROBERT F. BROWN: No formal thing. Yeah.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —and that was it. And even when I was a little feller, I was persistent, and of course, I was guided in the right direction. Now, my mother wanted to go over to me—with me to make sure that perhaps I would get in there, and I said, "No, I'll take the whole thing on my own," and I did. I was very fortunate in getting in there because many things in that Tiffany and Company were the—I went from—we were middle class, and I went from the middle class to live in the high class or what they called the money bracket at that time. And in that way, you would learn nicer things of life and the—that is what I mean is this. You had the silverware, you had jewelry, you had diamonds, and you got to know about all those things in that department. [00:08:00] I said that you have to work in the office there, and, see, in this way, you handled those things, and you got to know them, and you know what a breakfast knife was and a table knife and a bouillon spoon. And I could tell you something, in the hospital recently, they gave me a bouillon spoon for a sugar spoon. That's beside the point though.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you recognized these distinctly?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, the office you were in was the office of the art department, the—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes, it was a combination of the art department and the engraving. We had 26 engravers there, and we had approximately 10 artists—10 or 12 artists.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were designers for, uh—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: They made the design for the stationery. They made the design for the menus. Now, there, the business, it really went out. We had the chamber of commerce, we had the colonial names, and we had all the big organizations in New York City that gave these annual dinners, and each and every one of them had different menus.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, did the artists and the engravers work together on these things?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And the artists and the engravers worked together. Now, we in the art department, we just designed them, and, uh, it was a composite of the thing. We had the order, but since we had the order for the opening of the Manhattan McAdoo Tunnel—it was the Manhattan and Jersey tunnel. And at that time, well, there was a mishap in the, uh, in the photo, department, and I asked whether I could take a course in that.

[00:10:08] I figured I had—I knew enough about Actus, but I wanted to get that in. The boss was lenient, and the chap that was learning that business there and took that end of it, he was on a vacation, and of course, he had an accident, and he was killed, so I took over—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In the photographic department?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: In the photographic department.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now why—how was that used then in this design business—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the photography?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —there are many tiaras, diamond tiaras—anything that was downstairs in the store of any value, that was photographed and this Mr. Collier had charge of it. Sometimes, we went outside to take pictures. For instance, I went over to the Yerkes Mansion, which is on Fifth Avenue, and that's a beautiful residence. They had a big hall—a big entrance there, a hallway all white marble and the usual rugs, and they had a big, open stairway. Over the stairway, they had all fernery and birds flying around there, and you couldn't go through there due to their nets. And then down below, of course, they had a glass floor to let the light in, and they had the art department, and we had a statue, to photograph, of Diana, which was supposed to have been stolen from the Wallace Collection in England. [00:12:02] Well, I don't know whatever happened, whether she gave it back to them or not, but we had things like that. Then I went over and I took a picture of the Delaware, Lackawanna pier in Hoboken and then I took a—by the way, I went downstairs in Hoboken before they opened up, and I took a picture of the tunnel and that. Then I took a picture of the New York side from the ferry, and those pictures were reproduced on a menu. So that that was the McAdoo Tunnel, and the governors when they had that big banquet, they had pictures of the ferry and a picture of the tube in the center. I can show you. I have showed it you.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, how old were you when you were in this? This is, what, shortly after you came. Were you about 16 years old?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I was about 17 years old then.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see. Did you have an assistant who helped you with your photography or just—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, I took that on my own because, you see, I lived over in Jersey, and by that time, I was well enough so that I could take a lot of outside pictures. And I'll never forget, there was a dark fellow and the telephone operator, and he said that he had a lot of pictures taken of his children, and he asked me whether I would come over and take their pictures. He says, "I never liked any of them," and I said, "Well, I'll try," but the only thing I had is to take a picture against a brook—a brick wall in the backyard there, you see?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: So I did, and of course, he raved of them because I had the light so that he had a light color, and they looked like mulattos, and it brought out their beautiful features. [00:14:05]

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see, sure, sure.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And he was very pleased about it, so—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, how long were you with—in photography with Tiffany's, very long before you went into engraving?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, I was about five months, I would say, then they transferred me into the art department.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you begin your apprenticeship then?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Then I started the artwork. The first thing I did, I had to do alphabets and then there's one nice thing about it. We had Gus Lang, and he did a lot of those small monograms, and we had another one, Frank Taylor, and he did lettering, very small lettering. We got little cards—I would say they're about two by three and a half—and underneath, it was stamped the Tiffany stamp, and we had to put monograms on there. In other words, they gave us the letters that the customer wanted, then they said they want it similar to style 46 or whatever they picked out and then you make one like that and you make two others. So in that way, why, you bring out the monograms for steel guys then you had another phase of the thing and that was the lettering. I didn't get too many of that because we had two or three apprentices working on that, but I got the larger of the

alphabets. You do the script, and you have, oh, three or four lines of it, and the A, B, C's you do every letter until it's perfect and then you do it backwards until it's perfect, and you take your all in—[00:16:12]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this was in drawing?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I beg your pardon?

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was in drawing or what do you—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: This is pencil drawing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Pencil drawing, right.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: In pencil drawing. The idea of the thing is that we try to get into a lot of the children is never mind what it looks like. If you get your basics in any kind of art, you've got it because from there on, you can build up. But I noticed my granddaughter, she drew a picture, and there's no basic—basics to it that they taught in the schools of today. There was just, you know, no proportion, no nothing—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, the—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —but that's beside the point.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, but these basics would be interesting to know. What do you mean by that? By—say when you're doing lettering, basically, what, the proportions, the spacing?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: The spacing, the proportions. The first thing you get, you get your individual letters and you get them down pat and you do them good until—I mean, you work on it until you're doing them A-1, I'll put it that way. And then you have the combination. You put them together. Well, lettering is one of the hardest things to combine because you have different shapes in the lettering, and it is mostly on an eye-training basis. Well, you can spell out your name like "Francis A. Lammer," and you got the big "F," then you have the "R" and you have an even space, the "A," an even space but then you've got to have a lot—a wider space between the "A" and then "N." And then you have the same space between the "N" and the "C" and the "I" and the "S," and so forth, with all the rest of them. [00:18:15] And then you space, oh, so that it looks nice. Now "A, Francis A." and then the "L" so you have two spaces, but you've got to allow for a period after the "A." So you allow a little bit more on that side than you do on the others, and of course, "Lammer" is the same way. You do that with any name, and you do the same thing with the address. In any type of lettering that you do, you have that. Now, you look at signs or any lettering in the newspaper work, and the spacing is—it's terrible. It's—people don't seem to notice it I guess or something.

ROBERT F. BROWN: With who—you were working then closely under a master letterer or a designer?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes. You have your, uh—men that are fully experienced in it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And they—do they—each day, did you show them your work or—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh yes. You go to them. Now, for instance, I was telling you about Gus Lang, I do a couple of monograms and then say, "Gus, say, I don't know this. Well, can you help me out with this or help me out with that?" And you're always working with professionals, and they're always willing to show one another and then—especially if you're kind with them. Now, we had to—one of the jobs we had to do is clean out the paint or watercolor, both, and a lot of times, you do a little extra. Probably, you take their drawing board and put a clean sheet over it. [00:20:04] You're not supposed to do, but you're supposed to do that and dust the benches off and —

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah, and then you get—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean for the master artists, you helped. Sometimes, you cleaned their equipment and get things ready for them?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah, you get things ready for them, and in that way, it also teaches you. Now, you can come upstairs to my bench any time, and you'll find my brushes in a certain place and you'll find the pencils, and I could always find things so that I can work quickly. And each and every brush and pens, they're cleaned immediately. You don't leave them there till tomorrow and clean them out. I could tell you some instances in some of the art schools I've been, they get that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So there's a lot of—there was a lot of discipline then in this, was there?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: There was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But were you happy with it?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Very, very. I always liked it because every—you had a place for everything and everything in its place. Then, uh, while you're doing that, you'll have maybe a year or two years where you are put in the library. Not every boy gets that, but I was very fortunate, I got that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Put in the library at Tiffany's?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes. We had, oh, several thousand books there, and if any of the boys wants something or want—well, you can hang around and browse in the library. We had art books of all kinds, and, uh, there were professional nude pictures and things of that type. So you study all that as you go along. You see pictures of engraving, you study that, and you keep it, but at the same time, you're dusting and cleaning the place—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, so you were allowed to when? During your lunch hour, you'd do this or—[00:22:03]

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, no in the mornings.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: See, you get there eight o'clock in the morning, and you start with your library work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see. And you may—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And—or you start cleaning up for the—and that's the only duty you like to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, in the library books, did you begin to get an idea of styles through history and the possibilities of different styles—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —of engraving?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: It gives you an idea to do research work because, a lot of times, the artists there needed to look up something for them, and I would and then, of course, we had a Bible there. And we when you're 21, that was a place where you're judged by the boys—this has nothing to do with the company—and you either get married—and I know one of the boys, he got married, and I brought over a pink lace, and my sister wouldn't wear the skirt. We'd get one of the clothes and put it on and then they have the Bible there, and you have a regular ceremony, and the boys are sitting on top of the cases, and some of them that they're 21 or 22 and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you have a mock wedding there?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah, a mock wedding, or else you get a trial, and you're, you're charged with stealing something and then you get a fine. Well, the fine—even I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —say so, there's a lot of times you do a little extra in like big counts. I—they went around to the engravers and the artists, and every one of them chipped in, and as a rule—it was just amongst us apprentices—so that a fellow would get a keychain or we get something else. I got a sterling silver knife, I got a keychain, and I got one—uh, this sterling silver pencil, so I got three things. [00:24:12]

ROBERT F. BROWN: When was this when you'd served your apprenticeship?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: When I served my apprenticeship. I think the reason for that is because I never refused to do anything for anyone. If they wanted something, oh, sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, were these extra things they'd made that they get—they made for this especially for you?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, they buy them downstairs in the store.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see, yeah, because they wouldn't have much time, would they? They weren't—were—you were always very busy, weren't you, taking orders from—that came through the office?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah. Oh, this is after you—when you served your apprenticeship and you graduate—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, oh, I know—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —when you're in the shop.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well when you're an apprentice, do you—are you allowed to work on the orders or are you—and you just do a—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well, when you go in the office, yes, and you do nothing but artwork.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, but I mean are you allowed to work on the orders for customers when you're working with the engravers and designers? Did—or like this man Gus Lang, did he supervise? He'd say, "Frank, you do this part of this—of this commission that we're to do?"

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well, to explain that, you don't do anything for maybe two years. You touch no customer's work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You're just doing your drawing and your—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: You're no good, absolutely no good for two years and maybe two and a half years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You're just doing your studying of—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —under their supervision?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: But you go to these different artists to get corrections because you cannot always go into Whitehouse's.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But that—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: He was the head boss, see, and he would approve of this thing. But you'd always go to the boys, and they would teach you a lot especially if you're nice to them. And we had—and there was—I don't know whether it was at Tiffany. [00:26:03] There was only one chap, and well, he didn't stay too long. But something happened there, and I almost got hooked with it, with a three-stone diamond ring that's worth \$7,000.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Oh, I see, yeah.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: But it didn't work. I know I—a lot of times, I act stupid, see, and I learned a lot that way. He always thought I was the stupid kind, and he was—he lived in New York in the, well, the middle-class section, and he was it. When the work came from upstairs, Bob from downstairs, he told you, and you'll have an electric elevator, a small one, the same things they have in the apartment house, and you pull the rope by hand, but this is all electrically equipped.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, and just to bring down the material—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right and then you have a whistle, a tube that comes up, and Bob used to blow in that when he told me, "Hey, Frank, there's such and such a thing in it," Well, he blew in that, and he told Charlie that there was a three-stone diamond ring plus the others. Well, I had only been there a short time, and this noontime I came in, and he took it off the dumbwaiter, and he put it on the table, and he was supposed to check it off, but he left it to me. And when I went through the stuff, what happened—my boss was there. See, the office was kind of small, Mr. Little was charged with. [00:28:00] He was there, and I told him. I said, "Mr. Little," I said, "I want you to come over here." I said, "I got every one of these items, but this one here, this three-stone diamond ring, and I can't find it in there." I told him, "I already called Bob and told him that, and he said it was in there." He said, "Don't sign that." I said, "Oh no. I wouldn't sign that on a bet." Now, many times, you'd come in, and you'd be lazy. You have a lazy year or so, and when that book comes and you put this stuff in the trays and lay everything out, you see, and you just put a big "FAL" over the whole page. See, but this day, I was lazy, and I was very fortunate. See, I always say the good Lord was with me that day.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you didn't. Huh.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: So within a few minutes, the superintendent came up and he was like a bulldog and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean the security, the police?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: They find—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the policeman?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Then the Pinkertons came up, and they head to him, and I went to the window. I thought they were Pinkertons, and they asked me a few questions, and they said—I told them just what happened, just repeating it and then they got—waited for Charlie. Charlie was out to lunch, and when Charlie came back, they got to him, and they took him in a room, and this was at least quarter past one. It didn't take him long to come in, oh half-past one, and they grilled him till four o'clock, and he was crying like a baby. But what he did after that, he stayed about a week, like a month or so, then he said he's leaving to go to college. Now, we never knew whether he stole the ring or whether he was convicted. [00:30:00] We never heard anything of it, and it was none of our business.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It wasn't in the newspapers or anything?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No. There's nothing in the papers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because it would've been bad for Tiffany's if people knew those things were happening, right?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And in January, Mr. Little closed the books, and he says, "Frankie, come over here a minute." I said, "Yes, sir?" He says, "Do you see this here?" He said, "You saved our department \$7,000," and he said, "What made things worse, it belonged to a customer. It was in for repair and engraving at the same time," so I was very happy. I know when I—after I got out of there, I had another boss, Mr. Snippen. He had charge of Tiffany engraving, and I—and I should have told you Mr. Whitehouse is overall—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, you did.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —the entire department.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, by then—by after two years then, you were allowed to start help designing work for customers, is that—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh, yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what were you by that time?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That was a new year of your library, your door, your office work, and then it's two years after that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. Oh, I see, so—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —on the bench.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —it's more than two years. Then you go—then you're on the bench finally, you're at—you're working on—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right, you're on the bench.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —you're working with the metals, you're working with engraving, jewelry—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And while you were in—well, I wanted to do—in other words, you do the engrossing the same as you see up there, that prayer. And what you do there is the black lettering.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, you're not talking about engraving now. You're talking about engrossing.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah. I'm talking in—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You did—this work.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —engrossing. So then what you do, you take these menus I was telling you about. They have the American flag on it, or they have various things, and they're printed properly in black or in brown then you color them. [00:32:10]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see. That was some of the first work you did—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That was some of the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —when you were in—



FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —first work—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and it's simpler.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —and you work—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was simpler than the—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: It's simple work because you have everything. All you have to do is know how to do your washes. You wash and you color the American flag in different things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you had people who taught you how to do that?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Then you move into engraving, is that right?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well then, after about two years of that, I—in the meantime, you do picture work. I have told you about the pen and ink drawing that I made. I don't know whether you remember or not.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Pen and ink drawings for what?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: For—of a French scene and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what was this supposed to be for, for sale by Tiffany's or—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, they get you into the picture under that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see, right.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Now, Munro, he made the pictures of the Lackawanna. See, he painted those little pictures the same as I do now?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well, he did that work and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He did, and what were they done—what was done with it? These were for the menus and things like that?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: There were for menus—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then they were engraved by other men?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And then they were sent to the factory, or they were sent for lithographing out, and they made—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, so they reproduced—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —made plates of those drawings, see?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: So, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So that's what you were getting—being taught to do then?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I was getting to know. That's why these things here and—well, I made one of—I have one up there now—the French scene, and it was pen and ink, and I took it into Mr. Whitehouse, and I don't know. I think he gave it to me to do, and I did it, and he said, "That's beautiful, you see," but he said, "Do it over again." So—[00:34:02]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what faults did he see in it, do you think?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: He didn't say. So I went, and I studied, and I did it over very conscientiously and then he said—well, I took it in to him, he says, "That's nice, much better," but he says, "I'll tell you what, Frank, do it over again." Boy—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The third time.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And in those days, you couldn't tell the boss where to go.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, and what—and he wouldn't tell you his reasons either?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, no. He said, "You just go and do it all." Well, you do it, and you might swear under your hat. Well, you didn't have the hat on anyhow, but you sit down, and you do it, and you're so mad that you're going to do that perfect so that he won't make you do it over the fourth time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were copying from a French scene?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh yes—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were trying to—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —you copy.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —be as accurate as you could be in copying?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah. You'll have to get every bit of detail in there—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this copying from a painting or an engraving?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, this was from an engraving.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, so you have to get the lines in and the cross-hatching?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes, all that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you were doing it in pen and ink?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I was doing it in pen and ink. So I took that in to him the third time, and he says, "Well, that looks like—" He said, "Now, wait," so he—I didn't know, but he pulled out the first one and he pulled out the second one and he took that third one and he put it alongside. He says, "Frankie, see that?" I said, "Did I do that first one?" He said, "You sure did." See, and I learned the best lesson in my life that the first thing you do isn't always perfect. [00:36:00] So that these pictures that you see here they're as near perfect as you can make them in every way, in measurements and all. And you'll always find no matter what masterpiece—we used to go up to the art galleries, there were three of us. Munro would have painted that picture up there, and Teddy Krebs, he was a very good [inaudible] artist, and we'd have our 25-cent lunch or 35-cent lunch. And then we'd browse around the art galleries. It was Nagler's and different ones and have pictures in. And you look for the flaws in a masterpiece not to belittle them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: True.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: We did this on our own and see who would be the first one to find something that was a little bit off.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In terms of accuracy?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right. And you'd always [inaudible] then and no matter what masterpiece you're looking, there was always some flaw that he overlooked. What I do many times with these pictures after I get them all done, I put them aside. For instance, I did a big job for—on—I engraved a tooth for Haffenreffer.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. A whale tooth, yeah.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: A whale's tooth, and he had the Mount Hope printed on it, and he had the Governor Bradford House, and he had the death of King Philip, and he had the picture of the first sailboat that they built and they bought—[00:38:01]

ROBERT F. BROWN: The Herreshoff?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: The Herreshoff Company—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Bristol, Rhode Island.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: In Bristol. And then I put the inscription it. I had quite a few months to do it because I do take time on that. So he came—it was Sunday—and he said, "Have you got my tooth finished?" I said, "No, I haven't," and he said, "Well, as you know right well, that I've got to have it for Friday, his birthday is Friday." I said, "Don't be excited." So I went, and I hadn't looked at it for two weeks, and I said, "I have to check it for

errors or anything." So I said, "I figured you wouldn't come till tomorrow or Tuesday, Wednesday," and he said, "You let me do all the criticizing of this thing, and if I don't want it, you will know it." So I gave him the tooth, and he said, "That's perfect." He had—he came with a magnifying glass and looked over everything, and he says, "You're not getting this back even to handle it because you might want to see something in there," but he says, "Everything's perfect on there," and he said, "You'll get a check tomorrow." So I said, "You better put it in some tissue, so you don't get it scratched up."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, you—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: So I did, and I had my check the next day.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you see this as a tribute to the discipline that you got under Whitehouse as an apprentice?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then going and—yes, hmm.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And you see in Tiffany's, everything has to be perfect. There was nothing that went out of there unless it was AA-1. Sometimes I do something, and it wouldn't be right, and sometimes I would go to the professionals, and they would say, "It's all right, Frank. It's all right." [00:40:02] But that's what I didn't like about [inaudible] Snippen, and that's one reason I got out. He always got me for something.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, this was one of the artists at the—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Tiffany?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —it dates back to when I started there, he wanted me to do something, and he wasn't my boss. I mean, I didn't think he'd ever be and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Oh, I see—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —I told him where to go [inaudible]. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. So this accuracy then was the great thing you were aiming for, so the—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —continually—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —all my life.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —consistent work. Now, did you ever—during those years at Tiffany's, did they—did you—were you encouraged ever to develop new styles of lettering—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —or of engraving?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Uh, they—you do that on your own because you have the sample sheet, and they're all more or less the same.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who made the—you mean the sample sheets you were given to practice with?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, the sample sheet that they used. In other words, they have them—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, for the customers, right.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —down in the store, they show it to the customer, then they just send it by mail, uh, these different sheets, the addresses and style sheets. And then they—we have one that was on—we've mounted on a board so that we viewed it all the time, and they wanted style 46 or something like that, and you do it. Now then, what I—I was one of those kind that I never wanted to stick to one rule, so I created a lot of monograms, and they were very pleased. Whitehouse, he was very pleased, and I got a lot of monograms to design after that. I had one for Teddy Roosevelt Jr. I don't know whether I ever showed you that or not, but—[00:42:02]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you ever meet the customers?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, you never meet the customer, you don't—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you ever meet Mr. Tiffany?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes, he came in two to three times all the time I was there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was? And what would—he looked closely at your work or—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah, oh, he'd come in, wouldn't say a word. He's a little bitty fella, [inaudible], and he'd go around the shop, and I don't think he'd say three words even to the head boss. He just walked around and then you wouldn't see him again. He'd probably to go Italy or France or somewhere, and he'd pick up different ideas or things for—

ROBERT F. BROWN: When did you finish your apprenticeship there? What year was that?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Boy, I don't know. I think it was in 1912 or [19]13 that I got out of there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you meet—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I worked a couple of years after the apprentice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, at Tiffany's?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: As a full designer, as a trained—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Designer, and I was also breaking in on the engraving end of it. And I didn't like it. I didn't want to be an engraver. I wanted to be an artist. So they—this Snippen, he wanted me to get—I knew why he wanted to get me under his tongue, which he did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was an engraver?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes, and he became the boss. He just sat there at the desk, and he criticized all your work. It was either yes or no or whatever it was. So then, uh, they wanted me back in the art department again because we had—well, there's seven of us black Tiffany's apprentices in all and one, Gus Harbrander [ph], he became a salesman downstairs. [00:44:00] Gus Lang got out. He went with this father-in-law and then he had—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You stayed with Tiffany's then until 1912 or so?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah. Then they called. This Snippen put something on me, and I did a job—I'm going to be honest about it—and I had four of the finest engravers in there, and they all said it was perfect. He said it was not, so he told me to go in and tell Mr. Whitehouse that such and such is wrong with it. I went into Mr. Whitehouse, and he looked it over, and he said, "Well, I can't see what's wrong with it." He says, "You tell Mr. Snippen to pass it; it's perfectly all right." So I never told Snippen, I never told him, but that got me so mad, I walked out, and I got out. I said, "If I'm going to be under in this way—" So Mr. Whitehouse came to me, and he said, "I tell you what, I'm going to give you three dollars more a week"—I was making 15—and he said, "We want you back in the art department." See, that's why they were pulling in, and I had enough of a taste of engraving that I liked it. You know you can learn to like it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sure. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Even though it was very arduous, wasn't it, learning is?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh, it was very hard, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you went back then in the art department?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, I, I just walked out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You decided to leave?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I just walked out, that was it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In any way is this—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I didn't even say goodbye.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and this is when you went to Lord & Taylor? Is that when you went to—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, I knocked around, and I wanted to go to Pennsylvania, and I did it. So, my brother-in-law told me about a friend of his, and I helped him about three months. [00:46:02] And imagine this, now, I was getting—what am I getting—\$18 a week, but I was making \$50 to \$60 a week.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And then I'd get out of that, you see, and I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, for three months, you were making \$50 or \$60 a week?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Doing engraving?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah. But I didn't want to stay at that because it was—it was beautiful work. It was nice work. But, see, this company, they bought out the Reed & Barton's retail store, and they were having a big sale of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why did Tiffany's pay so little compared to this company?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Never did pay.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Tiffany never did pay much—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No. No, you worked—you worked for little or nothing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You went there for the prestige of being—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —of doing their kind of—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. There was no—oh, that's why you take Gus Lang, he was full pledged, and he got out. Teddy, he got out from the South, and we all started a little place of our own for a while. Teddy was on in the Finine Building, and I had one—I did—I never spoke of because I wasn't there long. I went right into Lord & Taylor's, and I opened up their shop.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You began their engraving shop or their—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: The engraving shop. It had nothing to do with this store whatsoever, but I bought the presses, and I hired an expert copperplate engraver, and you see he was working for Reed & Barton, and Reed & Barton's went out of business. So I got into the league and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The league of engravers?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah, indeed. Dick—he couldn't get in there unless you were perfect, you see? [00:48:03]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: So by that time, I was a pretty good die cutter. I did quarter bonds, I did—I took anything even home from Tiffany's shops and all. And Dick Murray, he had a big printing place, he just did plate printing and die-stamping, and I'd get work from him. While I was in Tiffany, each one of my girlfriends got a steel-die monogram that I engraved myself, see. And Dick Murray used to—I'd buy the paper down at Tiffany downstairs and then they—I'd give it to him, and they'd probably make a pillow for me. It was the regular style make a pillow for the young fellas, and I had quite—I kept one of that after.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, how long were with Lord & Taylor?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I was a little over a year. They took 20 trucks, two weeks, 24 hours a day to move them up, and I went with them down on 20th Street and Broadway. And then when the new place opened up in about six or seven weeks, we got the room on the west end of the building on the ninth floor, and it was quite a good-sized room and had two nice big windows in so that we were able to work there. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was pretty much like Tiffany's. You get the customers' orders?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right, and I made the style sheet for the steel-die downstairs and then Dick Nurse, he made the style sheet on the copperplate. [00:50:00] So I did know how to do copperplate; however, he put the finishing touches to me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was a little more advanced?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes. Oh, he was the man. I used to go out with him, and he was a married man. He had a couple of kids, and I don't think he was much around his own boys, but he kind of took to me, you know?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And we took out to dinner together, and I finally became president of the league in New York and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is the league of die cutters and engravers—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —steel plate engravers?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Copperplate engravers, and they wouldn't you take in unless you were recommended by three of them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what was the idea—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: On your work, they had to see you work. Never mind the character or anything.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was the idea of this group, to try to go to manufacturers and make sure they paid enough?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: The league?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes, to keep it up on a standard.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And to keep the price—keep the wages up too—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —is that right?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —keep the wages up. And, of course, the manufacturers, they didn't like the league, and what happened, the league went on a strike and there was quite a bit of—I was out of Tiffany's then. And they had enough pay so that the engravers getting plenty of pay, and they're standing on the sidewalks in New York, in front of the building with diamonds—wearing diamonds.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They really lied, huh, the papers?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Sure, they didn't make that much money. And then they got a better scale of wages but the—here's—well, that's beside the point. Remind me after we do this, and I'll tell you about it. But every one of them, they pulled out of the league. [00:52:08]

ROBERT F. BROWN: They all did. How—why did they?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Tiffany's. They either had to do or get out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To go to work at Tiffany's, yes.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: So, you see, where I was in Lord & Taylor's, we had all the rest of them, and the factory in Tiffany's was in Forest Hills in New York City. And they, of course, had a league there, but they had to throw it out, and I'll tell you why. Yes, I can tell you why. The foreman of the shop in Forest Hills reneged, and it broke the thing, so they all had to go back to work again. He wouldn't stick with his men. They couldn't very well fire any of the fellas. They had to take them back again, so I guess there was some settlement made with Tiffany's, I don't know, and some of the other. Tiffany's was the worst offender as far as—they wanted to kill the league. Then there's a company I helped out, and they bet me that I wouldn't stay there two or three months, and I'd show you the stuff I did. It was a greeting card house, and I said, "I'll go up there." But getting back to Lord & Taylor, you want to know why I got through there? The buyer—see, the partner stores, they worked funny. They

haven't got engraving bosses or jewelry bosses. The bosses of the different departments are the buyers downstairs, and they are the boss. [00:54:07] Well, we had a floor worker, he'd come to open up the art department, the stationery department, which is new and then we had a Ms. Oakley. She knew her stuff too downstairs, see, and we had a little place there where people could come in. I organized all that they could sit down and ordered a wedding—

ROBERT F. BROWN: She was a buyer this person?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: But she was a buyer, but she worked with me on this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, and so what they were interested in is what would sell?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Say what?

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were only interested in what would sell you're saying—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Whereas at Tiffany's—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Downstairs.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the customers would come, and there was a trained artist like Mr. Whitehouse who would —

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right. So quite a difference?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh yeah, oh it's—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is that why you got out of it first of all—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —all the difference in the world

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is that why you got out of Lord & Taylor's? That you—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Not exactly. In this way, you see, we stick together pretty well, the league fellas. And the buyer, he came to me in an indirect way—that is, he had and another fella come to me, and this boss said to me. He says, "You know what Keeler wants you to do?" Oh, he's—he had charge of the toy department too, the downstairs—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Toys—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —the second floor, toys and the stationeries—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the stationery. Yeah.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —and I think some toys—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He wanted you to do something—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And he bought \$50,000 worth of toys, and he got stuck with a lot of it. Our art department paid, I know that, and he said to me, "Now, look, we got to reduce," and he said, "We're going to get you to run the whole department, so you do the copperplate engraving, and do the"—well not the plate printing. [00:56:00] "But we're going to get rid of the Dick Nurse." Well, Dick Nurse was an older man, he had a family, and I said, "I am single," so I told him Dick about it. I said, "Dick, don't worry. You're going to stay right here. I can knock around, I'm willing to knock around, and I've learned a heck of a lot," and that's what I did. I got out of Lord & Taylor's.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see. When did you finally got out of New York? About what time was this? During World War I this has happened?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, this is before World War I. So I was—oh, I took a vacation and went by [ph] looking around, and I helped out over there too that—what do you call it?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Greeting card company?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Greeting card company. And I said, "How about a job here?" he said, "We'll, see." So when they found out, of course, I got to work immediately. It was a stab shop, and some of the nice boys there told them, and they closed the whole shop up for a month, which of course, didn't affect me any because I was—I was on the side anyhow, you know? And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean the league closed off.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: They didn't want the league in there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Because the league would get in the power press operators and the stampers and the—and I'll show you exactly what I made for these people.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But these—this was at a time when weren't the engravers and all feeling a threat to their profession?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because there's an awful lot of mechanical shortcuts being introduced, weren't there?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes. It was—it had started, but they hadn't made much progress with it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: So then after I get straightened out, and well, I told the—I got a notice about it that this engraving machine has come to stay, but we don't know how good it is, so I said, "All right, I'll go down and see what it is." [00:58:18] I went down there, and I told them I was going to buy a machine, and they engraved my plate in, oh, 15 minutes, the machine. They can see that it cut the time. It would take about an hour or a half, depending, but I had to [inaudible] there. It took about an hour and a half—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this new machine—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Did it in 15 minutes. What they did, they put etching on it, and then they'd scratch it, see, the same as with a steel point, and they had their master plate. I have a machine upstairs, but mine was the fine jewelry end of it. They would work it that way, then they would get these engravers that started or have started and never got very far. Well, they would retouch it, which was easy enough. So I said, "The only thing I could see is that we can—what we have to do is to organize a league for the retouch engravers and see what can—" and if you notice—remember one of those papers that I had from the palette engraver from the league? They spoke about the company out west that went on a strike, they wanted engravers, well, that's what happened. [01:00:07] Well then, I happen to—speak about me going up, I happened to be going up to Boston. I used to be a great one, I liked to go to Pennsylvania, I'd go to Boston or somewhere. I've been to Albany.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You'd meet engravers to go see the—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah, you'll stop in to see—and see the work you might say. So I was in his office, and he was a diamond merchant. I'm trying to think of what his name was. He's a very good friend. Anyhow, he said, "Hey, Frank, are you going to work for Nick Thompson?" "Oh," he says, "sit down there and mind my office, would you?" Knowles his name was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was in Bedford or in Boston?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, this was in One West 34th Street.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, in New York. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: He said, "You stay here and until I come back from lunch," and he said, "I wouldn't have to lock up." I went, "With all these diamonds?" and he just left, you know? So in come this stocky fella, and there's a little table and then we sat along, and I was sitting there, and he sat alongside of me. Finally, he says, "What's your name?" and I told him, and I said—he asked me—told me his name, and he says, "It's Russell." I said, "What's your line?" He said—I go ahead, and he said, "I sell the same stones for the—from Indianapolis or Indiana for the buildings in New York City," and he said, "What's your name, and what do you do?" I said, "My name is Lammer," and I said, "I'm a steel and copperplate engraver." "Boy," he says, "you can have a job up in



New Bedford, Mass." [01:02:06] He said, "My sister works up there, and the company is looking for somebody like you to take charge," so I said, "I don't want to be bothered working up there." I said, "I get—I'm straightened out down here, and I got everything all set." So when I got home that night, there's telegram to come on down, so I sent a telegram back, and I said, "I'll be up." I had told Russell that I was going up to Boston, and I said, "I want to take a boat to Fore River, and from there, I'll take the train," so he said, "All you have to do is take a trolley from there to New Bedford." So I went in, and I hit Kearsarge Street. I went over with the trolley, and what intrigued me was the country part and motor [inaudible], all the kids going to school. I got out, and the first thing I saw was the fire engines, and they had—the fire engine three-horse boiler as New Bedford had. And I finally acted chaff, and I found my way to the place, and I expected it to be in the woods, you know, but it was down on South Second Street and William. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: About what year was this you came to Bedford?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Nineteen fifteen.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Nineteen fifteen?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And the place—well, recently, these two schoolteacher communists, they burned it down and I had—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, that's how you got to New Bedford?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I beg your pardon?

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then—first, you worked for this company and then eventually, you set up your own shop? Right?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's right. Well, the—they made a deal with me to stay there and take charge of the steel work, and they had big runs from the different mills. And then I was to get a certain interest if they made out because of—well, Nate Collins had died." [01:04:05]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Can you hold that?

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ROBERT F. BROWN: Just say any—so we'll talk and then I'd like next to talk about why and when you went on the—in your—on your own in New Bedford.

[Audio Break.]

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well, the company, I was promised one's interest in the business, and when the year was almost up, when it got be like January and February, and the year would've been up in March the 25th. However, I was getting paid piecemeal, probably \$5 a week, \$10 a week, or something like that. And that meant really that I was stealing—to me, I was stealing because I was not getting the work that I should. I was not earning it, so I felt that what I should do is get out while the getting out was good. And what really happened, the shop manager, the captain—the manager of the place, he bought it up, went into bankruptcy naturally, and he had quite a successful business. And the man that put the \$10,000 in, years later, I met him on the WPA, and he said he was often sorry that he didn't make me manager of the place then. His name was Cliff Barclay, and he was the treasurer of the Dartmouth Mills at that time, and of course, we did not get acquainted for some reason or another. He said that him and I would be sitting pretty today, which was back in 1938 or thereabout if he would've made me manager of the place. [00:02:00]

[Audio Break.]

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And I decided to start in New Bedford on my own, and I had a little place and then I got another store, and so forth, and so on, but I was getting back to the engraving business. It really is divided into three distinct businesses, or it was at that time. One is the lettering jewelry and monograms and things of that type for anything and everything. They used to put them on harnesses and all that. Well, that's really one type of engraving, and you have to have a special tool for that type of engraving. And then there is another type of engraving, which is on a metal, and there was a great feeling for it in this day on pewter and many of the teapots and things. The old-fashioned things, they were all cut with that. Well, that required another set of engraving, and I was fortunate enough to buy the whole set of engraving because one of these boys in Pairpoint had died, and the reason—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where was that Pairpoint—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —I bought—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in New York?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: The Pairpoint was a place that put out silverware and teapots and flatware.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was in New Bedford?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That was in New Bedford, Mass.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You bought his metal engraving—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I got his metal engraving—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Or metal engraving—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —tools. And the—when I had my shop foreman came in, and he asked me. [00:04:04] He said, "I need another engraver," and he said, "You can help me out," and I said, "I am sorry, but I cannot do your work," and we made a bet on it. We became very familiar, so we bet on it, and I went down there for a day. I did the job, but you see, my work is entirely different, and if you are a steel and copperplate engraver, you cannot do any of that work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The ornamental work?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And you—the ornamental work, and you cannot do silverwork.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why, why? Because you're used to using different kinds of tools?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: That's—there it goes again. There's an entirely different set of stool—uh, tools, and they're set different, they're sharpened different, and your touch is entirely different. Now, your touch with a copperplate work is very, very light, and your hand has got to be very, very steady. Now, with the ornamental work, it's free moving. In other words, you have to stand up a lot of times, and you swing your whole arm around, and you swing the article around so that your design flourishes. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, and you worked quite rapidly too?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And it's—yes, it's quick work. Now, I did a job down there, and they paid me three dollars, and he said, "It was a wonderful job," but he said—and he said, "I can use it," but he says, "It's a different type." Well, I said, "I win." I said, "You see, I can't turn out the quantity because there's no detail to that. [00:06:03] You have the flowers, and you go at it." Now, you take this—the jewelry business, your tool are set high. You have a square one, and you have liners, well. You also have the—when you have the very fine liners—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you mean by set high, the tools are set high?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well, you—I will say you go up and down a mountain because your jewelry is up and down most of the time. And it's different shapes and inside of rings, and you take the humps that you've got to go over, and you cannot have a flat tool. Now, steel and copperplate, you always have flat tools. I do screw [inaudible] sometimes, and I like to use the steel and copperplate. Let me show you one that I finished for my wife.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because the delicacy is the same in both.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: It's very delicate, and you get the lines, you get everything you want and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, that was the third branch then of engraving is jewelry? There's steel and copper die, ornamental, and then jewelry work. Is that the third branch you were talking about a moment ago?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes, there are three.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you did jewelry work. Did you do some jewelry?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Well, then when the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —jewelry—well all of the mills since '34 have closed down because of the strike, and so forth, and so on. So then I eventually went into the jewelry end of it because there was an awful lot of work there, and there is more work of the jewelry than there ever was today.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really? [00:08:01] Designing—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: However—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —on your own designing—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —jewelry?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And what I did instead of paying the high rents down in New Bedford—when they saw you successful, they would boost the rents way up the second year or when your lease up, and they get all they can out of you and then you were left to yourself. So then, I had a little building in the back, and I rebuilt that. It was real safe, and there was a pony shed and there was a garage and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And in your—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —I finally got that, and I had a beautiful, little studio there. I had so much work that I— with my lettering and all, I had to buy a whole new set of tools because I didn't have any of the jewelry tools. And I finally broke into it, and my first job the monogram on a silver mirror. I think it took me two hours or three hours on the whole toilet set. And you should do a set like that, unless it's an ornamental thing—it should take at least an hour to get all of it out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, this was—this is what's considered jewelry engraving?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: This is on jewelry engraving. But on your—and you can do pretty fast work on your copperplate work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What would be the difference between what you just described and ornamental engraving? Because these monograms are ornamental.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I mean in a broad sense—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: You have—yes, you have ornamental monograms, but they're nothing like the ornament that's on there. See, you have broad cuts—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —mm-hmm [affirmative], in ornamental engraving.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —in ornamental engraving. And when we go out, you can see one of those on there. And on the others, you have all small cuts and—shut that off a minute? [00:10:06]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sure.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah.

[Audio Break.]

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And the—there's various methods of cutting, and in the jewelry engraving, if you run your hand, oh, with a monogram that had been cut or the lettering that had been cut, there should be no burs. It should be very, very smooth, and it should be smooth as is and not polished or sandpapered or anything else because that's a good engraver's work. Now, on your—on metal stuff because that automatically—that comes off, and it's polished afterwards and I think oil plated. Now, on your copperplate you have to cut so that everything is smooth and you take a letter—no matter what size it is a quarter of an inch, 16 to an inch—it has to be cut both ways, and it has to be cut without a bur.

ROBERT F. BROWN: By both ways, you mean you go up the stroke?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: You have to be up the stroke and down the stroke. A script is a little bit different. A script, up to a point, yes, you go up and then you come down from the top of the letter, and you meet, and it's got to be even. And then you thread your script letters, and that's how you get—in other words, you have one main cut and then from there on, you lay your engraver over, and you cut, and you cut until you get the nice—what they call a [inaudible] line of beauty. [00:12:04] In other words, you get the same thick and the thin. And that's—and then on your other lettering, you have what they call a liner, and you have different sizes. I have up to 14 different sizes, and they are raised to a point because sometimes you have to go inside of a bowl to do the lettering. On the standard copperplate, they don't raise, they're flat, and they're both sharpened the same way. The only thing on the jewelry and that silverware, you have a belly, what they call a belly on the tool and the others you don't. And these liners that you use for jewelry work—and they're also good copperplate—but it puts

the finish on the inside and the bottom of the letter, and I have them from two up to 14—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in size?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —in size, and they have all little ridges in them. As you cut, the ridges show up in your—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in the inside.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —inside of the letter. Now, on the copperplate work, you don't have any ridges. You just have a flat tool, and you cut because you are cutting for printing. And then you cannot have any—your plate has got to be very, very smooth and then your plate is finished. In other words, you have to charcoal it. [00:14:02] And you have a buffer that you make—you can make a lot of these things yourself—and you buff the plate down. And you've got to know when to stop on charcoal, otherwise you'll take some of the engraving. It is very, very light engraving, and you're buffing, you can buff all you want, and then you have a rouge polish that you polish that plate. It does not require a high polish, just simply that there isn't a scratch in it. The slightest scratch in a copperplate will print, and the slightest marks in a copperplate will hold the ink so that that part will be dirty or black. That is a dirty look after you get it printed so that you have—it's got to be perfect. Now, on a printing press, you have what they call a plate press, and underneath it, you have heat, and then you have a palette, what they call a palette, and your ink is on there. And then you have these velvet rollers—and I don't know whether they still make them or not—and you have a handle that is made out of zinc. You put this roller in there with a bolt and then you roll that ink back and forth, back and forth until you get it so that you have an even amount of ink on your roller. Now there, again, you roll—you roller must be soft, and it must be clean. [00:16:02] Your palette must be so that no dust can fly in on it. And then alongside of that, you have a dish of white ink where you put your white ink in there, and you moisten it, and it dries. You take your plate, and you run it through the press and then—in other words—I'm getting ahead of my story. You take your plate, and you lay it on the press, and then you put your ink on there, and you wipe that off. And then you run it through the press, and you get an impression. You cut out that impression, and you have a stick of glue and you put it on the back of the plate, and you stick that right under the lettering so that helps to raise it a little bit. So when you print, you cannot—you can put some pressure on it and then you regulate your pressure from two screws, which is over the press. Well—and then you lay that on your plate. You put another piece of paper over, you glue it on there, and you run it through a couple of times with an impression, and then you have a buildup on your cylinder, and it's only half a cylinder. So your cylinder and your plate—the end of your cylinder and your plate meets, and it rolls right over it, and your plate goes towards—away from you. Then there's a weight, it comes back and hits you in the stomach, and of course, you get used to it. [00:18:05] You pull that heavy wheel and then you let it go, and of course, it shoots through and then that weight—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You did this when you had your own shop, really?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh yeah. I even lent my own printing tools.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But at Tiffany's, the printing was done by the others?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh yes, and you had regular men to do it because these—your printers were really—plate printers are scarce. I got one, and I was sorry for, but I only had him for about two, three days or no, a week, and I had to let him go because they said he was—had a heavy cold, but he was hitting the bowl, and a lot of plate printers, they hit the bowl.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that'd be a problem because he had to be so exact.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh yes, and his work is not up to par, and then I broke in my own fella. And, well, what you do then, you take your plate and you wipe it off and you print it and then it's ready for the next impression. You take your roller, and roll it over your ink back and forth a couple of times. You get it even, you roll your plate just where the engraving is and then you take a cheesecloth of a certain type—it can't be too thin, and it can't be too heavy—and you wipe that off lightly. So when you hit the surplus in, and you wipe it against your letters, so the ink stays in. You follow me?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, yeah.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And then you—when you get that, you have your white ink, and you put your hand—the palm of your hand in there, see, and then you wipe it off on your apron which I have on there. And then you take the palm of your hand, and you take your surplus with both hands, and you wipe that plate and polish. [00:20:01]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where your hands—with the remainder of the white ink.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And the ink, yes, will remain, but you have to be careful because you get too much white

ink in there, it'll take the ink out. So there's a way of doing it, and that knack—just like everything else, there's always a knack in everything you do, and that is practice. You practice, and you eventually get it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that, of course, is what you've been—you were able to do for years at Tiffany's, right, to practice these things, weren't you?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I practiced everything. I knew the principle, but I never did it until I had my own shop because—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right. But you knew if you hired men, you were in a position to know whether they were doing it right or not.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yes. When I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —hired Bob Murray in and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well now, here in New Bedford or in New Bedford, what was your main line of business of those three, ornamental, jewelry, and—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh no, it was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the copperplate?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —stationery.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Stationery?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: It was stationery.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So that would've been the copperplate die—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: The copperplate.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Then when you moved out to Dartmouth, you moved to your country shop?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh, I gave up for a while then because I was too nervous. I had a—well, I had a lot of—I had a fire and I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sure.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —hit a lot of hard luck in that way, why, I was too nervous to sit down and do that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, what do you see today? Do you see much of your profession at all? Does much of it continue, other people who are continuing were this long training in engraving?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: You mean the average? Well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, not the average, but I mean is there a—is there a—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: It's all done by machine, and the only work according to, what, Channel 2 that time said that the men like me, that belong to the league, there were 10 of us left in the world, and four are down in Washington, and the rest are like myself. [00:22:03] Well, I—when—the reason I went in business—you'll find as you go on, there may be some shops around that still do that, which I don't know anything about, but they have their script engraver. They have—there's black engraving, square letter engraving, and they have their picture engraving, and it isn't very often, that you get any of the mixed work. You know, I used to do this—on a copperplate, I used to do that in Lord & Taylor's, and he did a lot of the others but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Dick Brown.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —what I did mostly in Lord & Taylor was die. We had a big die work, monogram die work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But that isn't done anymore very much, is it?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, there isn't much of that today.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, no. But—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And there isn't much of the others. We get—excuse me, we get some invitations now with the raised printing, and well, to me, they are fancy and flourishing and the paper itself—

ROBERT F. BROWN: If you look at those fancy, flourishing with a glass, they don't—they're flawed, aren't they?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Oh yes. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They don't bear off the inspection in it—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —that the old work would?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And everyone—when I had the printing and I [inaudible] up Roger Dinner or I did and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Roger Ritter—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —I suppose you had those brown ones from Nantucket. By the way, if you get down there, ask them for the plates.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sure. Okay.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But Roger was your printer?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: Yeah, he was. I broke him in as an apprentice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But, now, is—did you inspect this even—even when you left Tiffany's, did you—did you printers think of or rather you engravers think of your—think of the profession as perhaps going to die out or—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No, no. [00:24:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —you were very hopeful?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were very hopeful then?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: You always said, yeah, it was going to last forever and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: When did it die that—begin dying down in the Depression or even earlier?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: In the Depression because the people did not have the time, and then the next thing that come up was this raised printing. That came up in '23 when I had my business, and some of the boys, men—you see when you have your own business like that, you have a better opportunity, and they brought in samples of raised printing—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, that was done—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: —and they call that mirror engraving. And engrave with graphing, and they had different names for it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And it was done by machine?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: It was regular printing, but it was done by—with a varnished ink and raised it, and some say it's a white varnish and then put powder on top of it, I don't know, black ink and whatever it is. So I went ahead, and I read in the engraver graphing just one, none of us liked it. I was in on the other end of it, but I know the league members didn't like it either. So I write to the Federal Trade Commission, and I got my evidence in a magazine. They had a picture of the engraving stuff, you see. There was no engraver sitting there, and I pointed that out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did you tell them? That there was—

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: I said that's not an engraving shop. They have no engraving benches or anything and then they came to see me, and I told them the whole story. And then I headed from various printing places all over the country, one was up in Niagara, I remember that one. And then I got the samples of the billhead from these boys that say, "Gee whiz, this is much cheaper than you do the die work," and it's engraving. [00:26:09] I took

all those samples, see, and I gave them to the Federal Trade Commission. In about six to nine months, they sent me about four pages. They thanked me, and they said they had the trial on it, and there was another chap in Texas and myself, we were the ones that gave the finest evidence against it. From now on, they will have to put raised printing or whatever they named that one, but no more engraver graphy and all the stuff.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. But, nevertheless, this raised printing as they were now forced to call it eventually became very popular.

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: It did, yes and they were—they'd say, "Why should I buy yours? because it's so much cheaper, and you put your hand over it, it feels the same as yours—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It looks the same at least from some distance, doesn't it? It looks somewhat the same?

FRANCIS A. LAMMER: From a distance, they look the same. I'll have to admit that. [They laugh.] Oh boy.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh—

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]