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Oral history interview with Charles Hill Morgan, 1973 Apr. 5

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Charles Hill Morgan on April 5, 1973. The interview took place in Amherst, Massachusetts, 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

ROBERT F. BROWN: And—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Okay.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —that kind of thing. Yeah, I was kind of—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: That loud enough?

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

[Audio Break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Interview, April 5, 1973, Professor Charles H. Morgan in Amherst, Massachusetts. Yeah. Perhaps, let's start just to, uh—if you'd like just to talk a bit about your childhood as you remember, recollected, and we can gradually lead you talking about what became your career and what led you into that. But if you could, at first, talk about your early days?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, I don’t think they're particularly interesting as a matter of fact. [They laugh] I suppose, I first got—I don’t know how I got interested in archeology, but I just always was. As far as I can remember, I've often tried to think back to what started it, but I can't. But I took Greek in school because I was sure I was going to be an archeologist, and of course, I wasn't much of one. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where was this in school?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: That was Hotchkiss and then at Harvard, they did give archeology, but they also gave art, and I discovered I like art very much. It came easily, let's put it that way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was art history?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Art history. Well, I've—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who was that with at that time?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh well, Harvard had a great department then. It had George Harold Edgell. It had Paul J. Sachs and Edward Forbes and Chandler Post. And I was—by that time, I've made up my mind to be an architect, and I just knew I was going to be an architect. So, as soon as I got through college, I took a couple of weeks off and went right in the summer session at the school of architecture, and in two weeks, knew I wasn't going to be a an architect. [00:02:01]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Why not?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, it just didn’t appeal to me the way I thought it would. So I finished that up all right; I got course credits. Well, I didn’t know what I was going to do, and I used to take out a single and row on the river. One afternoon, I was putting my shell up, and Alan Priest came down for a swim, and he had been assisting and tutoring in fine arts at Harvard. I know him well, and he said, "Charlie, congratulate me, I'm going to China for three years," and just as by way of a joke, I said, "Fine, Alan, that's great, how about getting me a job?" He said, "I think that could be arranged." I found myself half-time assisting and tutoring in Harvard, so automatically I went on for a master's and then automatically to a Ph.D. But, uh, by that time, my interest in ancient languages had flogged a good deal, very important in archeology for a degree, so I took my degree in the history of art and wrote on Lysippos, the Greek sculptor for my thesis, and Greek pottery is my second. And then I decided I wanted a year in Athens, so I got married, and we went right off to Athens for a year. I did postgraduate work there and started in—I had two weeks on the excavation, and that was enough—I was sold

completely. In the meantime, I didn’t know what I was going to do the next year, and my impulse was to stay on another year and go on with the research—I liked it. But all the good advice I had from people like George Chase at Harvard and my own father said, "You better come home and go to work for a year." [00:04:01] Rhys Carpenter was keeping—who was director of the [American] School [of Classical Studies] in Athens at the time was keeping his seat warm at Bryn Mawr while he was away, and he needed someone to fill in, so he recommended me. And so I accepted the job, and a week later, President Pease from Amherst too, had to start a department going, wrote and asked me if I'd be interested, and I was honorable. I don’t know that I'd be anymore and—so I wrote him and asked him if I could have a rain check. I don’t suppose I'd have done it now. Nobody ever does anymore. Anyhow, I had a very interesting year at Bryn Mawr and then came here—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it quite different from Harvard at the time?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Bryn Mawr?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: A very serious place then, wasn't it?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, Harvard is a serious place too. I taught girls at Harvard. You see I gave classes at Radcliffe too, so there was nothing new about that. But the opportunity here was practically unique because there wasn't any department. Everything was free for me to start where I wanted, and that's all out down in the book there. You've got all of that side of the thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You were greatly encouraged though. I mean the president, what did he have in mind?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, he had $10,000 and a lot of books and slides from Carnegie, and I suggested, oh, putting in a program of general art history to begin with and then expanding from there, which is what happened. And then at the end of three years, this was in the summer of—well, the summer of '32 actually, it must have been, Edward Capps of Princeton who was the genius behind the School of Athens asked me to come up to [inaudible] and said, "How about taking over visiting professorship at the school next year?" [00:06:08] Of course, this was terribly exciting because it meant I'd get back into digs some more. Stanley King was brand new as president, and I didn’t know Stanley, but I went to him, and I said, "Here's a chance, I'd love to do it, would you let me go for a year? And I promise to come back the end of the year," and he said, "Okay, if you can find a substitute for a year, go ahead." So I got a former student whom Stanley approved of highly to take over, and we went for a year, and we thought it was just wonderful. We got back here, and about a month later, Capps asked me up to his place up on—in Casco Bay, Chebeague [Island] and said, "How about going over for three years?" He said, "I'm retiring from Princeton, I'd like to take the directorship for one year, so you come over as assistant director for a year and then you take on the directorship two more." Well, I went back to Stanley King. [They laugh.] I said, "If you let me go, Stanley, I promise I'll come back in '38," and Stanley didn’t know me as well then as he—as now. I think he was a little dubious maybe. In any case, the problem was to find someone to fill in for three years. I think Stanley had in mind getting—in fact, I'm sure he had in mind—getting someone who, if I didn’t come back, could take the department over. My own choice was somewhat different—a friend of mine who's excellent in the studio and a good art historian could come. I had just, after five years of struggle, got the faculty to allow credit in studio courses. [00:08:06] That was very new. Harvard had done it, but very, very few people—places did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you began here, you didn’t have studio?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: We didn’t have studio at all. Well, the faculty wouldn't consider it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you do anything based on what Rosenau and Pope and so forth might have taught at—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, I didn’t—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the Fogg?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: —I didn’t do any of that, but Scott did when he came because he—for one thing, he was much better trained than I. He had done an awful lot of studio work. So that seemed an ideal situation and so we went for three years and had a lovely time. The reason the Byzantine pots came out was because I figured I'd like to do a job on this archeological material and what's the kind of job that can be conceivably done in three years. And here are these Byzantine pots—I didn’t care anything-about Byzantine and stuff. Nobody—no proper classes would do that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No one had ever.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Practically nobody had. Fred Waage had written a little article on one type of stuff at the time, and Talbot Rice was doing something with the Byzantine material at Constantinople, which is quite different from ours. But we had a mass of excellent stuff and so I got started. The first thing to do was to find out what there was and then the next thing to do was to try and get the groups together—how much did we have in this kind of stuff, how much in that. Most of this stuff didn't even have a name. We had to invent names such as green-and-brown painted ware or mizzles [ph] ware or something like and then—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Pronovost was generally known for it or—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: But it's all the stuff from the excavations. And then the next thing to do was to try and get some sort of chronology together and then the origins, which is much more difficult and very unsatisfactory. [00:10:02] But I got the text—I got all the cataloging done by the time I came home in '38, and I had the text drafted. I finished it up, oh, in the next two years at home, and [laughs] the book came out in '42, and I got a copy of in the Libyan desert, and I carried it around with me for the next three years. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, now, the origins, were you able to resolve that fairly fast then during—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: No, no. Local stuff, yes, but then the great mass of the material is common to most Byzantine sites, and I've always suspected some place of origin in Anatolia, but everybody dumps what you don't know what else to do with into Anatolia, so—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: It was another type, the crusader type, which actually is the basis, the background out of which Italian Majolica developed. That is found in large quantities, a little spot in Palestine and in Corinth and practically nowhere else. So I suspect some place over there, Palestine maybe or some part in the crusader area anyhow.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But no one had worked out trade groups for these things, this—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: No, and you see there isn't enough stuff. Nobody has paid enough attention to the Byzantine.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So a great deal have been chucked off?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, it was always thrown away. Corinth was very unusual in keeping the more extraordinary pieces that turned up, and it so happened that while I was digging there, we got masses more. We just happened to be in the right spot, and we didn't have an awful lot of evidence for chronology. The place had been churned up so much, but I could come pretty close. Theodora Ashire [ph] [MacKay]—what's her married name—worked on that for a couple of years in Corinth on the matter of chronology. [00:12:02] But as nearly as I can see, she didn't upset it. I did have luck because some of these types were being found in the Agora, and the Agora excavations had loads of closed deposits and was very carefully dug. And Alison Frantz who was in charge of that sort thing at the Agora, a good friend, so we compared notes all the way along the line, and that was a great help.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. This took you away from teaching, didn't it? Didn't this—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, I didn't—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —distract your mind?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: —for those three years, I didn't. Well, I would take the students on trips, and I'd give a course on Greek sculptures once a week in the museum, that sort of thing. But between excavation and administration, there wasn't an awful lot of time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you've always greatly enjoyed this work, haven't you, supervising excavations?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh, yeah, yeah. The—I'm not going to dig any more though. The last time I did was '52, I think. I had a sabbatical, and I had little money. And in the big excavations before the war, we'd turn up a large building of which there are about 20 stones left and bits of pavement, and that was about it. Trenches were the walls had been pulled out. Part of the building was very well built, part if it was not, and almost everything had been hauled out for rebuilding. But I remembered this from before the war, and I wanted something small that I could concentrate on, so I got two to three men and started cleaning this up and find out what the dickens this was. We know so little about the Greek house that I thought this might be useful. But it was obviously not a house. It was something more important than that, and because there were drinking cups all over the floor and

built into the floor and under the floor, it had the aspect of a tavern. At one end, there was obviously, some kind of little structure that wasn't heavy because it didn't have any foundation under it, but the pavement would come up and just end, so there must have been something light in there. [00:14:10] There were a couple of places curious—see, curious semicircles where the pavement came up in the places where they've been, but again there were no foundations. It had to be something light. And I tried and tried and tried to figure what it could be. I thought naturally of a troan [inaudible] [dog barking] which is in the house.

[Audio Break.]

CHARLES H. MORGAN: —always the—always what happens in an excavation—the last week, solved the whole problem. Now, there are a bunch of little, tiny cubicles that ran off in one direction, and in the floors were buried these deposits of terracotta that related strictly to Aphrodite. So we had the thousand beautiful girls of legend, they had to meet the sailor someplace from the fleet, and this was—I called it the Tavern of Aphrodite. And it was—you know, the girls were sacred to Aphrodite, so there's a certain touch of religious connection there. And there's one little place in one of the foundation walls that looked to be thickened—looked to me to be thickened that might have had a shrine right at the entrance and then you've got these, these masses of votive offerings. So that's what my reputation is. I'm the greatest authority on prostitution [they laugh] of antiquity—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In the world, huh?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: —that there is. So I thought I'd let my reputation rest there. The only other contribution I made was—this is kind of interesting—before the war, I used to walk on Acrocorinth on Sundays when we weren't digging. I love Acrocorinth. It's a marvelous mountain, and I used to scramble around on the fields there and always looking for coins or terracotta or fragments of pottery. [00:16:03] There was one field that just simply burgeoning. Every time we went up there, there were loads of little bits of miniature plates with little indications of grain or fruit or something in them, Demeter offerings. Every time I went, I could always pick up if not a whole, a piece of a good figurine, so I was pretty sure there must be a sanctuary somewhere in that area. The war came, and I didn't get back to Greece until about 1948, I guess. I went up on the slopes of Acro again and the same field produced the same stuff. So I suggested to the director that it might be worthwhile putting in some trenches. Well, the director couldn't care less about things classical. He was all Mycenaean, Minoan, prehistorics.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, really?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: He didn't want to dig in Corinth. He found a dig down on the Bay of Nopia [ph] back there at Lerna. So he was the director for 10 years, but his successor, Henry Robinson was definitely a classicist. Two to three years after he had been director, he sent a student up there to put in some trenches, and by golly, the stuff just almost vomited out of the earth. You can't imagine the quantity of stuff they had. He even found buildings on the steep slope or the foundations of buildings full of banqueting halls with some of the couches built up out of stones and clay with the stucco coating in perfect condition on them, and again, just bushels of offerings. It's the Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this sort of thing would've been suddenly destroyed, do you reckon, or why such—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, it was destroyed. It was destroyed by the Romans when they destroyed Corinth and then rebuilt by the Romans and were used by the Romans. [00:18:02] And then probably as the city shrank at the end of the classical period, and the Avars came in, and it just got buried up or just fell into ruin. The superstructure would—mostly have been—break anything anyhow, but there are still a lot of good foundation stones, excellently cut, and the plans were easy to make out. There's a little theater.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, generally, there's this frustration in archeology? There's not the staff or the time or the funds to pursue the—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh, there's always something more to find. Now, this dig has been going on now for at least 10 years. Sometimes they go a season and simply consolidate the finds and then they explore [ph] a little more. But it's—that's rather good fun. Well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is—you incorporated them into your courses when you were teaching at Amherst then?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: No. I did give a course called Four Greek Sites, Athens, Corinth, Delphi, and Olympia as two cities, one Ionian and one Dorian. And two sanctuaries, one oriented toward the east and the other toward the west. That was sort of an overall culture course you want to call it that. It was history, literature, art, and how—particularly, how each one of these sites developed, physically developed from the point of view of plan, building, and that was good fun. But that's the only time I ever used that material here. Well, let's see while we're on Athens. After the war—I didn't go back before the war. After the war, I got involved. I don't know why I got so involved except that I was very fond of it. But in '40—when was it—'48, I guess it was—I got out of the

army in '46, and in '48 Louis Lord asked me to be vice chairman of the managing committee. [00:20:22] Now, the set up in Athens is a curious one because—

ROBERT F. BROWN: For the American Academy—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: The—at school, we call ourselves a School of Classical Studies. We have a board of trustees that administers the funds and, so far as possible, augment to those funds the policies laid down by the managing committee. Now, the managing committee consists of one or more representatives from each contributing institution, which numbered—virtually every important institution in the United States. They make policy, they pick personnel, they recommend expenditure, and they really are the body that controls what goes on in Athens. And then on the Athenian side, there was a director who runs the school, two men who go out for a year from the membership and the management committee, and then there are the students, and then of course, there's a big staff in Athens. But this was all complicated in 1929 when the Agora excavations were set up by a special Greek decree. I think it was something like 25 acres of land full of houses. It was turned over to us to expropriate, demolish, and excavate, and that's the Athenian Agora excavation. And that was all back in the—when it started up until the war by John D. Rockefeller Jr. privately from his own funds. Just before the war, John D. said to the director of the excavations, "I'm delighted with what's happened, and I've never queried the bills that come in, but" he said, "I'd like to see an end to this now, and how much are you going to need to finish it up?" [00:22:17] And then then director who was a man who rather prided himself on having the exact figure on his cuff for anything, never paused a moment, and he named a sum. I've forgotten. I think it was [$]3[00,000] to $400,000. So Mr. Rockefeller promptly turned over the securities for that amount and then the director went home and did a little careful homework and realized he'd asked for much too little. So he went back to Mr. Rockefeller, and he said, "Mr. Rockefeller, I think I made a mistake," and Mr. Rockefeller said, "Well, I'm awfully sorry, but I've paid up, and that's it. I have no intention of doing any more." Well, there was enough in the kitty there to see us up till the war and then during the war, we couldn't spend the excavation money, so that there was a whole lot of money accumulated that we couldn't use at Corinth. So we kept the Agora going with that money, but that didn't last very long either. The big problem in '48 was what to do about the Agora, and Louis Lord who was then chairman—Louis never got very far on money. The urgency wasn't there because we had enough money to carry on a small staff and a certain amount of digging for another couple of years. But we also had the problem of building a museum on the site. We promised as part of the contract to do that, and we spent tens and tens of thousands of dollars trying to find a place to put the museum. We didn't want to put it in the middle of the area, so we would spend thousands poking a hole out on the periphery hoping to find someplace where you could take the museum. And then we always—[00:24:01]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Neutral ground then—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Hmm?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sort of neutral ground that wouldn't—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. Well, we always found something that couldn't be covered up. So finally, this Bryn Mawr girl, Mabel Lang got the brilliant, expensive idea. She said, "Why don't we rebuild an ancient building?" And the best-preserved of the ancient buildings is the Stoa of Attalos. Well, it was kind of a difficult situation because here, we didn't have money enough for the excavations, and here was a building that was—estimated cost about a million dollars that it was proposed for the museum. And the sums were simply staggering. Well, Louis retired as chairman in '50, and I took over for 10 years, and the first job was to see if we could raise money—whether we just shut off the whole show and waited or whether maybe we could find the money. So I went over to Athens, and I got the staff there to make a very careful estimate of everything that would need to be done in the way of excavation. We had [W.] Stuart Thompson in this country who had done a lot of work in Greece and knew the situation, knew the materials to make a very careful estimate as to what it would cost to rebuild the Stoa of Attalos. And then when we got those figures in, we added 50 percent, and we discovered we're going to need at least $2 million. So then the question was where do you find $2 million. I had a friend in the air force whose profession was fund-raising, so I met him in New York, and I said, "Here's the situation. Can you give me some advice? Can your firm help out?" He heard about the school and how our alumni were all teachers and whatnot, and he said, "Leave us alone. You'll lose money on us or any other comparable firm because we're going to have to demand 30 percent guaranteed of the total sum that you want, of everything you raise, and you've to pay us before you can keep anything." [00:26:10] He said, "That won't work. You can't—it's not like a church where everybody is living together with a common enterprise. Your alumni are scattered all over and none of them has a nickel anyhow." But he said, "Look at your board of trustees and look at the names on it. Arthur Vining Davis, John Nicholas Brown," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. He said, "That's where you're going to have to find the money." So I went to the president of the board who's then Ward Canaday and I said, "Ward, when are you going to start raising all this money?" and Ward said, "Oh, that's your job. You get going." Well, I said, "Ward, can you start me off with $25,000?" "The hell I can, I'll give you $5,[000]," says Ward, "to get going." So I bought a ticket—a dogleg ticket like this to Miami. I did know Arthur Vining Davis a little, not very well, but he was an Amherst alumnus, and I did know Mrs. Semple who was a Taft out in Cincinnati. And so I

thought, Well, I'll see these two, and I probably won't make expenses. But I had first of all to clear seeing Arthur Vining Davis because he was an Amherst alumnus, and you don't—members of the staff here do not tap alumni for anything without permission of the president when Charlie Cole was president. He was an old, old friend of mine. I said, "Charlie, I would like to tap Arthur Vining Davis, do you mind?" and Charlie smiled, and he said, "If you can get a nickel out of that old tightwad, it will be an education for him." "So, my golly, I—he—I had an appointment, he met me, smiled, showed me into the office, and I said—he said, "What can I do for you, young man?" and I said, "Well, Mr. Davis, I need your money and your advice." And Mr. Davis turned absolutely purple and began banging top of the desk, "Young man, I can't do a goddamn thing for you." [00:28:06] He said, "Look, this year, the government takes 88 cents out of every dollar I make. Next year, it's going to take 92 cents out of every dollar, and where does it go? Mink coats, the White House," and he began—I thought he was going to have a heart attack. I was absolutely terrified. Then, all of a sudden, he switched this off and put on his Billiken grin, and he said, "Young man, would $25,000 help you get started?" and I said, "It certainly would." Well, he said, "Now, let's see if we can make that more useful than just $25,000." He said, "Suppose I make a condition that I don't pay you a penny of that till you've raised $75,000?" and I think God put his hand on my shoulder, and I said, "Mr. Davis, nobody is going to let you off the hook. It'll help a lot." He thought that was great, "Come back, young man, have some lunch." And I flew on to see Mrs. Sample, and the same thing happened out there. Once she heard Mr. Davis had begun the ante up, she anted, and the first hundred thousand came in, in no time at all. Then the big problem was to find bigger money, but by that time, we had worked out a plan to get Mr. Rockefeller reinterested. Ray Fosdick was an old friend of mine, and Ray of course, is very close to John D. I went to see Ray, and he said, "Well, there's a legend in the Rockefeller family that once they have made a final payment on something, they never reconsider it. It's a joke that goes back to the old John D. Rockefeller Sr., and the family simply howls every time anybody comes back and wants more money for a project that's been closed," so he said, "You've got several strikes against you." But he said, "I would suggest that the one way you get to Mr. Rockefeller and maybe get him to change his mind is the complexion of the board has changed. [00:30:06] There's a new field director, and Winthrop Ulrich is the man who's closest to Mr. Rockefeller who's now a widower. If you can persuade Winthrop Rockefeller that it's a good cause, he may be able to persuade the old man. Well, fortunately, the president of the board Canaday was an ex-roommate of Ulrich's, and he was able to persuade Winthrop Ulrich, and Mr. Rockefeller did the incredible and changed his mind. But his proposition was that he would give us a half a million dollars outright and that would be the end of it. Or he would give us a quarter of a million dollars, and remember he had matched. He'd go on matching dollar for dollar until we got our two million. That half million looked awful big, but we took the gamble, and of course that was like Mr. Davis's conditions was a great help because you'd always say, "Well, give us a dollar, it becomes two automatically," and we had the money in three years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was in the late '40s, early '50s?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: This was the early '50s. We started then in '50, and we had the money by—well, we started—the campaign really got going about '52, and we had the money by '55. In the meantime, we'd started then rebuilding the stoa and that was done, dedicated in the summer of '56, installed, and everything else. The excavation was completed—that is, the area—the original area was completed about the same time, and there was still a little money left over for publications. We brought that in, and we had kind of a moratorium. Everybody wanted to go ahead and dig some more around the periphery. We hadn't got quite the whole area, but that was going to take an awful lot of money, and the staff was tired. And the original staffers by that time had been on the job for, well, about 25 years, and they all had so many publication commitments. If they lived to be a hundred, they'd never get them done. [00:32:19] So it seemed a good idea to just shut down on the dig—it was complete up through the program—and wait a little while and see what happened. See if there was more money and see what we could in the way of working in a junior staff that could take over and continue for a quarter of a century if necessary. And we've done that recently. We've got more money. The Greek government has been tremendously helpful in expropriating the land and paying for it and then turning it over to us to dig.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The surface remains of the buildings that have to be raised, there were none of classical time?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: The only—there were only two that were always known. One was the Hephaisteion—the Theseion—that had always been out there. The other was the so-called Stoa of the Giants, those colossal figures down in the middle of the area that were a—one of the facades of the odium of Hadrian. That's all. And almost everything else—and there were pieces of the Stoa of Attalos, which we found a lot a liability because they weren't strong enough to hold anything, but we couldn't tear them down. We had to reinforce them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you meant to have it a presentable-looking area when you're done.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: That's right. But you see what happened was the whole area between the Hephaestion and the Stoa of Attalos was the Agora. And then when the—in the early Christian times when the city was much too small to defend its original perimeter, what they did was to pull down all the buildings from the Agora and use them as material in a new circuit wall of the city. [00:34:01] So that in places, even the lowest foundations

have been ripped out, and there's just nothing but a trench there to show you where the building was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But it was considered on a par, say, with the Fora in Rome in terms of the expecting to find a variety of civic buildings and—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. Well, we've got the whole plan now, and we've got it, and we've got a lot of awfully good chance finds, but we do know exactly what it was like—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The original reason was the likelihood that you would find a tremendous variety of things there that—as an exercise and—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: It was more ruinous than we thought, more ruinous than we hoped. But we have, for example, all the famous buildings that are mentioned in antiquity and their relationship to each other and lots about them. We can restore every one of them on paper. In the meantime, we—what we've done is to put the site into order. We've outlined the original buildings, filled in where the—well, there was nothing left but the footing trenches. We've rebuilt the plan of the building with odd stones that are lying around and then we've landscaped it extensively to make a very attractive public park.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. How closely do you work with the needs of the Greek, let's say the Greek university or the Greek public? Is this considered, or are these in the nature of foreign concerns?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. What—our concern was that the public is partly the history of Athens, revealing the history of Athens and also making a very pleasant park so that people are tempted to come in and look it over and simply enjoy the area.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. As director, did you have close relations with a number of Greeks?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh, yes, I had to. See—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mainly officials or—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: —like—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —were there—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Officials and fellow archeologists. Well, every time we go back to Greece now, we—of course, the American population is always changing, but the Greeks are always there. [00:36:07] We spend most of our time with our Greek friends.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This school and all, these were partly run or founded by architects, weren’t they, and, uh—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, the [American] Academy in Rome was McKim and Meads—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Particularly, yeah.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: – particular pet. The school at Athens was Charles Eliot Norton's idea. He was the genius behind that. We've never had any practicing school in the arts, you see, as—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Nor you had one—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: —the academy had.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and also that's a more purely academic—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: That's right. We, fall into two places. Fundamentally, we are an archeological school, but we also put a very heavy emphasis on ancient languages and literature. So that while, in my opinion, you can just as well learn those here, you can there. It's nice to have the background. I think our primary concern is archeology. But being an archeologist and not a linguist, why, that's a natural slant, and you find that every time [laughs] with the managing committee, it falls into one or the other category.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. But it's just as well, isn’t it?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh sure. Well, I kept that job for 10 years and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you were always at Amherst as well, weren't you—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —teaching?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I went over every summer for a couple of weeks. You know, you can correspond for 11 months and then there comes a time you've got sit down for a few days and just talk things over with people. It's a way of keeping in touch and really knowing what's going on too. When I make those visits, I always made it a point to stay with the director or at the schools so that I was available to anybody from the gardeners on up to come and give me their complaints and their ideas. But when I gave it up in 1960, well, we stayed in a hotel in town. We stayed out of the picture as far as the school goes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Could you discuss your career here at the college during those years, the involvement with the museum here, and the—[00:38:05]

CHARLES H. MORGAN: That's in the book.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I don't—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In much greater detail. Yeah.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, there is one thing I've picked up from one of the catalogues you've written in—discussing the importance of the private collector particularly in the institution here. And the—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, that's not in the book?

ROBERT F. BROWN: This—well, this was from a catalogue introduction to the—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh, for one of our exhibitions?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh yes. I remember I had a particular reason for writing that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: [Laughs.] Every now and then, you get these collectors who really want to get more out of you than you're going to get out of them, and I don't believe in that much. I think that—I go into that at more considerable length I think in the book. But there are fundamentally three types, and I'm the type of collector who buy things because I like them, and I have no interest in their increasing financially or anything else. Then there's the type who collects for money, and he's no use to the college or anybody else because all he wants to do is make a profit like stocks and bonds. And then there's the collector who collects for prestige and he isn't much use to us either because he's the type who will want his choice always to stay together where everybody can see and admire his beautiful things. And that would mean that if the college were to accept the collection, it will be under impossible condition. A place this size couldn't—should never, even if it was just stacked with Rembrandts and Michelangelos and what have you, it could never guarantee to hold that collection together, maintained as a separate entity. Think what it would do to the overhead of the college. After all, the position of fine arts here is similar to that, I like to think, of English and chemistry and whatnot, but it's no more important than the others. [00:40:07]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You'd have to have a wing for each man's collection.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: That's right, and you just simply can't do it. But this is why the prestigious collector is really kind of a nuisance, unless you can talk him around to changing his mind.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But in this introduction too this, I don't know, serves that particular 20-century collection at Amherst, but you do indicate that the private collector can represent a—be representing a segment of the objective opinion of the public, can represent a crucial affirmation of the artist. The only—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh, this I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —involvement.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: —this I do believe in entirely.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mainly for the first kind of collector, right, when you say this?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I think so, yes. But I'm also taking a little crack at the practice of museums buying directly from artists or museums commissioning an artist to do something. I think it's got to go through the catalyst of the private collector first where somebody really likes the piece and gives it the stamp of his approval and then other people will begin to look at it and approve it, by which time, it's about right for a museum. But I think for museums other than the Museum of Modern Art, which is dedicated to this proposition, not that type of museum. For places like the Met and every places like that, to go for contemporary art is absolute nonsense. They're repositories of prove—works of proven value. I think that Alfred Barr has his three percent of his collections for the Museum of Modern Art proved any good after 50 years, it would've been extraordinarily perceptive. Well, I don't think a museum should take chance especially a museum like ours where we have very little money to spend anyway. It's all for charitable purposes. You don't gamble with that kind of money on your own taste.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, and the curators are not in a position to be that screen.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: No, I don't—no, I don't think so. [00:42:01]

ROBERT F. BROWN: His role is, what, mainly to maintain, to display, to make huge—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: That's right. That's right. And to acquire. But there, again, in the cotemporary field, I was delighted to have people give these things in the contemporary field. We were constantly being criticized for not going out and buying Picassos. Well, one, we didn't have the money. Two, even if we didn't have the money, we couldn't get a topflight Picasso, and there's no point in representing an artist badly just to have his name in the collection. That's silly. Much better to put your money where the market is depressed in a field where you're weak and you need to strengthen yourself.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And as well as there's a possibility that some private collector might then give his, say, Picasso to the college then—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, there are Picassos, Matisses, Durands, Toulouse-Lautrec. They're all coming here. They're written in the wills. But those collectors, of course, are relatively young men, and they're not ready to shed yet.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sorry. What do you see overall as the role of the museum here, what was its—what part was it to play in the—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, it was to bring the real thing within the reach of students. You see slides, photographs, books, they're all fine, but there's—they're a poor substitute for the real thing. If you can get real stuff of good quality or stuff that is of second-rate quality, but it's important for teaching such as unfinished picture so the student can see how the picture is build up, how its conceived, that kind of thing, that's what I had in mind that we should have here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And meanwhile, had the studio program grown apace with the art history?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh, Lord, the studio—when we built Mead, and we built Mead nearly 25 years ago, we had two studio courses, and we had three studios, and since we were building on a very tight budget, that was pretty extravagant. Now, we've just moved also right out of the building, so much of it. [00:44:05] I think there's something like six studio courses now, and you've got to have a room to a class in a studio. You can't use the same room for two different classes because it's—everybody is communistic about pinching somebody else's tube of paint or somebody else's brush and all, with the best will in the world, but it doesn't make for a good feeling, no. And we've got plenty of space in another building here that it is adequate for what we need.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you always try to attempt to correlate art history and the studio program to that?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: We did indeed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Or—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: We made it a requisite that you could not major in the field without having at least one course in history or one course in the studio. Your interest might be strictly historical, but you had to have one studio course and vice versa, and that was an old idea. Howard had that I think. Not very many places do. But I remember the only student I've ever had who graduated in fine arts summa cum laude, a brilliant fellow down in Chicago now, came to me in despair and said, "Can't you waive this requirement?" He said, "You know my handwriting; I can't draw." I said, "I'm sorry, Walter, I don't want to lose you to some other department, but you are going to have to take a studio course." So here's this brilliant boy who never got anything but an A in his life, got a B-minus for effort and still graduated ahead of his class. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you felt that through the studio training, there was something released in the potential art historian?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I think if you have tried to do something yourself, you are more sensitive to the same sort of thing, better done by a professional.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. What other professionals who came here to teach? [00:46:00] What are their—was there an effect of being—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in a liberal arts college or even of having to teach?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Most of the people in the studio—now we have a different system. But what I've tried to do is to get people who hopefully could bridge both disciplines. The two men I got that are still permanently here are both equally good in the history field and the studio field. They're very hard to come by now. And that meant that our studio courses were very well taught. We usually had one man who did nothing but studio, would give a sort of token course in history or help out with it. But, now, we've got the ideal arrangement. It's something that I wanted to do for years and just never had the time and the energy, I guess, to implement. I've always believed that the student would profit from being acquainted with a professional artist, and a lot of the places have tried to solve that—Dartmouth and Paul Sample for example—by having an artist in residence. The only trouble with that system is that the student is here for four years, and he's the only professional artist that they ever see, and they just know one-man style. But, now, since I've retired, Frank has implemented this old idea of mine very successfully indeed, and he gets artists of established reputation to come here for a year and take a sort of sabbatical year off and give a course and be available to students and do his own work at the same time. We have started off a program of Fairfield Porter's got a—and the trouble with that was that he liked the place so much and we liked him so much, it was a frightful temptation to keep him on, but that would've smashed the whole—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —defeated the purpose then.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: That would've a defeated everything we were—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But these men were—the student presumably can have an insight to a much more advanced painter than the men who have to combine studio and art history.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. [00:48:00] Well, that seemed a good idea.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What has the result, do you think, have been among the students?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, of course the result is that once you get a professional artist in here for a year, your students begin to turn out things that look like imitations of him. This is inevitable, but at least, they learn what this fellow has to offer. I've always felt it didn’t make any difference what medium you've used or what technique you promoted. You gave the student one way to do something and then if he's any good, he will develop on his own, but at least I know this—the fooling around by giving somebody a palette and say, "Now, express yourself," but that they don't know how to begin. You've got to have some way of getting started. So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yet when you were at Harvard, it was still the later—the latter day of the old so-called Boston School of Painters, these very craftsmen-like men who had produced some beautiful canvases than the—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. Well, Sargent was still—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did that seem to be the only way ever to you, or were you very early on—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, you had people like Denman Ross with his painting theories. You had—oh, who were some of the other?

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you were never locked into one particular school you preferred. I mean, you—the Ashcan people were just as attracted to you as were the—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, of course, I didn’t know about the Ashcan people then because Harvard didn’t mention American—oh, they have mentioned Sargent because he was a local celebrity. And Homer came in, I think, into a survey course almost apologetically, but that was it. There was nothing in American art. I had to take two years off in the summers and boned up before I dared to give a course here. I didn’t know anything about it. The students were all saying, "What about American art?" and I was a little embarrassed to say, I couldn’t tell them anything, so I had to work it up on my own.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were any of these painters and other artists in the Boston area around Harvard at all? [00:50:03] Tarbell or people like that?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I don't recall ever coming to Harvard, no, no. Sargent had just done his murals, and, oh, I don't know, which are not his best, and I guess that's about as close as one ever got to Sargent. He was doing the Boston Museum murals about then too I think, yeah. No, as far as real-life artists went, we were pretty well restricted to faculty. But, of course, that was never my major interest at Harvard anyways. I dare say other people had a broader experience than mine.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well your major interests for coming, archeology and sculpture too you mentioned.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah, I never did any sculpture.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You've written on sculpture though, have you?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I've written a lot of articles. I'm trying to put a book together with all my revolutionary theories on Greek sculpture. They're—they've—it's all been done in individual articles scattered through, heaven knows, how many different journals. But if I could just find the right pace, I would like to string them all together and write a different history of Greek sculpture. They all read Winckelmann still, and every new piece of evidence that comes along is forced into the Winckelmann theory, you see?

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

CHARLES H. MORGAN: So the present vision as Ms. Richter had it is about the most jerry-built series of improbabilities that I know. And out of Ms. Richter's then I'm a little free to write—she was no friend of mine—but I can't get the right pace. You see, there's no point in writing an archeological history of Greek sculpture. That's been done in the articles, and the archeologists knows this. I've got to—if the book is to be of any use, I've got to appeal to a broader public. It's got to have a faster pace. It's got to have a different vocabulary than you use in the profession. And I can—I think I can hit that in a book like Dolouser [ph] like this one you've got here. But the minute I started on archeology—I am so disciplined over the years of writing for the profession—I find it almost impossible to get—[00:52:11]

ROBERT F. BROWN: What—and Rhys Carpenter aesthetic treatment, the essays on them—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Rhys is marvelous.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —looking at Greek sculptors.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Rhys is marvelous. He's got a lot of awfully good theories too. Most of them don't stand up unfortunately. But Rhys is so skillful with his language that it's almost impossible to tell where fact leaves off and fiction begins. I know when he reconstructed this pediment of the Parthenon, I read the thing through twice, and I could find nothing wrong with it, and then I looked at the reconstruction on the back, and I said, "It just won't work." And then I began to go through word by word, sentence by sentence and then I began to get the pattern of where he'd, sort of, hypnotized himself into believing this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But his writing mainly in visual terms as he does in the analysis of Greek sculpture generally.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is this something of your approach as well and, what, within your teaching too?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I know it was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sort of—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: —and it was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —reconstructing—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: —is Rhys—and Rhys is just, well, a unique phenomenon.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But verbal reconstruction of visual phenomena, is that in some way—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah, I think you—well, I think you have to do that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Usually, the problem is the way the Greek saw, the way, they—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yes. The way—the way they thought about it too. This is something that, of course, Winckelmann couldn't know, and this is where most of these histories go down the drain. They rest on an assumption that the Greeks were thinking like the neoclassicists, and they weren't. Furthermore, in the period right after Marathon, they were not thinking, they were not feeling the way they did a generation later. And this is something that's totally ignored by the average historian. [00:54:04] They couldn't have. And the average historian forgets things like economics, and they put then colossal Zeus of Olympia, which after all cost the ransom of many, many kings, 40—48-feet high, all gold plate, and ivory plate. God, think of the money that cost. And they try and have that built at a time when all the Greek states were fighting each other to the death. Now, there wasn't any money at that time except for weapons and ships. But right after the Persian wars, Greece was relatively at peace. They were—they not only had the booty from the Persians, but they were—they were at the real peak of economic—of surplus, and they also had a deep feeling, a religious feeling, which a generation later, they didn't have. And from all the great descriptions of the Zeus at Olympia, it was on one of overwhelming awe. The Athena Parthenos is probably pretty but nobody saw the Zeus. Part of it was the aura of history I'm sure, but part of it was just this enormous, overwhelming effect of this colossal image.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And history and richness of it.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. Because another thing that people don't realize is that the big festivals exactly at sunrise, so the rising sun coming squarely through the door and hitting this huge figure in this relatively small chamber. And there's a reflecting pool in front, which I think I've persuaded some people, actually helped amplify the light on the figure. But it must have had a tremendous eerie effect, you know, gold and white glittering right there in the black. [00:56:03] I was at Olympia one time with the—on one of those days when the Olympics would have been celebrated, early September, late October, or August I've forgotten, but I've figured it out. So I got up awful early and went down and sat right on the axis of the statue facing east, and the sun came absolutely up. I had some idea of what it might have been like.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This kind of phenomena, you would like to bring together and reconstruct in a publication on—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. Well, I've done the Zeus for the trade. Now, I've got to do it for the general public if I can—if I can.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which do you prefer to do for, the general public now?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I prefer the general public now, but you see once I get into archeology, habit takes over, and I'm stuck.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you've written on Renaissance things too then, haven't you some?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, I wrote *The Life of Michelangelo*, but I did that for quite a different reason. I—that came out of a very curious curricula circumstance. The faculty went with its new curriculum back in 1950, I guess it was, voted that all courses should be four-hour courses. Well, that just didn't work. Much better to have two-hour courses than four-hour courses, so after a couple of years, the two-hour course came back. And then I was walking across campus one morning, and one of my colleagues in psychology met me, and said, "I've got an idea for a one-hour course." He said, "I'd like to give one in marriage and the family, and I think one hour is just about right for that." He said, "You can't think up some one-hour course so that we could make it this, just not one one-hour course but a couple of one-hour courses, and get it through the faculty." [00:58:05] I said, "Let me think about that a little bit." Then, I suddenly thought, Well, you could do a one-hour course that would be in proportion to the overall offerings if you pick one individual and then who do you pick? Well, it's architecture, sculpture, painting, drawing, poetry, everything you've got Mike. So I said, "Okay, let's do it." I started in the course. It was a big success, but I gave the boys Simmons to read that marvelous biography, and the boys kept coming to me and saying, "We can't understand this Victorian Goth in Simmons. He takes so long to say something." Well, I say, "He says it awfully well." "Yeah, but it takes too long, and we don't get it." So I said, "Okay, let's see what we can do about that. Maybe I can write one that will be a little shorter and a little more up-to-date in the vernacular." So that's how that happened. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you work with—sort of as you would with archeological materials and going through? Did you spend a good deal of time on them?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I didn't have much time to spend on it. I found Tolnay extremely helpful. I read him very carefully, and of course, I had Simmons, and I also did a lot of background work in the history of both Florence and of Rome and put it together. It was not meant to be a deeply scholarly thing. I mean Tolnay has done all that, but I was rather amused because Tolnay hadn't got out his book on the *Last Judgement* by then. And from that point on, I was on my own. I couldn't pick his brains, so I had to do a lot of thinking and interpreting, and my book came out just at the time his book—his fourth volume came out. [01:00:04] I was a month ahead of him and then he claims three firsts in interpretation, and they're all in my book, and they're my own. [Laughs.] I'm

very pleased about that. So that lasted and then I thought of doing Cellini. I kind of hated to drop the—oh, we had the most marvelous trip in Europe while the book was in—being printed because I hadn't seen all the originals and so we laid ourselves out of this winter. We hired a car and a driver, by God, and we started out in Paris with the *Captives* and then we went up to Bruge for the *Madonna* and then we went down to—what am I—oh, Milan for the *Rondanini Pietà,* and Bologna and Florence and Rome and then we went over to Greece for a month or so. And then on the way back, we stopped in at the Royal Academy in London and saw the *Taddei Tondo*. So we got them all in. We've done that since, you know, pick one objective, one artist or something like that, and just build a trip around that. Because you get all these lovely dividends such as—or while in Bruge and Brussels, which we never get in otherwise. We both are very fond of Bologna from before the war. We've never been back, and we probably wouldn't have gone except we had this objective, Tomb of St. Dominic.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you were applying the—your training, say, in—and your years of experience in archeology in the things you would look at there and reconstruct and think about the form and shape, too, looking at a Michelangelo work or—[01:02:00] Was this more or less divorced in your mind, would you say?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, you see, with Mike's work, the stuff is all there. Where it survived at all, it's intact. Whereas with the Greek, it's always busted up and you have to reconstruct. But that was great fun. Then I thought it would be kind of fun to do Cellini's autobiography over again with a new translation and cut. And my wife's Italian is excellent, and she writes extremely well and—[clears throat]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Her training also in art history?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: No. Not at all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But she worked—she was with you in most of these journeys?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh yes. But the idea would be to take the Cellini text, and I would do the cutting. There's so much repetition about—after the 74th chambermaid, you get awful tired of it. I would cut it down to about, oh, half or a third or something like that of its present bulk and then she would do the translating. And that was a fine idea, except I found the job of cutting was just too big one for me. I've tried keeping a card catalogue of all the personalities as they come in and where they come in and deciding which ones to leave out in total and which ones to put in it completely and which ones to bring in, that kind of thing. And it got so complex that I just gave it up. And then Speicher died, and I took on the Bellows thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Cellini had you given course, the one hour?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: No, no, no, no. Oh, Cellini wasn't that—in proportion to the overall offerings of Amherst College, one hour—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But it would have been delightful as well as a smaller edited book, would it, because it's a very—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I think—well, the autobiography is great fun, and it's required reading in so many places, but it seemed to me there might be market for it. But it is—it is too long and too repetitive, and the Simmons translation is again dated, the language that he uses. [01:04:09] Though I guess it is still the standard one. There are others.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Before I interrupted that you were talking that Eugene Speicher died. This was—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —about when?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well that—Speicher died and—Mike came out in '60, and Speicher died in '62, and that's when I decided to go to work on Bellows.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why did—why were you involved in this?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: In Bellows?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, at that moment? I mean you already presumably—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh, I wasn't. I just always felt the need of a book on Bellows. I couldn’t find out much about him you see and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This dated back to when you were first trying to teach American art?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah, and continued because my interest had grown by that time. Let's see, I already had that, and I had some drawings and some prints—I was interested in him. And then when I saw that Speicher died, I realized that if that book was going to be done, it better be done right off. So the first thing on my list was to—well, Gordon Allison who runs the [H.V.] Allison Galleries in New York and is the Bellows outlet—he's an old friend of mine. He's an Amherst alumnus and most cooperative on this. He steered me toward people that had known Bellows and got Gene let me have the letters and the papers and whatnot. And I—the first thing I did was to go around and see as much of these old birds as I possibly could. Most of them are dead now, and that's less than 10 years ago. And it took me all over the country, and so I went to see Randall Davey in Santa Fe, and I went to see Ethel Clarke in Santa Monica. I went to Columbus two or three times and saw people there. And I went down to Sag Harbor to try and dig out information from relatives. It was a goldmine just purely by accident. I didn't have any names. [01:06:00] I went to Sag Harbor on a stormy night—I've never been there before—found a motel next to dock. One thing I wanted was some food and to get dry, and I went to the girl behind the desk and I said—I got my room and everything else. I said, "You know, I'm here on a rather odd errand. I got an odd question to ask you, but do you know of anybody in town here who remembers anything about George Bellows of the Bellows family?" She smiled and said, "You've come to the right place. My husband's a cousin, [they laugh] and he'll be in presently. Why don't you have a good dinner?" and I sat down to a good dinner and up came this attractive fellow. He said, "You don't want to see me because I'm only the second cousin, but my aunt is up the street, and she's a goldmine of information. I've just called her, and she'd love to see you after you finish dinner." So that's way that worked out. But the most fantastic thing of all was staging to go to the Sag Harbor. I found myself in New London, and I had an hour to spare before the ferry went. This fellow, Ed Keefe that he'd shared a studio with for three years had just plain disappeared. I couldn't find out nothing about Ed Keefe. Nobody knew what had happened to him, but I did know he came from New London. So I picked up the telephone book and ran my finger down, Keefe, Edward R. There was an Edward R. Keefe, so I called him on the phone and the voice said, [mimics voice] "Hallo?" I said, "I've got an odd question to ask you, but are you by any chance the Keefe who spent three years with Bellows in New York?" "Yes." Well, I said, "Mr. Keefe, could we have lunch tomorrow? I've got to go to Sag Harbor in the next boat, but could we have lunch tomorrow?" "Delighted." [01:08:02] So I met up with Ed Keefe and had lunch with him. I saw him a great many times later on. Every time I was down in New London, I always dropped in to see him. He'd had his vocal cord scraped so that speaking over the phone, forcing his voice is very difficult, and sitting across the lunch table is easy conversation. I went out to his place outside of New London a good many times, saw his pictures. He had some of Bellows paintings, and he was a delightful fellow. His nephew wrote this marvelous book called *The Investigating Officer,* which is one of the best books I have ever seen on the occupation of Germany. It is a marvelous tale, beautifully written. And having been an investigating officer myself, by accident once, I was very sympathetic to the problems and—but it's a delightful book. And of course Kroll, I now look on Leon Kroll as one of my best friends though I'd never met him before. But every time I go to New York, I give him a ring and either take them out to lunch or lunch with them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did you discover from—in these people mainly aside from data and recollection?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, you got a sense of what Bellows himself was like overall as seen by different people. But certain of the qualities they all saw were there. The kind of thing you can guess maybe from reading the letters, but you really have to talk with the people to get some notion of the gusto that he had.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And they were able to transmit this pretty well?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had he been sort of a center for them, for many of them?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Oh, yes, they all adored him, yeah. Yeah. I've forgotten how many other people I ran across or there a number of dead ends—of course, there always are. [01:10:00] I tried to see all the pictures I could find—another thing I've tried to do, picture his drawings. I'm presently doing a little paperback, two-buck-thing of drawing reproductions that Borden puts out in California on Bellows' drawings, which had been rather good fun because it's—it only calls for two pages of text, which is no problem. But it does mean finding about five dozen illustrations that we'll reproduce. So this has been a correspondence deal, writing museums and collectors and whatnot trying to—I must have about a hundred drawings, photographs now, and a great many of them can't be used for this kind of reproduction. If you tried to do the very dark ones, they just won't reproduce ink and paper and whatnot—a problem.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well the—as an artist, you seem to have found that he was kind of a watershed figure because you introduced him as a man who in, some ways, was not of his own times, but looked in some ways to the past, on the other hand, sort of, prefigured some things would come?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. He very definitely was. I mean for all his fondness for intellectual anarchy and Emma Goldman and so forth, he was about as conservative a person, morally, financially, every other ways you

can imagine. All of this are just intellectual chitchat. He was really rock-ribbed and old fashion as the dickens. On the other hand, he was fascinated with the possibilities of paint because he didn't try doing anything that didn't directly appeal to him. But he was always eager to see what you could do with paint within the framework of putting down what he saw the way he saw it. [01:12:06] That's the reason why this palette here, the Armory one and that are so very different. He also admired Henri immensely, and Rex is still pretty much Henri and of course that boy—but they both break away from Henri. Now that—one of the things about Rex is the two hands and the one with the ring on it, Henri could've done. But Henri could never have done that other hand—that comes out toward you—ever. That's just Bellows. And then this is his own style, and I got the two Krolls from Leon because they were done at the same time when they were both painting on Monhegan.

ROBERT F. BROWN: There's a very dark, almost morbid quality to the Bellows on Monhegan.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. Well, this is still when he was pretty much using Henri's palette. See, it's pretty [ph] Henri. And Kroll was already sold on French impressionism and the light palette and everything else. Renoir especially appealed to him. Well, I got those two because they're all three a blackhead, the two Krolls done from much the same position. And this one here is straight Kroll. I mean, it could be South Sea Islands as far [laughs] —much more so than Monhegan I think. On the other hand, that's much more somber, and I think Bellows has influenced Kroll in that particular picture. But he's trying to use some of Bellows's ideas.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But did you come to feel that Bellows as a man of his own moods, and these are always expressed. He didn't ever, say, pick up the impressionist palette for its own sake.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: No, no, no, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You said, on the other hand, he did love the act of painting and loved paint as—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah. And then he was—there's a letter of his—I think it's to Joe Taylor—full of enthusiasm discovering how you can get the effect of black without using black, which is ultimately the impressionist idea, you see?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, yes.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: They black off the palette. And they the dark rocks and then that one there are simply superb. [01:14:03] I gave the college the black wall, which he painted in Rhode Island in [19]'19, and there again, it's absolutely—I love that little picture. It sparkles so, but it—uh—the fascinating thing is the way he gets the effects of black without ever using them at all. There are marvelous contrasts there, but it's a scintillating little piece.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Bellows was attractive to you because his personality—his pronounced personality came through? Is this part of—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah, there's so much vitality in everything he did. I guess that's—I guess that's it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Or the hand here in Rex, which seemed to not quite well stop, the hand coming forward.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well that, and there's a kind of universality in some of Bellows's things. One of the remarkable things in the Bellows's portraits to me is that when he painted somebody he didn't know, he makes very much a type. Now, I know Vicky Straight pretty well, and Bellows painted her stepfather, and the family sold the picture. I asked her why on earth they sold it. "Well," she said, "it was a nice picture, but it never looked like him. It made him look like a businessman, and that's not the side of him we saw," but it's the only side that Bellows saw. He liked Straight very much, but he didn't know him personally at all just in chitchatting in the studio. He got the impression of a businessman because Straight would take a pose, the phone would ring, Wall Street had to be advised on this, so Straight would excuse himself and go down and answer the phone, come back, apologize, try and pick up the pose. And this is the effect that he had on Bellows who paints him as a broker. [01:16:00] And when you get to the famous portrait of Judge Olney, he only saw the judge as he was in the chair, and the authoritative, dictatorial way the judge had, and that all comes in to the portrait. But it's one of the most repelling pictures [laughs] that I've known. I mean I wouldn't like to have it around. But I'm sure the judge had that side to him, but that was the side the Harvard Club didn't know and that's the reason the Harvard Club reneged on his commission. On the other hand, Rex, he knew pretty well. They shared a studio for a year, and yet in that, there is the same sense of universality. Now, for example, my wife, my sister-in-law, the wives of other friends all see in that picture the image of their own sons. He looks more like my nephew than any of the other boys. It didn't look the least bit like my son who's got red hair, but his mother insists that he's very much like that. It's sort of a universal quality of an attractive person of that age that is in there; although, I'm sure Rex did look like that because he knew him very well. I've seen the portraits of Keefe and Kroll and the people he knew there that's—I suppose you could call them types if you want, but they are the persons as I knew them

anyways.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Does the same apply to the landscapes, or are there some that are rather typed and others that is a direct reaction or—the one that he—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, the late ones, the late pictures are inclined to get stylized. That's when he was experimenting with stylization, and whether that would've taken over and ruined his late paintings or not I don't know. But I was—I've been to as many of the places I could where he painted to see what he did with the scene itself, and they're quite recognizable. I've been down there to Squeaker Cove on Monhegan more than once, and it looks like that but not quite like it. [01:18:06] I mean, he's simplified the face of Blackhead there, given it a kind of strength, and yet back to that little plateau way up on the top with that touch of green in it is there covered with wild strawberries in season—a charming place. I have never been able to identify kelp rocks, fair enough.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then this is an American artist, and your training had gone in that, and you say you had to, sort of, make yourself a teacher of it at one time.

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, I had to find out about it. I got curious about it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But now you—this is an—this was a very personal idiom then for you of the investigation, this—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had to—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: I've never done it before, and I don't know if I'll ever do it again. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: How does this sit in your interest generally, the personal idiom versus the professional? Or where, what—is there a separateness to these?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, of course, the approach is. The approach is different, and in some ways, it's very similar. In both cases, you work with documents whether they're pictures or letters or whatnot. The only difference is that when you get a character like Bellows that people didn't know then the approach is just a little different from doing an awful lot of reading what other people have written. Because in this case, you've got a chance to form your own opinion rather freshly, I think. But I don't—I don't expect ever to do that kind of thing again. But it is curious how you happen to fall into these things, the Byzantine pottery, well, what's the job that'll take three years and then Mike to oblige students who needed a book to read, Bellows because somebody had to do it and the time was right. [01:20:08] The college collection because they wanted a book for the sesquicentennial celebration. The next book is going to be a cookbook speaking of the arts.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That someone want or—

CHARLES H. MORGAN: No. I've been fascinated with cooking for 20 years, and I think there is a place, and my agent agrees with me that there's a place for a cookbook for a man who wants to make a big show with very little effort. Since there aren't enough men's cookbooks anyway, there are more coming out, but there might be a place there depending on how you set it up and what it takes just like—and so I've been very seriously copying off rules and experimenting, fiddling around with text and ways of presentation. I think that's as far—what I'd like to do is to get the Greek sculpture one done, but I haven't touched it for a year. This summer, I'll go down in Martha's Vineyard and try again. Oh, every now and then, I'd spend an evening type away at the typewriter but —

ROBERT F. BROWN: But this is—that's really something that needs to be done though, isn't it?

CHARLES H. MORGAN: Well, I think so. Otherwise, if it isn't done and done pretty quickly, and maybe it's too late already, the party line, so to speak, is going to be so indelibly impressed on everybody, but that'll be the only work. And especially since in—I think it's true, general interest in the subject has waned rather than waxed. The number of people who are working in it are fewer. They are going to get lazier and lazier and just freeze on to the existing ideas without every realizing that a lot of the ideas that I have were original with me, but when I've really dug into the past, I found other people have had them, and they simply had been buried by academic authority—murdered by academic authority. [01:22:10] How about some sherry? It's noon.

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